POLICY COORDINATION IN NEOLIBERAL MIGRATION GOVERNANCE: 
THE CASE STUDY OF KILIS MUNICIPALITY AND HUMANITARIAN 
ORGANIZATIONS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO 
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES 
OF 
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

PELİN KARAKAYA KOCA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS 
FOR 
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE 
IN 
THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN POLICY PLANNING AND LOCAL 
GOVERNMENTS

JANUARY 2024
Approval of the thesis:

POLICY COORDINATION IN NEOLIBERAL MIGRATION GOVERNANCE: THE CASE STUDY OF KILIS MUNICIPALITY AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

submitted by PELIN KARAKAYA KOCA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ömür BİRLER
Head of Department
Department of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Burak BÜYÜKCİVELEK
Supervisor
Department of City and Regional Planning

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kemal BAYIRBAĞ (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Burak BÜYÜKCİVELEK (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of City and Regional Planning

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Haydar KARAMAN
Kilis 7 Aralık University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration
I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Pelin KARAKAYA KOCA

Signature:
ABSTRACT

POLICY COORDINATION IN NEOLIBERAL MIGRATION GOVERNANCE:
THE CASE STUDY OF KILIŞ MUNICIPALITY AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

KARAKAYA KOCA, Pelin
M.S., The Department of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments
Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Büyükcüvelek

January 2024, 174 pages

The aim of this thesis is to reveal the policy coordination processes with a particular emphasis on social cohesion policy concept that has emerged in the post-2011 migration governance context in Türkiye. This study aims to examine the unique position of Kiliş which is exposed to the impacts of the Syria war as a small border city, and focuses on policy coordination between Kiliş Municipality and humanitarian organizations at the local level. The thesis identifies both Kiliş Municipality and humanitarian organizations as stakeholders of each other to emphasize the pragmatic feature of neoliberalism in the broader migration governance context, and policy coordination in particular. This thesis argues that policy coordination carried out by stakeholders through social cohesion-oriented projects is the extension of neoliberal migration governance at the local level, examines this through qualitative research methodology. Within this scope, semi-structured interviews and the author's observations constitute primary sources, and documentation research constitutes secondary sources of this thesis. The thesis consists of a total of four chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The introduction chapter includes the research interest, research questions, literature
review, contribution of the study to the literature and methodology. The second chapter discusses the key concepts of the thesis and social cohesion policy in migration governance context of Türkiye. The third chapter discusses the policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. The conclusion section includes the critical evaluation of the study.

**Keywords:** Migration governance, policy coordination, local level, stakeholder, social cohesion
ÖZ

NEOLİBERAL GÖÇ YÖNETİŞİMİNDE POLITİKA EŞGÜDÜMÜ: KİLİS BELEDİYESİ VE İNSANİ YARDIM KURULUŞLARI ÖRNEĞİ

KARAKAYA KOCA, Pelin
Yüksek Lisans, Kentsel Politika Planlaması ve Yerel Yönetimler Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Ahmet Burak BÜYÜKCİVELEK

Oca 2024, 174 sayfa

tezin temel kavramları ve Türkiye’nin göç yönetişimi bağlamında sosyal uyum politikası tartışılmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde Kilis Belediyesi ile insani yardım kuruluşları arasındaki politika koordinasyonu ele alınmaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde ise çalışmanın eleştirel değerlendirmesi yer almaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç yönetişimi, politika eşgüdümü, yerel düzey, paylaş, sosyal uyum
To those who lost their lives in the earthquake on February 6, 2023
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Burak BÜYÜKÇİVELEK for his support, patience, and encouragement. I would like to thank examining committee members Assist. Prof. Dr. Haydar Karaman and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kemal BAYIRBAĞ for their precious contributions and valuable criticisms, which played a critical role in the development of the thesis.

I owe special thanks to all research participants for their time and contributions. Their invaluable insights have significantly enriched the depth of this thesis study.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my brother, Mehmet Doğu KARAKAYA, for his suggestions and support during the critical decision-making processes of my academic life and professional career. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my dear parents, who have always supported me and never withheld their love and faith.

Special gratitude is owed to my beloved husband, Bayram KOCA for his support and contributions for the completion of this thesis study. Throughout the research, he consistently provided encouragement and demonstrated remarkable patience by listening to all my concerns. I am thankful for his presence in my life.

Finally, I am grateful to my kitten, Asuman, in short, Asuş, who motivated me with all her cuteness and never left me while I was studying on my thesis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM .................................................................................................................. iii
ABSTRACT ..................................................................................................................... iv
ÖZ................................................................................................................................. vi
DEDICATION ................................................................................................................... viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................. ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... x
LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................... xii
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................... xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS............................................................................................ xiv

CHAPTERS
1. INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................... 1
   1.1. Research Interest and Questions ................................................................. 1
   1.2. Literature Review and Contribution of the Study to the Literature ........... 3
   1.3. Methodology of the Research ................................................................... 4
   1.4. The Structure of the Thesis ..................................................................... 8
2. CONCEPTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK ............................................ 9
   2.1. Governance ................................................................................................... 10
   2.2. Policy Coordination .................................................................................... 13
   2.3. Who are the stakeholders? ......................................................................... 18
   2.4. Social Cohesion ......................................................................................... 22
   2.5. Social Cohesion as a Policy Agenda in the Post-2011 Türkiye Context ...... 27
      2.5.1. The Course of Migration Governance and Social Cohesion .............. 28
      2.5.2. Urban Aspect of Policy Coordination ............................................... 44
         2.5.2.1. Municipalities as “Frontliners” in Policy Coordination and
                  Migration Governance ....................................................................... 46
         2.5.2.2. Coordination and Social Cohesion Aspects in the Legal and
                  Administrative Structure of Municipalities ..................................... 49
3. SOCIAL COHESION POLICY COORDINATION IN KİLİŞ ..................... 53
3.1. “They contribute to the development of the city” ........................................56
3.2. “These are the things that we do not welcome” ........................................59
3.3. Stakeholder Landscape in Kilis and Key Stakeholders of the Thesis .......... 68
   3.3.1. Historical Background of Relations Between Kilis Municipality and
          Humanitarian Organizations .................................................................74
   3.3.2. Analysis Principal Stakeholder Interests in Policy Coordination: Kilis
          Municipality ...........................................................................................80
   3.3.3. Analysis Principal Stakeholders Interest in Policy Coordination:
          Humanitarian Organizations ....................................................................86
3.4. Social Cohesion in Policy Documents, Practices and Perceptions ............ 91
   3.4.1. Analysis of Social Cohesion in the Policy Documents of Kilis
          Municipality ............................................................................................91
   3.4.2. Analysis of Social Cohesion in the Policy Documents of Humanitarian
          Organizations ..........................................................................................93
   3.4.3. Practicing Social Cohesion: Project Activities .................................... 98
   3.4.4. Perceptions of Bureaucrats on Social Cohesion ................................. 101
          3.4.4.1. Perceptions of Municipal Bureaucrats on Social Cohesion .......... 101
          3.4.4.2. Perceptions of Humanitarian Bureaucrats on Social Cohesion ..... 109
3.5. Analysis of Policy Coordination within the Scope of Social Cohesion-
     Oriented Projects .......................................................................................113
   3.5.1. First Contact and Subsequent Negotiation Process for Project Design .113
   3.5.2. Roles and Responsibilities and Implementation ..................................118
   3.5.3. Project Closure ..................................................................................124
4. CONCLUSION ..............................................................................................126
   4.1. Findings .................................................................................................127
   4.2. Policy Implication Recommendations ..................................................133
REFERENCES ...............................................................................................137
APPENDICIES
A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE 157
B. CURRICULUM VITAE ...............................................................................158
C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET ..................................................159
D. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU ..................................174
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of Research Participants ........................................................................7
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Policy Network Map................................................................. 15
Figure 2. Policy Process Chart ............................................................... 17
Figure 3. Periodization of Paradigm Shift in Migration Governance .......... 30
Figure 4. Distribution of Syrians under Temporary Protection by Year ........ 33
Figure 5. The 3RP Model for Syria Crisis .............................................. 41
Figure 6. Stresses Affecting Municipal Resilience in Türkiye ................... 48
Figure 7. Impact of the Syria Crisis on the Capacities of Municipalities ....... 49
Figure 8. Kilis City with Buildings and a Mountain in the Background ........ 53
Figure 9. Location of Kilis on the Map ................................................... 54
Figure 10. A Locally Known Greengrocer in Kilis Run by Syrians .......... 59
Figure 11. Kilis City Center .................................................................... 63
Figure 12. Stakeholder Landscape in Kilis .............................................. 69
Figure 13. Organization Structure of Kilis Municipality ........................... 70
Figure 14. Organization Structure of Humanitarian Organizations .......... 72
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3RP</td>
<td>Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACPU</td>
<td>Association for Combating Poverty and Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFAD</td>
<td>Disaster and Emergency Management Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKP</td>
<td>Justice and Development Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIT</td>
<td>EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>German Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSDNAP</td>
<td>Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBC</td>
<td>International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFIP</td>
<td>Law on Foreigners and International Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDMM</td>
<td>Provincial Directorate of Migration Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMM</td>
<td>Presidency of Migration Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODES</td>
<td>Social Support Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Metropoll Strategic and Social Research Centre carried out a survey to measure “the pulse of Türkiye” in July 2023. According to the survey, irregular migration is considered as “the biggest threat” to Türkiye by many survey participants (Serbestiyet, 2023). The result of the survey shows that irregular migration has been one of the hottest topics in the country.

Castles and Miller (2008) describe the 21st century as the age of migration and underline that the world will have to learn to live with mass population movements in the near future. The movement of goods, services, ideas, and people promoted by neoliberalism has also played a role in the internationalization of the impacts of conflicts and wars. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) projects a rising trend in the global number of forcibly displaced individuals, reaching an estimated 110 million. This figure includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and others requiring international protection. Low- and middle-income countries host 75 per cent of the world’s refugees and other people in need of international protection (2023, p. 3). Forced migration seems likely to increase due to various reasons such as wars, violence, and crises in the world. In this context, the governance of forced migration is inevitable and a phenomenon that needs to be considered. As a matter of fact, this thesis is essentially a governance thesis and discusses migration governance at the local level by focusing on the coordination between stakeholders with a critical perspective.

1.1. Research Interest and Questions

The aim of the thesis is to reveal the policy coordination processes between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations in Kilis as stakeholders of each other,
with a particular focus on perspectives towards the social cohesion policy concept that has emerged in the post-2011 Türkiye context. This study aims to examine the unique position of Kilis which is exposed to the impacts of the war as a small border city.

Governance, which is put forward as the governing model of neoliberalism, envisages handling migration, and in particular forced migration, from a multi-level and multi-stakeholder perspective. Migration governance refers to a complex and dynamic phenomenon in which many stakeholders are involved as policymakers and implementers at many levels.

According to Bayırbağ, when discussing the neoliberal transformation in public administration, he emphasizes that the policy implementation phase should be focused on. Because the public policy process becomes increasingly pragmatic and the distinction between implementer and decision maker is blurred. In this context, it is useful to consider policy implementation, in other words “action”, at the center of policy analysis (2013, p. 16).

Adapted from Bayırbağ’s approach, this study focuses on the policy coordination at the local level. Policy coordination as an integral element of the policy implementation process, refers to the management of conflicts and the establishment of consensus between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations that are mainly non-governmental organizations (NGO) and United Nations (UN) agencies in this study. At the local level, neoliberal migration governance proposes project-based coordination. Considering this fact, the study critically examines policy coordination with reference to the project management processes between the municipality and the humanitarian organizations. The concept of social cohesion, which turned into a policy discourse starting in 2016 after the 2011 Syria crisis, especially in relation to the contextual framework of migration in Türkiye, is chosen as the policy issue.

The thesis identifies both Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations as stakeholders of each other to emphasize the pragmatic feature of neoliberalism. As a concept that essentially belongs to business literature, but is frequently mentioned in migration governance, policy documents and discourses, the concept of stakeholder,
in this thesis, refers to Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations that interact with each other according to their relative interests.

This thesis argues that policy coordination carried out by stakeholders through social cohesion-oriented projects is the extension of neoliberal migration governance at the local level. To examine the argument, the organizational framework of the study is predicated upon a primary research question accompanied by two sub-questions. The primary research question is: **What is the relevance of social cohesion-oriented projects in policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations?** In addition to the main research question, following enquiries are covered in this study:

1) Who are the stakeholders participating in policy coordination within the scope of social cohesion-oriented projects in Kilis?
2) How is social cohesion defined in policy documents, practiced in projects, and perceived by municipal and humanitarian bureaucrats?

### 1.2. Literature Review and Contribution of the Study to the Literature

In general, the prolonged and uncertain stay of refugees\(^1\) in Türkiye has increased academic interest in various disciplines towards migration studies. Türkiye has experienced a massive and sudden influx of refugees since 2011. The complexity and unique experience of Türkiye as hosting a large refugee population, began to be studied intensively by many disciplines. On the other hand, as highlighted by Güngördü (2021), considerable amount of the studies has methodological nationalist approaches which fail to acknowledge that refugee migration is a multi-scale phenomenon that may be studied at the local and urban scales.

In the migration literature, there are various studies on migration governance that discuss the phenomena at national and global levels (Müller-Funk et al., 2020 &

---

\(^1\) As it will be discussed in the next chapters, those who fled from Syria to Türkiye are under temporary protection status according to the Turkish legislative framework. They are not legally entitled as refugees. However, considering the international literature and rights-based approach, the author of this thesis prefers to call them as refugees in this study.
On the other hand, academic interest to the local situation of governance is also on the rise (Jorgensen 2012; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017; Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Hackett, 2017; Hockstra et al., 2017; Keith Mark, 2021; Goble et al., 2017; Bhusal and Sunam, 2023; Missbach et al., 2018; Kaya, 2023; Özçürümez & İçduygu, 2020). There are several critical evaluations regarding humanitarian assistance and policies in the literature (Çeliker, 2018; Karauz, 2022; Sözer, 2019). Studies focusing on Kilis, which is the spatial scale of this study, are as follows: locals’ perception of immigrants (Koca & Altnoluk, 2022; Yılmaz, 2017), geographical analysis of displacement (İncili & Akdemir, 2016); social cohesion (Köse, 2022; Efe et. al., 2022); gender (Yarım, 2021); hate speech in the media (Erdoğan, 2018); daily life (Deniz et. al., 2016), border sociology (Şenoğuz, 2014); and effect of migration on waste management (Gürbüz Akgün, 2022).

To summarize the literature, there are a lot of studies related to migration phenomenon. Looking at the literature, it can be stated that there is no research in Türkiye and Kilis specifically that constructs policy coordination in migration governance through stakeholder relations and explores it through the discourse of local-level social cohesion.

1.3. Methodology of the Research

This thesis is based on qualitative research methodology. The main purpose for applying qualitative research methodology is that it supports the insight of the researcher towards the cores of a problem that cannot always be expressed through numerical data. The fact that forced migration is a motion based on many complex and intertwined causalities and impacts. To measure these factors through a limited numerical scale may not go beyond verifying the ‘efficiency’ of the scale ‘only under its self-defined conditions’. According to Denzin and Lincoln,

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative
research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (2005, p. 43).

This study is based on primary and secondary sources. Semi-structured interviews and the author’s observations were used as primary sources. Semi-structured interviews provide an important input to the study in terms of understanding the statements of Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations on social cohesion, coordination between these stakeholders, the integrity and differences between the statements and their reflection on practices. Bal (2016) states that in the semi-structured interview, the place of the questions can be changed according to the flow of the interview, new questions can be asked, and additional questions that provide deepening can be asked according to the answers received (p. 163). In this study, the interviews will be presented to the reader using the descriptive analysis technique. Kümbetoğlu (2015) defines descriptive analysis as examining “the data in the interview analysis by adhering to their original form and directly quoting what individuals say” (p. 154).

This study incorporates the author’s observations through critical examination of stakeholder approaches, expert opinions, and reflection on practices. The author of this thesis has been working in the humanitarian field for more than five years, particularly in south-east Türkiye. She has had experience in several humanitarian organizations by working in programmatic positions that required interactions with various public and private institutions. In addition to the interviews with experts, the writer will provide her observations in line with the thesis scope and her field experience.

The secondary source of the study is document research. Document research consists of literature review, reviewing web pages of institutions, reports, strategy documents and other related resources.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key municipal officials of Kilis Municipality, and key experts working in UN agencies and NGOs that interact with
the municipality. Purposeful sampling technique is applied in identifying and selecting individuals to interview. Purposeful sampling is a non-probability-based sampling technique. It allows in-depth investigation by selecting information-rich situations for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups who possess significant expertise or familiarity with a particular phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Besides expertise and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) highlight the significance of being available and willing to participate, as well as the capacity to articulate, express, and reflect on experiences and opinions effectively.

Interviews were conducted between 15 May 2023 and 4 November 2023. Table 1 lists the research participants. The author conducted interviews with 15 people (3 female, 12 male; and 12 Turkish, 1 German, 1 Syrian; 1 Canadian). The research participants are in the middle age range between 30 and 40 years old, and they have at least five years of experience in the field of migration. Municipal officials have management and field experience for a variety of municipal services. A field officer who is a contracted field officer in the municipal company is also included in the study. Research participants in the humanitarian organizations were selected from among people working in the fields of project management, project development, donor relations, public relations, and field implementation. The reason for this is to reveal the diversity of approaches towards the subject of this study. In addition, some of these participants had previous experience in various government institutions, and these experiences were used in the study. Pseudonyms were often used to de-identify participants but also avoid de-personalizing and ease reading of individual narratives. One participant did not prefer pseudonyms. This research participant will be named as a project expert from a humanitarian organization to ensure anonymity.

The duration of the interviews varied between 1 hour and 3 hours. Some interviews have been recorded, while notes have been taken in others. The language proficiency and preference of the research participants played a pivotal role in shaping the interview process, leading to the conduct of some interviews in Turkish and others in English based on individual choices and comfort levels. The notes of the interviews conducted in Turkish were translated into English by the author. While the majority of the interviews were conducted in person, there were instances where the...
geographical distance between the author and research participants necessitated the utilization of alternative modes of communication, leading to the conducting of certain interviews through phone calls and various internet technologies.

**Table 1. List of Research Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet</td>
<td>Senior Municipality Official</td>
<td>Kilis Municipality</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekir</td>
<td>Senior Municipality Official</td>
<td>Kilis Municipality</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemal</td>
<td>Senior Municipality Official</td>
<td>Kilis Municipality</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emre</td>
<td>Senior Municipality Official</td>
<td>Kilis Municipality</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakan</td>
<td>Senior Municipality Official</td>
<td>Kilis Municipality</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furkan</td>
<td>Field Officer</td>
<td>Municipality Company</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezgi</td>
<td>Field Officer</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serdar</td>
<td>Field Officer</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nidal</td>
<td>Field Officer</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burak</td>
<td>Project Expert</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frieda</td>
<td>Project Expert</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feryal</td>
<td>Project Expert</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engin</td>
<td>Project Expert</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerim</td>
<td>Project Expert</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Project Expert</td>
<td>Humanitarian Organization</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4. The Structure of the Thesis

This study consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, offering an overview of the research interest, presenting research questions, introducing research methodology, and providing brief information about the structure of the study. In the following chapter, Chapter 2, conceptual and contextual framework of the study is presented. The conceptual framework introduces key concepts aligned with the discussions in academic literature. These concepts include migration governance, policy coordination, stakeholders, and social cohesion. The contextual framework focuses on the course of emergence of social cohesion as a policy agenda in post-2011 Türkiye context, urban aspect of migration with reference to the role of municipalities in migration governance, and an overview of the legal and administrative framework. Chapter 3 focuses on the findings of the field study. In this chapter, the impact of the migration to Kilis is presented based on the interviews held with research participants and studies conducted on Kilis. Following this, historical development of migration governance in Kilis is discussed with a specific focus on the course of interactions between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. Following this, the stakeholder landscape is introduced to show the main stakeholders of migration governance in Kilis. In this landscape, the organizational structures and the interests of Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations, which constitute the sample stakeholders of the study, are introduced. After this, significance of social cohesion in policy documents, project activities, and in the perceptions of the research participants are critically examined. Lastly, the policy coordination process is revealed based on the findings from the interviews with critical evaluation. Chapter 4 is the conclusion of the study. The study is concluded with a critical review of the findings and policy recommendations, limitations and further research topics.
CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter constitutes the conceptual and contextual framework of this thesis. Conceptual framework presents key concepts to guide the study as the theoretical foundation: migration governance, policy coordination, stakeholders, and social cohesion. This thesis, which includes criticism of neoliberalism, associates these concepts with neoliberal vocabulary and positions them as the basic concepts of the migration phenomenon in Türkiye after 2011.

The concept of social cohesion has become a popular policy discourse in Türkiye in the post-2011 period, prominently mentioned in 2016 and later, and has become one of the agenda topics of institutionalization and public policy processes in Türkiye. As the management form of neoliberalism, migration governance is considered as the whole of multi-level dynamic and complex processes in which stakeholders with many structures and interests produce and execute policies, while interacting, conflicting, or compromising with each other. Policy coordination is considered a component of the policy implementation phase in the public policy process and is related to migration governance.

This study defines the municipality and humanitarian organizations in Kilis as stakeholders acting according to their discretion and interests, and this concept is considered useful in analyzing the fragility, pragmatism, problems, and good practices in coordination processes at the local level. In this chapter, these concepts are discussed with reference to academic literature.

Following the conceptual framework of the thesis, contextual framework is introduced in the chapter. The contextual framework focuses on the course of emergence of social cohesion as a policy agenda in post-2011 Türkiye context, urban
aspect of migration with reference to the role of municipalities in migration governance, and an overview of the legal and administrative framework. In this context, particular attention is given to the social cohesion phenomenon in migration governance from the central level to the local level.

2.1. Governance

Governance has begun to be implemented with neoliberalism, especially in the West, Türkiye, and the world in general. Many nation states left their welfare policies but turned to neoliberal forms of government as a reaction against the Keynesian form of interventionist political economy due to the economic crisis in 1970s. The new policy package and policy-making model sharply limit the government’s intervention in the economy, restrict public expenditures by abandoning welfare policies, and significantly undermine the decision-making and implementation capabilities of the public bureaucracy (Bayırbağ, 2013). Describing its impact as “creative destruction”, David Harvey discusses four core elements of neoliberalism: privatization, financialization, management and manipulation of crises, and state redistributions (2006, pp. 151-156). The rise of neoliberalism has also brought a new vocabulary for policy debates. According to Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, it is the vocabulary of “NewLiberalSpeak”


Thus governance, one of the key concepts of neoliberalism, has been widely used since 1980. Moreover, the emergence of governance is a result of the adoption of the new public management approach, which replaced the conventional public administration model through a transformation influenced by neoliberalism. Governance simply refers to the process of governing. It is a process that includes multi-actor and interactive relationships, joint management and regulation, and public-private partnership approach, instead of relations determined unilaterally by
classical management structures (Parlak, 2021, p. 292). It refers to the multitude of actors as policymakers and implementers at various levels of networks formed by formal and informal connections (Bevir 2012; Penninx & Garces-Mascarenas, 2016). Multilevel governance literature links this multiplicity of levels and actors to the diffusion of power across many levels and types of government, and shared responsibility for policy outcomes between governmental, quasi-governmental and non-governmental actors (Cairney et al., 2019, p. 7). This diffusion of power, on the other hand, should not be considered as a purely linear pathway in the real-world context. Instead, it is a governance “ecology” that is alive and has a complex feature to the extent that it is greater than the sum of its parts. This dynamic system implies new distributions of power, in which state actors are increasingly replaced by civilian, professional players (Rose, 1999) or in other terms, stakeholders.

While governance addresses the collapse of the welfare state in the neoliberal era, it does not necessarily refer to an end in the state’s political intervention, but rather that it has led to the production of new management strategies where various actors including civil society organizations step in to solve problems linked with the weakening of the welfare state (Can, 2007, p. 94). In this sense, governance signifies “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed” (Rhodes, 1996, pp. 652–653).

Stoker (1998) presents five propositions and associated dilemmas of governance that could be considered by the practitioners and academia while analyzing the prospect of governance failure.

- Governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government.
- Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.
- Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action.
- Governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors.
- Governance recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide (p. 18).
Each proposition is associated with a certain dilemma or critical issue:

- There is a divorce between the complex reality of decision-making associated with governance and the normative codes used to explain and justify government.
- The blurring of responsibilities can lead to blame avoidance or scapegoating.
- Power dependence exacerbates the problem of unintended consequences for government.
- The emergence of self-governing networks raises difficulties over accountability.
- Even where governments operate in a flexible way to steer collective action governance failure may occur (p. 19).

By field or subject, we see that many social, political, and economic phenomena are discussed as ‘governance’ issues. Likewise, the term governance is widely used in the context of managing social changes, including human mobilities, as explored in this thesis. It is proposed as a governing model to coordinate and regulate migration processes through policies and interactions of various stakeholders at multi-level ecology. While studies on migration governance are discussed mostly at national and global levels in the literature (Müller-Funk et al, 2020 & 2023; Haas et al., 2015), academic interest to the local situation of governance is also on the rise (Jorgensen 2012; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017; Caponio and Borkert, 2010; Hackett, 2017, Hoekstra et al., 2017; Goble et al., 2017; Bhusal and Sunam, 2023; Missbach, Adiputera, and Prabandari 2018; Kaya, 2023) that emphasizes the importance of the local and subnational levels for the study of migration governance because it is at these levels that policies are implemented and enforced.

The term migration in this study essentially refers to the forced mode of migration as the migratory movement observed from Syria to Türkiye, with a particular emphasis on Kilis, was fundamentally driven by the exigencies of the ongoing war in the area. According to the International Organization for Migration, forced migration is “a migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion” (IOM Glossary on Migration, 2019). The term forced...
migration “includes not only refugees and asylum seekers, but anyone forced to leave their homes by violence, persecution, development projects, natural disasters or human-made catastrophes” (Castles, 2006, p. 8). In forced migration, the extent and effect of the force causing the migratory movement is crucial and distinguishes forced migrants—who may be termed “refugee,” “trafficked person,” “stateless person,” “asylum seeker,” or “internally displaced persons” (IDPs)—from other migrants such as economic migrants.

This study acknowledges the multi-level nature of governance and focuses on its local situation. In this respect, the study argues that migration is a local governance issue. Just as migration is a multi-scale and complex phenomenon in terms of its causes and consequences, its governing also involves multi-scale, multi-stakeholder, and complex processes. The analysis of this complexity at the local level allows for the capture of an instantaneous snapshot from the point where it is most acutely experienced. The term ‘local’ here refers to spatial conditions. Unlike national or even international contexts, the local dimension usually describes the spatial level closest to people. Within the scope of this study, what is meant by ‘local’ is essentially urban. This research focuses on the migration governance in Kilis, an urban context, with ‘a closer proximity’. There is a strategic motivation behind the study’s focus on the urban area. Cities are the spaces where the problems come out and are the potential hubs for recovery and solutions. The significance of urban focus in migration research is also related to the reality that migration is predominantly an urban issue.

2.2. Policy Coordination

The second key concept of this research is policy coordination because it links different stakeholders having different policies with each other and gives insights about the complexity occurring in these processes. To understand what policy coordination means within the scope of this study, it is useful to define policy and coordination with simple terms. In a general sense, policy refers to a plan of action decided by a public authority. A public policy is a projected program of goals, values, and practices (Lasswell & Kaplan, 1970). Public policy essentially includes a design challenge, often centered on enhancing a single program. While this narrow focus
allows designers to address specific program needs and minimize other factors, it can result in overly restricted programs. On the other hand, one important premise for policy design should be that the success of any program relies on the interaction with other programs (Peters, 2015). This issue becomes a critical issue when it comes to considering the multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance discourse. In addition to the state that has been shrinking in terms of service delivery and coverage, different actors appear as policymakers and policy implementers in migration governance. Humanitarian organizations also take their places as stakeholders in the governance ecology with their varying specializations and sizes. This study regards these stakeholders as public authorities because, in the most general sense, they formulate their policies and practices with the public interest argument and address social problems in their services.

Simply, coordination is the extent to which organizations attempt to ensure that their activities consider those of other organizations (Hall et al. 1976, p. 459). In other words, coordination refers to the process in which the decisions made by one program or organization are considered in relation to those of others to avoid conflicts and redundancies (Peters, 2015). A set of decisions is coordinated if adjustments have been made in it such that the adverse consequences of any one decision for other decisions in the set are to a degree and in some frequency avoided, reduced, counterbalanced, or outweighed. (Lindblom 1965, p. 154). Fritz Scharpf (1994) has coined this approach as “negative coordination”. “Positive coordination”, however, goes beyond conflict avoidance; it involves seeking cooperative solutions for the benefit of all organizations and their clients. Coordination issues are not solely conflicts; they can also result from program redundancy or gaps in coverage due to a lack of coordination (Peters, 2015).

Within the scope of this study, policy coordination, in a critical sense, refers to the management of conflicts and consensus in the interface between local governments (Kilis Municipality) and humanitarian organizations (NGOs and UN agencies) with specific focus on the coordination processes in social cohesion-oriented projects. Policy implementation of these stakeholders through projects is a fundamental tool of neoliberal migration governance and, in the context of this study, post-2011
migration governance in Türkiye. Examining coordination through projects does not exclude other dynamics of migration governance. Because project management is embedded in migration governance. In this respect, this study considers the interactions between stakeholders in the project processes as a reflection of the totality of migration and its governance, with its causes and results.

When attempting to study policy coordination, the first action for a researcher is to produce an institutional policy map regarding the relevant policy problem/area (Bayırbağ 2013). This map should present different actors that have a say at different scales of the policy process. This contextual map is also helpful for this study to introduce migration governance ecology. Figure 1 is an example network map as suggested by the author. This thesis focuses on the local level and mainly on the policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. On the other hand, remembering the multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder nature of governance, it is envisaged that stakeholders at other scales also have an impact on the coordination process. Referring to the relationships between stakeholders, this study considers Kilis Municipality, and humanitarian organizations as stakeholders of each other. The reason for using this concept stems from the fact that institutional affiliation in both policy and practical processes in migration context is based on this conceptualization. In the next section, the theoretical introduction of the term stakeholder will be made and how it is used in this study will be explained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Civil society</th>
<th>Public+Civil society</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Public+Market</th>
<th>Market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supranational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-local</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Policy Network Map


Public policy refers to a continuous process including the chains of decisions, transformations, actions, and stages (Bayırbağ, 2013). Within the vast expanse of
scholarly literature dedicated to policy analysis, numerous esteemed scholars have posited intricate analytical cycles that prominently position the government as the rational decision-maker, and the process is partitioned into certain stages (Jenkins, 1993; Pal, 2010; Dye, 2013). However, the policy process, far from a linear and deterministic endeavor, emerges as a dynamic and intricate phenomenon where concurrent decisions are made, and actions are taken on multiple fronts. In acknowledgment of this inherent complexity and the interdependence of various elements, an alternative analytical lens comes into focus – the “policy network” analysis. Pioneered by scholars like Sabatier (1991) and Rhodes (2009), this approach shifts the spotlight towards the interconnected relationships and collaborations among diverse actors involved in the policy process. The policy network perspective provides a holistic view that recognizes the intricate web of interactions, negotiations, and influence-sharing among governmental bodies, interest groups, and other stakeholders. Building on the network perspective, Bayırbağ proposes a policy process chart as a guide for the empirical studies that aims to analyze public policy processes. As can be seen through Figure 2 that include nine interrelated policy stages to be considered in policy process analysis:

- Institutional site of policy/agenda formulation (black box),
- Policy package/document,
- Translation of the policy package into legal documents and rules sets,
- Policy implementation process,
- Policy outputs,
- Policy outcomes/impacts,
- (New) problems,
- Policy mobilization,
- Policy agenda/demand filtration (2013, p. 16).

It is not within the scope of this study to analyze all the processes described in the figure. This study will utilize from this chart to examine policy coordination processes between stakeholders at policy implementation phase considering the fact that all stages in the policy process operate simultaneously and in interaction with each other in the policy implementation process (Bayırbağ, 2013).
With the neoliberal transformation in public management and growing extent of governance discourse, the public policy process has become more focused on pragmatism, leading to a blurred line between those who execute policies and those who make decisions. Lipsky’s (1980) characterization of the bureaucrat/implementer in the field, which theorizes the gap between policy and practice, indicates that the essence of the issue is also the implementation phase of public policy and the policy practitioners. According to him, practitioners on the ground, “street level bureaucrats”, are the ones who can control which higher-scale policy decisions will or will not be implemented, using the advantage of being directly in the field and their professional experience and expertise. Inspired by Lipsky’s conceptualization but slightly differentiating it, bureaucrats in this study are defined as not just those at the “street level” but also as active policy participants who have an influence on decision-making processes and coordination among stakeholders. These individuals are people working in Kilis Municipality and humanitarian aid organizations, and

---

**Figure 2. Policy Process Chart**

---

they include people who provide services directly to people in the field, as well as those who are involved in its coordination and management.

This study examines inter-organizational coordination in this process. Therefore, this study focuses on the policy coordination in the migration governance between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations.

2.3. Who are the stakeholders?

The third concept to be discussed within the framework of this chapter is stakeholder. This is a critical concept as it defines different actors as policymakers and implementers depending on their discretion and interests in policy coordination processes and broader migration governance ecology. We can say that stakeholders have become one of the keywords in the migration governance and policy coordination (Rother & Steinhilper, 2019; Keith Mark, 2020; Kaya, 2023; Gülay, 2018; Taruri et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2022; Branka, 2018). The various concepts encompassing stakeholder identification, stakeholder analysis, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, stakeholder participation, and stakeholder communications collectively refer to the significance of various actors as “stakeholders” in migration governance, and more specifically, in the context of project management.

The origin of the stakeholder concept lies in the business administration literature (Freeman, 1984), and may be traced back to Adam Smith (1790) and his “The Theory of Moral Sentiments”. In fact, the new public management that emerged with the transformation in public administration is “free market oriented” in the 1970s and thus it is typical for the stakeholder theory to be taken from business administration and used in public administration. The contemporary interpretation of the concept was introduced by the Stanford Research Institute, to refer to all entities crucial for the survival of an organization (Bonafous & Rendtorff 2016, p. 1). The intention was to broaden the concept to the extent that organization should prioritize its responsiveness not only to shareholders that are limited to legal owners of shares of the share capital of a public or private corporation but to a broader range of stakeholders (Jongbloed et al., 2008).
Stakeholder theory is a standpoint of neoliberalism that emphasizes the interconnection between a business and its customers, suppliers, employees, investors, communities, and others who have a stake and interest in an organization or project. In other words, stakeholder theory focuses on the relationship between company and stakeholders as its the main issue. The main purpose of stakeholder theory is to examine the decisions and results taken in managing stakeholder relationships (Adıgüzel, 2006, p. 3). Therefore, according to stakeholder theory, there is a focal emphasis on active management of the business environment, relationships, and the promotion of shared interests as key principles guiding organizational practices and strategies (Freeman & McVea, 2005).

The term stakeholder was popularized by Edward Freeman in the 1980s in the field of business and management studies. According to Freeman, stakeholders are “any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives” (1984, p. 46). According to the approach, a firm, organization, or group should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders.

The core assumptions of stakeholder theory are presented below:

- Organizations engage in relationships with many groups that either influence or are influenced by them.
- The theory focuses on these relationships in terms of processes and results for the company [in this study, “municipality”] and the stakeholder.
- The interests of all legitimate stakeholders are of intrinsic value and no single set of interests prevails over all others.
- The theory focuses on managerial decision making.
- The theory identifies how stakeholders seek to influence organizational decision-making processes, so they become consistent with their needs and priorities.
- As regards the organizations themselves, they should strive to understand, reconcile and balance the various participant interests (Wagner Mainardes et al., 2012, p. 1863).

In the literature, there is a broad consensus regarding the types of entities that can be considered stakeholders. Individuals, groups, neighborhoods, organizations,
institutions, societies, and even the natural environment are typically regarded as entities eligible to be recognized as actual or potential stakeholders. It is related to the view taken about the existence and nature of the stake that presents an area of argument, because it is the concept “stake” that determines “what counts” (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 856).

The terms “stake” and “interest” are intertwined in stakeholder theory. “Stake” corresponds to a vested interest or claim of individual, groups or entities, and “interest” refers to their needs, concerns, motivations, expectations, or objectives in an organization or project. In this sense, interests can be diverse and in different forms such as financial gain, ethical considerations, social responsibility, environmental concern, and legal compliance (Freeman, 1984). The terms stake and interest will be used in this study interchangeably.

The positioning of stakeholders may vary in accordance with objective, role, potential and impact of an organization or project. Stakeholder theory does not necessarily argue that all stakeholders are equal in terms of influence, power, or significance. Rather, it acknowledges that the extent of stakeholders’ impact as well as their engagement with may differ. Proposing the concept of “stakeholder salience”, Mitchell et al. (1997) also highlights that stakeholders can be categorized based on their attributes, such as power, legitimacy, and urgency, which determine their relative importance to an organization’s operations and decisions.

While the stakeholder theory mainly focuses on the corporate ethics and interests in relations between the subject company and its defined stakeholders, in this study, the concept of stakeholders refers to the institutional actors of migration governance, and specifically Kilis Municipality and NGOs, and UN agencies, in short, humanitarian organizations.

Kilis Municipality is considered as the main actor embedded in the locality, and humanitarian organizations are the stakeholders engaged in interactions with the municipality for a variety of interests. To express it somewhat metaphorically, the fixed point of the compass is the municipality, while humanitarian organizations are
the lines that emerge around the municipality based on the level of relationships as the compass moves. These actors engage in policy coordination with each other through social cohesion-oriented projects. These actors are stakeholders of each other in line with their relative interests in migration governance and in projects.

NGOs and UN organizations are collectively referred to as humanitarian organizations in this study and are stakeholders of the municipality. The main reason to call these organizations in the same category is that their local focus refers to providing humanitarian responses to crises. The second reason is to protect the anonymity of research participants. They are the stakeholders of Kilis Municipality that is a local constant actor in Kilis. In this context, the focus of the study is the coordination process between the municipality and humanitarian organizations. However, as it will be discussed in the next chapters, the study also reveals some findings related to the coordination gaps within humanitarian organizations and public institutions that have impact on the policy coordination and migration governance in Kilis.

Coordination between NGOs and UN agencies, the dynamics of migration governance and actors (e.g., regulations of the Presidency of Migration Management) will be addressed if it is identified that these influence the coordination of municipalities and humanitarian organizations. The determination of this relies on the contextual framework and field research.

As stated above, the concept of stakeholder refers to municipalities and humanitarian organizations at the institutional level. It should be emphasized that this study does not exclude the active role of individuals in migration governance by using the concept at the institutional level. As explained in the methodology section in the introduction chapter, one of the primary sources of the study is interviews. Research participants are people who work in various positions in Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations, make decisions and are affected by decisions and inactions. These individuals are active participants in intra- and inter-organizational bureaucracy. In this context, these people constitute the bureaucrats of the study. The concept of bureaucrat here is an umbrella concept that does not refer to people
working in government institutions in its classical sense but to people working in municipalities and humanitarian organizations from field level to management levels who have influence on policy coordination processes from diverse aspects.

2.4. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is not a recent phenomenon, notion, or ‘problem’. Indeed, it has its origins in a lengthy tradition of discussions dating back to the times of individuals living in communities. Both early and contemporary discussions on social cohesion emerged, and they were revisited depending on the conjunctures of era, paradigm shifts, and major changes in demographic, economic, political and other aspects of social systems. Discussions on social changes are quite extensive in the literature. The phenomena are discussed with many conceptualizations. In migration context, academic and policy efforts referring to the question of how to sustain society propose various concepts, such as assimilation, multiculturalism, integration and, in recent years, social cohesion. Social cohesion is the last concept to be introduced in this chapter.

Unlike the precision often associated with formal sciences, social sciences grapple with the complexities of human behavior, culture, and society, making it challenging to encapsulate concepts within rigid boundaries. The fluid nature of social phenomena necessitates an acknowledgment of diverse perspectives and interpretations, allowing for a nuanced understanding of concepts that may vary across contexts and disciplines. Concepts such as social cohesion may be subject to varying interpretations based on cultural, historical, and contextual factors. From this perspective, it can be argued that social cohesion has been a “catchword” and popular concept in migration governance. It has been an expected outcome or the name of a project activity, but the meaning of the concept has remained relative and controversial.

The etymological origin of social cohesion comes from the Latin ‘cohaes-’, meaning cleaved together, from the verb ‘cohaerere’ (cohere) on the pattern of ‘adhesion’ (Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). The meaning of the
word is the action or fact of forming a united whole. At first sensation, it evokes a physical action of sticking together particles of the same substance. This physics-oriented description can give some ideas about the core of its meaning, but it refers to complexity when it is used with its adjective, “social”.

There are mainly two discourses of social cohesion in the literature: academic discourse and policy discourse (Chan et al., 2006). Academic discourse emphasizes the conceptual and analytical grasp of social cohesion. Various academic disciplines, especially political science, sociology, and social psychology, have a role in the development of intellectual discussions of the concept (Lockwood, 1992; Gough & Olofsson, 1999; Bollen & Hoyle, 1990; Dickes & Valentova 2012; Etzioni, 1995; Hulse & Stone 2007; Janmaat 2011; Putnam, 2000; Paxton 2002; Rajulton et al., 2007). On the other hand, the policy discourse, as its name signifies, puts forward social cohesion in policymaking aimed at solving social problems. It can be used as a “catchword” to incorporate “the most pressing social issues of the day: unemployment, poverty, discrimination, exclusion, disenchantment with politics, together with any problems that a policymaker sees fit.” (Chan et al., 2006, p. 288). The policy discourse has been increasingly influential in recent years due to increasing focus of policymakers and the more policy-oriented analysts on the subject (Beauvais and Jenson, 2002; Bernard, 1999; Jenson, 1998; Janmaat, 2011; Council of Europe, 1998 & 2005; European Committee for Social Cohesion 2004). This discourse is largely related to policymakers and policy-oriented analysts in the United States, Canada, and Europe. In this sense, policy-oriented discourse is predominantly Euro-centric. These two discourses of social cohesion phenomenon are not entirely separate from each other. They have influenced each other in locating themselves to their contexts.

Berger (1998) and Gough and Olofsson’s (1999) works on social cohesion are one of the leading academic debates. One key feature of their studies is that social cohesion is often analyzed in terms of the broader questions of social integration, stability and disintegration. Berger emphasized “normative conflicts” (for example, ethnic conflicts and secessionist movements) in modern societies, as well as the potential institutional arrangements that may mediate these conflicts. Gough and Olofsson in
their scholarly endeavors, concentrated on elucidating the dynamics of policy by specifically addressing how to “link the themes of social integration and social exclusion” (Gough and Olofsson, 1999, p. 1). These studies are crucial sources within the social cohesion literature, and significant on their own merits. On the other hand, it is important to note that they offer limited perspective on how to define and operationalize social cohesion, due to their concentration on systemic analysis and exploration of somewhat abstract questions (Chan et al., 2006, p. 275).

Lockwood (1999) received considerable attention in literature, and he is an exception in this trend by providing an explicit definition for social cohesion. Lockwood put emphasis on a distinction between social integration (relationships between individuals or groups) and system integration (relationships between functional parts of a society). In his approach, “social cohesion” and “civic integration” (institutional order at the macro-societal level), correspond to two levels of social integration, which concern the “orderly or conflictual relationships between actors [in society]” (Lockwood, 1992, quoted in Gough and Olofsson, 1999, p. 5). In his theoretical framework, Lockwood uses “social cohesion” as one end of two extremes. Social cohesion is a state of strong primary networks at the communal level. “Social dissolution” is the opposite of social cohesion. According to Chan et al. (2006), Lockwood’s approach is important and insightful to the extent that it provides a framework for social cohesion. However, they find his approach “primarily negative, or on the so-called societal pathologies. This is evident in his set of measures of social cohesion (or social dissolution), which includes such items as the absence or presence of crime, urban riots, and family disorganization”. At the same time his approach is “legitimate” and can be utilized as a useful “early warning mechanism” against potential social disorders (Chan et al. 2006, p. 276).

The social capital approach has gained popularity in social cohesion literature from the 1980s and onwards (Bourdieu 1986; Putnam 2000; Paxton 2002; Coleman 1988). Social capital simply refers to “the benefits derived from being social” (Claridge, 2014). According to Bourdieu, social capital is inherently linked to the reproduction of class, status, and power relations. In society, while some individuals enjoy access to social capital by virtue of social stratification, others do not. Social capital has
been categorized into three types by some scholars: bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Gittell and Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 1998). These categories of social capital have also been referred to as its dimensions (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000), functions (Gilbert et al., 2013), and forms (Schuller, 2007), all of which are synonyms for the same understanding. Bonding social capital refers to inward-looking relationships “within” a group or community characterized by high levels of similarity in specific areas (Putnam, 2000). It exists between “people like us” who are who typically have strong close relationships. Examples include family members, close friends, and neighbors.

While academic debate has been ongoing, from the 1990s onwards, social cohesion has been a prominent subject of policy-oriented approaches, with scholars and policymakers grappling with the multifaceted dimensions of this concept. Similar to the academic debate, there is a lack of consensus on the concept of social cohesion in policy domain. Some relate this to the nature of the policy discourse that is often politicized and driven by the concerns of agents from policy fields (Schiefer & Noll, 2017, p. 580). According to Paul Bernard, social cohesion is a “quasi-concept, that is, one of those hybrid mental constructions that politics proposes to us more and more often in order to simultaneously detect possible consensuses on a reading of reality, and to forge them” (1999, p. 2). Additionally, Bernard claims that the ambiguity of such a hybrid construction is what both makes it adaptive to many contexts and makes it challenging to define precisely what the construct means. On the other hand, despite lack of consensus on a unique definition for social cohesion, it draws increasing attention of scholars and policymakers as a tool to monitor social progress and adapt policies to ongoing societal changes (Schiefer & Noll, 2017, p. 580).

Lack of a consensus on the definition of social cohesion triggered policy-oriented researchers to develop conceptual framework focusing on its essentials. Jane Jenson (1998) proposed five dimensions of social cohesion that are belonging/isolation (i.e., shared values, collective identities in the social entity), economic inclusion/exclusion (e.g., in the labor market), participation/non-involvement in public affairs, recognition/rejection of diversity and pluralism, and the degree of
legitimacy/illegitimacy of societal institutions. Her colleague, Bernard (1999) further developed Jenson’s approach based on two facets. The first facet is to categorize the dimensions under three domains (economic, political, or socio-cultural). The second facet is to categorize these dimensions according to the type of social involvement (attitudinal or behavioral). Chan et al. built their study on a criticism of the academia and policy-oriented studies. They define social cohesion as,

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

Some recent studies integrate both Bernard and Chan et al.’s frameworks (Acket et al., 2011; Dickes and Valentova, 2012; Dickes et al., 2010), introducing four main dimensions of social cohesion: legitimacy versus illegitimacy (i.e., institutional trust), acceptance versus rejection (i.e., solidarity, and concern for the common good), political participation, and socio-cultural participation (Dickes and Valentova 2012). Lastly, the Joint Secretariat of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defined social cohesion as “the absence of latent conflict whether caused by racial, economic or political reasons, among others; and the presence of strong social bonds, as noted by the existence of trust, reciprocity, associations crosscutting social divisions and the presence of institutions of conflict management” (2015, p. 13).

All in all, there is no universally agreed conceptual framework to define social change. With the increasing number of people on the move today in the world, different actors including governments and international organizations have developed policies and approaches to regulate migratory movements from defining legal frameworks to proposing living conditions of newcomers, and the extent of their inclusion to social life. Social cohesion as a concept has already taken its place in many policy documents in various forms and programs.

The unique complexity of migration governance is the diversity of policies, actors, practices, and their effects. This situation manifests itself especially in the debate on social cohesion, especially in discussions about social changes in the context of
forced migration. This study recognizes this complexity from the beginning and it does not propose a definition of social cohesion. Rather, it examines the extent that it is considered as a policy agenda, and how it is practiced and perceived by the stakeholders at local level. Before delving directly into the local level, the contextual framework will be discussed as the secondary essential part of this chapter. This contextual framework will explain the emergence of social cohesion as a policy issue in Türkiye after 2011 and its evolution to today. The local level is a critical layer of this contextual framework, although it has its own dynamics within it.

2.5. Social Cohesion as a Policy Agenda in the Post-2011 Türkiye Context

According to Castles (2010, p. 1570), “forced migration research is often quite separate from other areas of migration studies and has two distinct prongs: asylum and refugees in the North, and humanitarian issues in the South”. Nonetheless, what Türkiye experienced from 2011 onwards is not a situation that could be described simply with this perspective. Rather, it represents a striking example emphasizing the complexity of migration patterns (Özçürümez & Hoxha, 2020, p. 9). Türkiye is currently hosting a large refugee population in such an atmosphere, while a protracted crisis at its border has been ongoing since 2011, there have been intensifying debates on return options, citizenship, integration, social cohesion and so on. In such a complex, multi-stakeholder, fragile and dynamic atmosphere, it may seem desperate to study social cohesion, and it is not an easy task. In addition, there is a general ambiguity regarding the presence of Syrians in Türkiye. However, as reflected by Bernard,

It would be very risky to turn our backs on this concept, which is not merely a cover for growing inequalities but can open vistas of important debates. Instead, we must grasp it . . . critique it and push it to its fullest logical extent, show that it necessarily maintains strong links to the principles of equality and social justice (1999, p. 24).

According to a study by Dauş and Sert (2021), the situation regarding the presence of Syrians in Türkiye is marked by a lack of clarity and uncertainty. Consequently, it is important to delve deeper into how state actors, NGOs perceive and define their enduring strategies concerning Syrians. As a result, the influx of Syrian refugees into
Türkiye has ushered in a new era of migration governance, and social cohesion as a policy problem remains in the middle of the governance environment.

It should be noted that this thesis does not aim to praise social cohesion. Rather, it tries to identify the feasibility of it in a country that has experienced “massive (large size of refugee population continuing to stay), acute (movement across borders intensified within the years 2014–15 leading to a crisis situation) and protracted (prolonged duration of stay in the receiving country) forced migration flows” (Özçürümez & Hoxha, 2020, p. 2).

2.5.1. The Course of Migration Governance and Social Cohesion

In the last two decades, Türkiye has experienced new forms of migration flows and its governance since the 2000s. From the 2000s onwards, Türkiye is recognized as a “migration transition” country - a transformation from mainly being a country of emigration to a country of immigration (İçduygu & Aksel, 2013). The neoliberal form of political economy that included liberal market economy and informality, globalization, the EU accession process and political liberalization efforts including migration policy reforms can be considered as the major phenomena behind this transformation in Türkiye (İçduygu & Aksel, 2013; Castles & Miller, 2008; Stalker, 2000; İçduygu & Keyman, 2000).

Since 2011, however, Türkiye is not only a migration transition country but the hosting country with a large refugee population because of the entry of the massive migration flow from Syria. The post-2011 refers to the period when migration has become an issue to govern – ‘governance problem’ with the involvement of the government with regulatory measures and engagement of various stakeholders in the process. It may not be the correct approach to perceive this breaking point as merely inward-looking (national) and disconnected from history. Although the EU accession process was shelved, policymaking and reforms continued in the field of migration, especially after 2011. In the literature, this is described as the European Union’s (EU) “externalization” strategy in the literature. It simply refers to extending EU rules beyond EU borders (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009; Qadim, 2014). In the context of migration governance, externalization is employed to refer to the transfer
of border management to third countries and the reconfiguring of migration management beyond the borders of the destination states (Üstübici, 2019, p. 2).

Migration governance in Türkiye was influenced not only by the EU regulations but also the rising initiatives of global and intergovernmental organizations like UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Üstübici, 2019, p. 14). Going back to earlier years, a bilateral agreement was signed in 1995, and Türkiye became a member of the IOM in 2004, demonstrating its commitment to an EU-style migration management approach (Fine, 2018). In 2008, in coordination with several EU countries, UNHCR, and IOM, the Migration and Asylum Bureau and the Bureau for Border Management were established under the Ministry of Interior (MoI). The main mission of the Migration and Asylum Bureau was to draft the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP). Establishment of these two structures under MoI can be considered as a reflection of institutionalization of migration bureaucracy and “technocratic” modes of migration management (Üstübici, 2019, p. 14).

Social cohesion which is more often referred to as “harmonization” in the legislative framework, became a prominent policy area after the EU – Türkiye Statement in 2016, and it can be considered one of the most significant policy results of the multi-level governance ecology. To understand the emergence of social cohesion as a policy in the post-2011 era, it is necessary to look at the changing and transforming course of the context in the last decade. Özçuürüz and İçduygu (2020) present an easy-reading timeline for the evolution of migration governance from 2011 to 2019 in Türkiye. Authors refer to the concepts of social cohesion and social integration simultaneously and in a complementary manner in their studies. Essentially, they argue that social cohesion and social integration essentially represent a “social model” and “policy model” as remedy for resolving incompatibility, violence, tension, and hostility between social groups. They claim that the process from 2011 to 2019 evolved into an “interactional social cohesion and social integration governance model” in Türkiye. The study applies this model while examining the governance “ecosystems” in four key areas: work, education, health and shelter.

As it is seen in Figure 3, Türkiye experience has been divided into three periods. The first period (2011 – 2013), focused on the protection of those who migrated to
Türkiye, and providing humanitarian emergency response/lifesaving assistance to these “guests”. The second period (2013 – 2016) is a transition period from protection towards interactional social cohesion and social integration. The third period (2016 – 2019), is a period that is considered as the beginning of interactional social cohesion and social integration.

![Periodization of Paradigm Shift in Migration Governance](image)

**Figure 3.** Periodization of Paradigm Shift in Migration Governance

*Note.* The first period is between 2011 and 2013, and the operational principle is protection. The second period is between 2013 and 2016, which refers to a transition period from a humanitarian life support-oriented approach to interactional social integration. The third period starts from 2016 to present, and operational principle is social cohesion. From *Zorunlu Göç Deneyimi ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme* (p. 46), by S. Özçürümez and A. İçduyuğ, 2020, Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları. Copyright 2020 by Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İktisadi İşletmesi.

The periodization presented by the authors does not fully cover the scope of the study. First, the scope of the authors’ study is until 2019, which corresponds to four years ago. There have been many developments that have had implications to migration governance and policy coordination from 2011 to 2023. These include but not limited to the economic crisis that deepened in 2018 and continues, the COVID-19 pandemic, voluntary return discourse, military operations, politicization of migration governance with the increasing intervention of the politics to the public administration, anti-refugee political propaganda as seen in the general elections in May 2023, and earthquakes in February 2023.
In addition, the authors’ periodization may not be found sufficient to track continuities and breaks at local level. For example, today, there have been ongoing projects carried out locally to meet basic needs of communities. It can be said that there is increasing uncertainty about the relevance of temporary protection status over the years. In this sense, there have been persistent concerns regarding access to rights. On the other hand, it is useful for presenting how the process has evolved, and framing the major breaking points and paradigm shifts at macro level. In this sense, the authors’ periodization is considered as a road map in terms of introducing the course of migration governance, and emergence of social cohesion as a policy discourse at national level in this thesis study.

The period between 2011 and 2013 indicates the initial years of the war and migration flow. The prevalent approach was a state of emergency. On 19 February 2011, the Disaster and Emergency Management Centers Regulation entered into force, and the authority was given to the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı, hereafter AFAD) to manage emergency coordination and take central role in the establishment of the camps and provision of emergency services. In this sense, the newcomers’ needs such as health, nutrition and shelter were managed under the AFAD administration. Syrians who arrived in Türkiye between 2011 and 2013 were settled into the camps. When the number of arrivals started to exceed the capacity of the camps, people started to seek shelter by their own means outside of the camps which resulted in the influx of newcomers to urban areas in the following years.

NGOs and UN agencies carried out humanitarian aid programs to respond to emerging needs in coordination with the AFAD. Interactions between these actors were fragmented and “random” (Özçürümez & İçduygı, 2020). It is important to note that the number of registered international NGOs has gradually increased, especially since 2013. Local NGOs have been involved in various engagement and activities. In addition, NGOs established by Syrians have also emerged as actors of migration governance. UN organizations have shifted their focus towards migration.

2 The website of the General Directorate of Civil Society Relations lists information about international NGOs operating in Türkiye. Please see: https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/yabanci-stklara-iliskin-istatistikler
Emergency discourse and ‘the temporality of uncertainty’, the belief that once the conflict subsides, the emergency would disappear and people would return to their countries, have been decisive for the scope of activities. For instance, temporary education centers were established both in camps and urban areas. In these centers, education was provided according to the Syrian national curriculum so that children and youth could continue their education without gaps when they returned to their countries. In this period, the government adopted “open-door policy” and welcoming practices. Referring to Friese (2010), while hospitality was a “religious and ethical duty” before the emergence of the nation-state, “with the development of the state system, political decisions, legal frameworks and administrative procedures have replaced this religious background and states have become the primary actor to organize and implement reception policies” (Danış & Nazlı, 2018, p. 1).

In Türkiye case, the state and its agencies are primary actors in migration management but the religious approach towards the issue retained its dominance in the mainstream political discourse. It is important to underline here that the government has had a major role in deciding measures for Syrian refugees because it has been in power since the start of the conflict in Syria. The government approached the issue from a religious-oriented human rights perspective. Taking “religious fellowship” as reference, the notions of “ansar” (helper) and “muhajir” (emigrant) has been popular discourse of mainstream politics. At the same time, it has been constantly stated by the government that the stay of Syrians was temporary, and they were “our guests” that they would certainly go back once the war in Syria is over. While the first years focused on the discourse of the “temporary stay” and responses were provided under “emergency” or through “disaster management”, what was seen on the ground indicated that this was not a situation that would end as soon as expected. According to the statistics shared by the Presidency of Migration Management (hereafter PMM), while the number of Syrians under temporary protection status was 224,665 in 2013, it increased dramatically to 1,519,286 within a year. When those who were not registered are taken into consideration, this is supposed to be higher than these figures. The government needed an institutional and legal framework and regulate such an in-country mobility that has enlarged and spread to other parts of the country from the border cities and camps day by day.
Starting from 2013, state actors, humanitarian organizations and other parts of migration bureaucracy started to focus on institutionalization and direct their interactions and networks with a purpose to contribute to this process.

![DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY YEAR](image)

**Figure 4.** Distribution of Syrians under Temporary Protection by Year


As of 2013, migration governance acquired an institutional face with the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management – renamed as the PMM in 2021, with the entry of the Law on Foreigners, and International Protection (hereafter LFIP) into force. This process led to the establishment of migration bureaucracy under the Ministry of Interior. Before the LFIP, various state bodies were in charge of formulating and implementing migration policies (Üstübici, 2019, p. 9).

The LFIP has defined migrant and asylum categories: refugee (Article 61), conditional refugee (Article 62), and subsidiary protection (Article 63), in addition to the temporary protection category (Article 91). According to the law, a refugee is,

---

3 Please see the original law in Turkish: [https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.6458.pdf](https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.6458.pdf)

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

Türkiye has granted refugee status to individuals coming from Europe and having the conditions specified in the 1951 Convention. On the other hand, conditional refugee status applies to those who carry the conditions of the refugee definition as the result of events occurring outside European countries. Subsidiary protection applies to those who are foreigners or stateless, “who neither could be qualified as a refugee nor as a conditional refugee, shall nevertheless be granted subsidiary protection upon the status determination” (Article 63).

When it comes to the legal status of Syrians, Türkiye has adopted temporary protection. Considering the mass mobility, temporary protection is defined in the LFIP as follows:

(1) Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Türkiye in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection.

(2) The actions to be carried out for the reception of such foreigners into Türkiye; their stay in Türkiye and rights and obligations; their exit from Türkiye; measures to be taken to prevent mass influxes; cooperation and coordination among national and international institutions and organizations; determination of the duties and mandate of the central and provincial institutions and organizations shall be stipulated in a Directive to be issued by the Council of Ministers (Article 91).

This legislation and gradual bureaucratization are considered as the breaking points in the periodization of Özçürümez and İçduyuğ as visualized in Figure 2 as a transition from short-term emergency support towards social cohesion policymaking process, the second period. During this transition period, the approach that prioritized meeting the needs of people who migrated through forced migration was gradually
replaced by institutionalized migration governance. In this period, discussions on social cohesion began. The official concept used by the Turkish government is “harmonization”. According to the PMM,

Harmonization is a voluntary-based policy that aims to contribute to the socio-cultural and economic development of both the foreigner and the host society. It is not assimilationist, but rather aims to ensure that the host society adapts to immigrants and that foreigners realize their talents in all areas of life, including the economic, social, and cultural spheres (Presidency of Migration Management, n.d.).

Article 96 of the LFIP has addressed this as follows:

(1) The Directorate General may, to the extent that Turkey’s economic and financial capacity deems possible, plan for harmonization activities in order to facilitate mutual harmonization between foreigners, applicants and international protection beneficiaries and the society as well as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be independently active in all areas of social life without the assistance of third persons in Turkey or in the country to which they are resettled or in their own country. For these purposes, the Directorate General may seek the suggestions and contributions of public institutions and agencies, local governments, non-governmental organisations, universities and international organisations.

(2) Foreigners may attend courses where the basics of political structure, language, legal system, culture and history of Turkey as well as their rights and obligations are explained.

(3) The Directorate General shall promote the courses related to access to public and private goods and services, access to education and economic activities, social and cultural communications, and access to primary healthcare services and, awareness and information activities through distant learning and similar means in cooperation with public institutions and agencies and nongovernmental organisations.

As can be inferred from the article, the harmonization definition refers to an ideal social organization that is based on interactions between individuals for all aspects of life, their reciprocal transformation and it includes inter-organization coordination.

---


5 Since the original expression is adhered to in quotations and proper names, the country name, Türkiye, will be referred to as Turkey in various parts of the study.
Access to and information dissemination about public services are considered a crucial part of this process.

At the PMM level, the Directorate General of Harmonization and Communication was established, and its activities were coordinated from central to provincial levels. The legislation and institutional developments have paved the way to seek coordination with state and non-state actors from central to local levels. However, the migration governance in Türkiye has protected its centralized nature.

In 2014, the Temporary Protection Regulation\(^6\) entered into force to regulate registration and stay in Türkiye based on Article 91 of the LFIP. The regulation has enabled foreigners to access various public services in Türkiye, such as healthcare, education, employment opportunities, social assistance, interpretation services, and more, subject to specific conditions. Specific regulations were adopted for the respective services in the following years. In this sense, the legal framework was regulated to facilitate refugees’ access to the public services in Türkiye. The “harmonization” or in other words, social cohesion discourse has been prominent in the legislation as a way to integrate Syrians to the service infrastructure.

The emerging legislation and bureaucracy from national to local levels with international ties are important developments on the way to the social cohesion policy discourse in migration governance. In 2014, the European Commission decided to establish the European Union Regional Trust Fund (“Madad” Fund) through a “constitutive agreement”.\(^7\) The overall objective was,

To provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis on a regional scale, responding primarily in the first instance to the needs of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries, as well as of the communities hosting the refugees and their administrations, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery (p. 5).

The Trust Fund focused on “seven priority sectors”: basic and higher education; livelihoods; health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); protection; and social

---


cohesion. Under social cohesion sector, the emphasis has been on improving access to services, strengthening local capacities (e.g. training service providers, and communities), and local infrastructures (e.g. rehabilitation of communal spaces, and improving WASH infrastructure). Attention was paid to municipalities as well as civil society as essential actors at the local level. Therefore, a high number of actions include strengthening municipal services and infrastructure, and skills and knowledge of service providers (EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis 10th Results Report Progress Update, 2022, p. 59). Under this fund, a diverse array of projects and programs were carried out through multi-stakeholder networks to address multifaceted challenges.

While there were such changes in the international and Türkiye’s regulatory framework, the conflict in Syria continued, and it affected the lives of millions. The march of Syrian refugees to Europe in the summer of 2015 alerted several EU countries to negotiate a refugee deal with Türkiye (Yildiz & Sert, 2023, p. 150). In Figure 2, 2016 is considered as a breaking point towards social cohesion-oriented policymaking and implementation, the third period. From 2016, relations between governance stakeholders are described as “small-world working networks.” (Özçürümez & İçduygu, 2020). In 2016 and after, while there have been regulatory efforts to coordinate migration governance, interactions remained heavily dependent on network relations. Various stakeholders including NGOs and UN agencies were increasingly engaged in local level coordination by creating “small-world working networks.” As of 2016, the existence of central public actors and the emphasis on social cohesion have become evident in regulating the flow of information and data in the field of forced migration, assuming a guiding role in practices, determining policy priorities and coordination between institutions (Özçürümez & İçduygu, 2020, p. 48).

Social cohesion, as a policy, has been built on migration diplomacy, which is problematic and based mostly on a “bargaining”. On 18 March 2016, the EU and Türkiye reached an agreement (the EU – Türkiye Statement) for Syrian refugees.8

---

According to the statement, Türkiye would take necessary measures to stop irregular migration flow from Türkiye to the Greek islands. Anyone found to have arrived on the islands irregularly from Türkiye could be returned back. For every Syrian being returned to Türkiye from the Greek islands, the EU would accept one Syrian refugee who had waited in Türkiye for resettlement. In return, Türkiye would receive 6 billion euros to ameliorate the humanitarian conditions of the refugees, and Turkish nationals would be granted visa-free travel to Europe. As it can be inferred from the statement, both parties used migration diplomacy as a bargaining tool in the EU – Türkiye relations. As part of the EU response to refugee issue in Türkiye, the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT)\(^9\) was established in 2016 in order to manage funding of 6 billion euros. It focused on humanitarian assistance, education, migration management, health, municipal infrastructure, and socio-economic support.

The preparation of the social cohesion policy document started in 2014 and intensified from 2016. It has been progressed based on Article 96 of the LFIP since it was the first-ever reference to harmonization in the legislative framework, and provided the normative framework required for policymaking in this area.

The PMM has signed projects to work with international and intergovernmental organizations. These policy development efforts in migration governance constitute an important step at the national-level policymaking process on social cohesion in Türkiye. As a result of these efforts and engagement with variety of stakeholders from the national and international community, Türkiye would adopt the Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan 2018-2023 (hereafter HSDNAP) in 2018. In the plan, it has been emphasized that a participatory method was applied by taking the opinions of relevant public institutions, municipalities, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and foreigners living in our country, under the coordination of the PMM.

The mission and vision of the plan is as follows:

\(^9\) Please see the details of the EU response programme: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/turkiye/eu-support-refugees-turkiye_en
To govern all the work and transactions of migrants within the framework of our country’s historical background and national and international legislation in a way that will establish social cohesion on the basis of a holistic human rights approach and to ensure inter-institutional coordination.

To sustain social cohesion through a human-centric, transparent and rights-based migration management (2018, p. 15).

Social cohesion is defined in the document as follows:

(...) social cohesion is defined as the ability to develop a shared sense of belonging through facilitating the cultural, social, and economic inclusion of immigrants into the society in which they live; mutual recognition of differences in the framework of intercultural interactions, deliberations, and social dialogue; upholding respect and ensuring coexistence. Social cohesion generally aims at the social acceptance of immigrants and a culture of coexistence. (...) Recognition of linguistic, religious, and cultural differences of immigrants for them to participate in the social life without facing discrimination, and a healthy recognition of their identities and in short, social acceptance of diversity is important for social cohesion. In addition, perception of immigrants as useful individuals by the society is very important for social cohesion (2018, p. 12).

Overall, it is indicated in the document that it was prepared in partnership with the relevant governmental agencies and through participatory process by incorporating the views and opinions of municipalities, international organizations, the civil society actors and foreigners living in Türkiye for an effective policy for harmonization.

This change in the policy approach has been reflected in other national-level policy papers. Türkiye’s 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) outlines a policy scope to strengthen cohesion between communities through support to institutional structure in migration management and capacity, increased focus on programs for children and youth, and utilization from funding mechanisms (2019, pp. 126, 158). In 2019, Binali Yıldırım, chairperson of the Turkish parliament, stated that 2019 has been declared the “year of harmonization” and said, “No one should weed out asylum seekers from east to west, north to south. After all, it is the most natural right of people to seek a life condition in which they will live in peace and security” (Hürriyet, 2018).

The policy development efforts and coordination initiatives at national level are linked to the wider policy frameworks and mechanisms at international level of the
migration governance. In 2012\textsuperscript{10}, under the leadership of UNHCR, the Refugee Response Plan for the Syria crisis was developed to coordinate the inter-agency mechanism to address the humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, Iraq and Egypt. Due to the severe nature of the crisis and the unique problems that host countries and communities were facing, the international community established the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (hereafter 3RP) \textsuperscript{11} in 2015. Similar to the paradigm shift in Türkiye in comparison between 2011 – 2013, 2013 – 2016 and after 2016, the 3RP represents a new direction in the Syria crisis by combining humanitarian and development responses. The main argument of the new approach is that “going beyond emergency assistance, the new approach combined humanitarian and development responses to the Syria crisis into a single coherent plan in line with national plans and priorities” (An introduction to The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), n.d.). Co-led by UNHCR and UNDP, the new 3RP approach has two interconnected components as follows:

The refugee component addresses the protection and humanitarian assistance needs of refugees while the resilience component addresses the resilience, stabilization and development needs of impacted individuals, communities and institutions, aiming to strengthen the capacities of national actors (An introduction to The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), n.d.).

As a coordination mechanism and regional strategy, the key function of the 3RP is that it has brought different actors together corresponding to more than 270 partners including governments, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and other partners.

The 3RP strategy is summed up in four pillars: “protecting people, pursuing durable solutions, supporting dignified lives, enhancing national and local capacities” (3RP Syria Crisis – In Response to the Syria Crisis, n.d.). Within the framework of these pillars, specific interventions are carried out in context-specific circumstances unique to each country.

\textsuperscript{10} Please see the full text of the Plan: https://www.unhcr.org/media/syria-regional-response-plan-march-2012

\textsuperscript{11} Please see the website: https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/
Regarding social cohesion phenomenon in Türkiye context, the 3RP country chapters for Türkiye are important sources to identify the directions of the stakeholders operating in Türkiye. Because these policy frameworks lay foundation for these organizations to design rationale for their activities in the localities. It is addressed as follows:

The comprehensive legal framework in Türkiye concerning Syrians under temporary protection includes social cohesion components and efforts aimed at harmonization. The inclusive policy framework of the Government of Türkiye and the generally welcoming attitude of host communities has proven crucial not only to reduce the marginalization of Syrians under temporary protection, international protection applicants and status holders, but also to foster positive relations with the host community. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected many sectors of the society, and therefore investment in fostering social cohesion needs to be scaled up in 2021/22 to address the risk of growing social tensions. The loss of livelihoods and growing competition over jobs, misinformation and language barriers are among the primary factors affecting social cohesion in Türkiye, requiring sustained and coordinated support (Turkey Country Chapter 2021 – 2022, 2021, p. 16).

Dividing responses into protection, basic needs, education, health and economic empowerment sectors, mainstreaming of social cohesion is indicated as one of the main goals of the 3RP partners’ while responding to the crisis (Türkiye Country Chapter 2023 – 2025, 2023, p. 4).
In addition to the country chapters, the 3RP published a report, “Social Cohesion an Overview of Host Community-Refugee Dynamics in the 3RP Context” with focus on the countries affected by the Syria crisis – Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, in 2022. In brief, the paper lays the groundwork for understanding social cohesion in the 3RP context, reviews social cohesion concerns and responses in four refugee-hosting countries and presents recommendations on how social cohesion approaches might be reinforced in the affected countries. The report proposes “a practical definition” of social cohesion as “the management of social tensions within a community so as to prevent conflict and foster opportunities for collaboration between groups, including at both the horizontal (between groups) and vertical (between groups and the state) levels.” (2022, p. 5). This definition is influenced by Chan et al.’s (2006) definition of social cohesion.

It can be interpreted from the developments from 2011 to 2023 that there was considerable progress in legal and policy frameworks, institutionalization, and efforts to establish coordination mechanisms between diverse array of stakeholders involved in migration governance at various levels. On the other hand, since the crisis goes on, and there is nothing on the horizon that promises a resolution and peace in the region, ongoing stay of millions of Syrian refugees in Türkiye has become at the top of the country’s agenda posed by multifaceted and enduring consequences of this protracted situation.

Türkiye abandoned “open door policy” in time and focused more on border security, brought restrictions to the mobility of refugees in the country, and political discourse started to abandon “religious fellowship” approach, and evolved towards the repatriation of refugees. With the Syria conflict at its borders, Türkiye has become involved in managing the conflict in a context of growing security concerns. Türkiye launched several military operations that were ‘Euphrates Shield’, ‘Olive Branch’, ‘Peace Spring’, “Winter Eagle”, and “Claw Sword” with the intention of “the preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of Syria, ending the bloodshed, the peaceful conclusion of the political transition process”\(^\text{12}\) and creating a ‘safe zone’

\(^{12}\) Please see the brief information about Türkiye – Syria relations on the website the Ministry of In Foreign Affairs: [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkiye-syria.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkiye-syria.en.mfa)
and a policy option for repatriation (Özçürümez et al., 2020, p.7). In the 2023 Election Declaration of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), titled “Century of Türkiye”, which was announced on April 11, 2023, it is stated that the priority in migration management is to “prevent new migration waves and to ensure that Syrians under temporary protection return to their homeland voluntarily and safely in accordance with international law” (p. 433). As a matter of fact, Türkiye started to construct an 837-kilometers-long wall on the Türkiye – Syria border line in 2016 and completed it in 2021 aiming to prevent illegal crossings (Van Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, 2021).

In his article, Erdoğan (2018) argues that international solidarity was symbolic, and he describes Türkiye as well as Lebanon and Jordan as “victims of an open-door policy”. According to him, the policy has become a method of avoiding responsibility and putting the burden on neighboring countries instead of sharing the responsibilities with the European Union and other western countries. He also argues that the EU – Türkiye statement was not effective because the issue is beyond financial aid. It was somehow the EU’s “externalization” policy that has also been instrumentalized by Türkiye that put thousands of people at risk.

It seems confusing if it is time to discuss return options or social cohesion, but it is the time both issues are discussed by academics, political actors and people in daily conversations. According to the 2021 Barometer, periodical research that seeks to analyze social encounters, tendencies, attitudes, anxieties, and expectations in Türkiye, 90% of Turkish society believes that at least half of Syrians will remain in Türkiye in the future. In other words, while the objections to Syrians’ becoming permanent in Türkiye has been growing, the belief that Syrians will return is also waning (Erdoğan, 2022, p. 155).

It is apparent that the ambiguity of prolonged settlement under “temporary” status causes increasing sensitivities at societal level, and stresses efforts at both horizontal and vertical levels of governance. Increasingly felt relative social segregation, deepening economic crisis, ongoing intercommunity misperceptions, impact of the massive events such as COVID-19 pandemic and earthquake, significant challenges
in public services, politicization of the issue, and prolonged stay of refugees without a clear and safe road map, increase fragility of communities that are also growing barriers against social cohesion. Although there are emphases on “ansar” and “common past”, it is understood that this does not find enough place and meaning in society.

2.5.2. Urban Aspect of Policy Coordination

Today, more than half of the world population lives in cities, and it is estimated that this percentage will rise to 70% by 2050. In other words, it is anticipated that two out of every three people will most likely be living in cities in the near future. Displaced populations are also part of the urban population. 60% and 80% of all refugees and IDPs – respectively – live in urban areas (Park, 2016).

We live in a rapidly urbanizing world that drives our perspective and future. Cities are complex places having diversified population, constituting hierarchic social structures and inequalities. Although cities draw in a wide range of people seeking services and prospects, the sheer demand for these resources may not be adequately met as the population continues to expand, necessitating the implementation of a comprehensive urban policy. Nevertheless, the challenge of securing access to limited urban opportunities also entails the issue of how different groups, including refugees, coexist within the city.

“Urban refugees”, which is a relatively new conceptualization, was first addressed in UNHCR’s Comprehensive Policy on Urban Refugees in 1997. While the UNHCR has had no consistently applied definition of an urban refugee (1997, p. 2). However, the initial nuance of the term urban refugees addresses people who had lived in urban or semi-urban areas in their country of origin and who prefer to live in urban areas. Later, urban refugees were defined as refugees who tried to survive by their own means in urban spaces outside the camps, rather than in refugee camps in the countries they migrated to through forced migration (Danış, 2018).

Inherently, migration is a spatial phenomenon. Although it is mostly discussed around national and international frameworks, it is inevitably a local issue.
Approaching the issue with local lens is also important in terms of producing effective policies and executing affairs that are sensitive to the locality and taking local dynamics into account. Considering the phenomenon from local aspect does not mean to exclude national, international, and other layers. On the contrary, discussing social cohesion policy coordination at local level requires the relation with national and international context within the scope of governance approach.

It is important to note that while national actors play crucial roles in terms of political decisions, shaping legal and institutional frameworks on refugee issues, local actors including local governments as well as non-state actors play a critical role in facilitating of social cohesion processes on the ground. The legal and institutional structure for social cohesion processes is primarily established at the national level, but the implementation of social cohesion practices is a matter that occurs at the local level (Özçürümez & Hoxha, 2020, p. 3).

From the perspective of refugees, compared to rural areas and camp settings, cities appear as the main locations for settlement. In Türkiye context, significant portion of the refugee population lives in cities, and significant characteristics of Syrian refugees is that they are “urban refugees” to a greater extent. According to the PMM statistics in December 2023, only 2% of Syrian refugees live in temporary accommodation centers located in seven provinces – Adana, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, and Malatya. 98% of refugees are densely dispersed in urban areas. In Türkiye, it has become important to organize the local bureaucracy in a way to provide services to refugees. Legal, institutional and policy frameworks regulate refugees’ access to urban services. The provincial directorates of the PMM were established in all provinces. Directorates of ministries extended their services to involve refugees at local level as directed by the 3RP documents, national and international frameworks introduced in the previous section.

It is important to highlight that references of global policies and commitments to the role of local actors in protracted crises have increased in time. Local as well as regional authorities have been recognized as the key actors in the global context characterized by increasing human mobility, decentralization, urbanization, and

At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, “localization” in a sense to promote local leadership and ownership emerged as a major theme (Robillard et al., 2021). In the Summit, the world’s largest humanitarian donors and aid organizations launched the Grand Bargain to improve effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. The Grand Bargain aimed to streamline humanitarian aid processes and enhance collaboration between donors and aid organizations to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance. One of the workstreams of the Grand Bargain was to provide more support and funding to local and national responders.

The New Urban Agenda adopted at the UN HABITAT III Conference in 2016 emphasizes the role of municipalities in making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.¹³ The Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter SDG), particularly SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 16 on Peace and Security, emphasize these positive contributions of migration and development as well as the role of cities.¹⁴

2.5.2.1. Municipalities as “Frontliners” in Policy Coordination and Migration Governance

In the 3RP framework, municipalities are considered as one of the main frontline responders, and it argues that investing on their efforts is found essential to support local response, absorption capacity, and resilience to mitigate competition between refugee and host communities, and counter misperceptions and misinformation. In 2018, the Strengthening Municipal Resilience in Response to the Impact of the Syria Crisis in Turkey report was published. The report summarizes the scope of


¹⁴ Please see: https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda
investments made on the municipalities aiming to put global commitments into practice at local levels. It indicates that 53 million USD of support has been mobilized to municipalities since 2014 benefiting over 60 municipalities. 3RP partners focused on several issues in line with their mandates.

UNDP supported waste management, fire-fighting services, and project management capacity with geographical focus on southeastern municipalities. German Development Cooperation (GIZ) focused on cash for work to support municipal services. UNHCR provided technical support to enhance social cohesion, contributed to public spaces and protection or social assistance services. IOM has operated to support community stabilization and the integrated provision of services to migrant populations through municipalities. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) partnered with municipalities and worked on child-friendly programming from budgeting to implementation. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) focused on skills development and poverty reduction through vocational training project for agriculture, livestock and food processing in Kilis and Şanlıurfa. Although the actors carry out activities within their mandates and through their expertise, their starting points were similar in terms of problematizing the situation, and there were multiple efforts for cross-cutting issues. Social cohesion was one of these issues.

Figure 6 visualizes the stress factors affecting municipal resilience (3RP, 2018, p. 13). In pre-crisis process, host community is the main population targeted to support in accessing to services, and concentration of power is at provincial or metropolitan level.

Municipal resources, municipal management and competencies are the essential wheels of meeting the needs of population. Municipal resources are mainly the transfers from the central government, and own revenues. In management, while there has been staffing, capital and operational expenditures, there is lack of protecting management experience. Although the municipalities are relatively competent in managing infrastructure, basic services and socio-economic support, their effectiveness in long-term strategic planning is lacking in the face of evolving challenges and societal dynamics.
Figure 6. Stresses Affecting Municipal Resilience in Türkiye


It should be noted that the figure gives a basic idea, drawing upon generalized profiles of municipalities in Türkiye. On the other hand, a crucial aspect entails the in-depth examination of each locality within its unique dynamics, emphasizing the imperative for researchers focusing on municipalities to adopt an approach that elucidates the specific characteristics of each locality.

Figure 7 summarizes the impact of the Syria crisis on municipal capacity. While an additional population has emerged with multiple deprivations in addition to the host population, municipal capacity has remained same, and it has been challenging to manage budgeting and resources due to increase in capital and operational expenditures. Population growth and socio-economic factors, in general, necessitated an increase in the volume of services which would create pressure on quality service programming in the future. In the new situation, social cohesion has become a problematic that is assumed to be of concern to municipalities at local level because the municipalities which have been affected most by the refugee influx are relatively the least developed regions of Türkiye. While the report recognizes unique challenges faced by municipalities in relation to the Syria crisis, it recognizes municipalities as a targeted local government that are better placed to promote social
cohesion in the localities and underlines the strategic approach to support them from various aspects.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 7.** Impact of the Syria Crisis on the Capacities of Municipalities


In the HSDNAP, there is particular emphasis on the role of municipalities in improving coexistence and mutual dialogue at the local level (2018, p. 35). The plan strategically situates the municipalities as one of the main actors in implementing various activities at the local level. The plan allocates a specific section undertake the essential tasks of formulating the necessary legal, administrative, and institutional arrangements to strengthen the roles of municipalities in fostering and enhancing social cohesion, and it constitutes an important policy document.

### 2.5.2.2. Coordination and Social Cohesion Aspects in the Legal and Administrative Structure of Municipalities

Within the legal and administrative structure of municipalities in Türkiye, a coordination element is present. The Municipality Law of 5393 permits
municipalities to work with various institutions and civil society organizations on socio-cultural issues according to Article 13. Additionally, municipalities are authorized to engage in joint activities or service projects with international organizations and bodies, as outlined in Article 74. Basically, the law thus enables municipalities to engage in diverse endeavors.

In Turkish legal and administrative system, municipalities are important local governments with variety of roles and responsibilities within their municipal boundaries. However, there is a lack of legal basis for municipalities’ role for refugee population and in particular, social cohesion. Article 14 of the 5393 Municipality Law sorts the duties and responsibilities of municipalities as follows:

a) Shall provide or cause to provide services in the following areas: urban infrastructure facilities such as land development planning and control, water supply, sewer and transport; geographic and urban information systems; environment and environmental health, sanitation and solid waste; municipal police, fire fighting, emergency aid, rescue and ambulance services; urban traffic; burial services and cemeteries; tree planting, parks and green areas; housing; culture and art, tourism and promotion, youth and sports; social services and social aid; weddings; vocational and skills training; economic and commercial development. Metropolitan municipalities and municipalities with a population of more than 50,000 shall open shelters for women and children;

b) May (…); build or cause to build state schools at all levels, carry out or cause to carry out the maintenance of and repairs to such school buildings and provide them with all the equipment and supplies they need; open and operate health care facilities of all sorts; ensure the conservation of cultural and natural assets, of the historical urban fabric and of areas and functions of historical significance to the town, carry out maintenance and repairs for such purpose and, where conservation is impossible, reconstruct them in their original form. When necessary, municipalities shall give materials to students, amateur sports clubs and provide the necessary support, organize any type of amateur sports games, may award, with a resolution of the municipal council, sportsmen/sportswomen who have demonstrated excellence or received ranking in national or international competitions. Municipalities may operate food banking.

The order of priority in the provision of services shall be determined in the light of the municipality’s financial situation and the urgency of the service.

Municipal services shall be provided to the public [citizens] at the nearest possible locations and by the most appropriate methods. The methods used in
service provision shall be appropriate to the situation of the persons with disabilities, elderly people, the poor and those on low income.

The municipality’s duties, responsibilities and powers shall cover the area within the municipal boundaries.

Municipal services may also be provided to the adjacent areas by a resolution of the municipal council.

The critical point here is that the municipalities have a variety of duties compared to other local authorities, and for a person in trouble, it is often the first public authority to ask for support. The 5393 Municipality Law is uncertain on whether municipalities possess the authority to assist refugees who are residents but not citizens. Article 14 is about the provision of services for “public” which is referred to as citizen (vatandaş) in the original language of the law. Article 13 of the law regulates “the townsmen’s law” and refers to the “townsman” (hemşeri) as the subjects of the town as quoted below:

Everyone is a townsman of the town in which he lives. Townsmen shall be entitled to take part in municipal decision making and services, receive information on municipal activities and benefit from the aids distributed by the municipal administration. Aids shall be provided in such a way as not to injure human dignity.

The municipality shall make necessary efforts to develop social and cultural relations among townsmen and preserve cultural values. It shall take steps to ensure that universities, public professional organizations, trade unions, civil society organizations and experts take part in such efforts.

The provisions of the law regarding the “townsmen” create the possibility for municipalities to serve refugees along with locals. While it might appear to highlight the importance of an all-encompassing approach that grants local rights and services based on residency rather than citizenship ties, there exist significant disparities in how the law is understood and applied.

Article 38 of the law regulates duties and powers of the mayor, and it is asserted that mayor shall “take necessary measures to ensure the peace, well-being, health and happiness of the town’s inhabitants” that can encompass refugees or not based on the interpretation of the mayor. The article also addresses that the mayor shall “spend the
budget appropriation set aside for the poor and destitute, provide services for the persons with disabilities and establish the center for persons with disabilities”. Since the law does not explicitly address the diversification of people in the locality including refugees, the extent of municipalities’ engagement in coordination for social cohesion is discretionary. When the LFIP is reviewed with local a lens, it is found that the law assigns restricted terms of reference for local governments, municipalities in particular, for “harmonization” as regulated in Article 96. The article addresses local governments only for seeking suggestions and contributions with general terms, if needed, which can be interpreted as more conservative compared to the language used in the HSDNAP. In addition, while “public institutions and agencies and non-governmental organizations” are clearly mentioned among the actors to cooperate in the provision of social and cultural services to foreigners in the article, municipalities are not addressed in the implementation part (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 42). In this sense, the linkage between municipalities as being one of the main actors at local level for policy coordination, and policymaking is weak in the legal and administrative system. This weakness creates and re-creates new and transformative relationships at the local level. Municipalities might be hesitant in recognizing needs of refugees in official terms, and within the scope of this study, the legal controversy complicates role of municipalities in policy coordination and their position in promoting social cohesion in practice. The gap in the legal framework may result in a coordination network at the local level, causing all actors to construct their perceptions of each other on a more ad hoc basis. This coordination network is a dynamic structure where political sensitivities continue but at the same time pragmatic interactions may occur, and where institutional stickiness is likely to happen due to the protracted nature of the crisis, and other factors. Projects are the most practiced mechanisms of this coordination network but due to the absence of a holistic approach, fragmented, repetitive, and too ‘sophisticated’ projects are carried out at local level. In the next chapter, the local policy coordination in Kilis with specific focus on the coordination for social cohesion policy between Kilis municipality, and humanitarian organizations will be discussed.
CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL COHESION POLICY COORDINATION IN KILİS

This chapter delves into the field study findings, presenting the impact of migration to Kilis through participant interviews and studies on the area. The historical development of migration governance in Kilis is then explored, emphasizing the interactions between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. The stakeholder landscape is introduced, outlining the organizational structures and interests of Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. The chapter concludes by critically examining the significance of social cohesion in policy documents, project activities, and the perceptions of research participants, followed by a revealing insight into the policy coordination process based on interview findings.
The wave of the Arab Spring, the series of anti-government movements, subsequently led to a similar unrest in Syria. The protests at early stages eventually escalated into a civil war in 2011. Over time, this conflict has evolved into a protracted crisis, and Türkiye has found itself in the position of being the country that hosts the highest number of refugees globally.

As a border city neighboring to Syria, and one of the first destinations of migration, Kilis is one of the locations that experienced the weight of the war. The city underwent a significant influx of migration, experiencing a substantial flow of people from the early years of the conflict, and it currently accommodates the highest concentration of refugees in comparison to its local population.

![Figure 9. Location of Kilis on the Map](https://earth.google.com)


Kilis is a border city adjacent to Syria. It is a small city with the highest refugee population compared to the total urban population. According to the PMM statistics in 21 December 2023, the city accommodates 71,650 Syrian refugees. When the
local population which is 147,919, is added to this figure, total population becomes 219,569, and refugees correspond to 32,63% of the total population. In 2022, the PMM switched to a new calculation for the ratio of refugees. In 2022, the registered Syrian population is added up with the population of that province and then divided by the registered Syrian population to determine the ratio. This change in the calculation decreased the ratio of Syrians in Kilis from 75% to around 38,5% in 2022. At that time, the Kilis Governorate made a press statement stating that there was a misperception that “the Syrian population in Kilis exceeds the Turkish population, which does not reflect some truth” (Ministry of Interior, 2022). Although the numbers are informative, it should be noted that what has been experienced in the city is beyond numbers. Kilis is one of the cities where refugees and local population encounter the most in daily life. Especially since both populations are concentrated in the city center and the center is a frequent destination for various reasons for those living in the surrounding districts, this situation turns into an issue that needs to be considered seriously.

Kilis, “the serhat city”\textsuperscript{15} has been “the ensar city”\textsuperscript{16} with the refugee influx as a result of the Syria civil war. Kilis hosts the most refugees per capita among all cities in Türkiye. In the first years of migration, there were periods when the number of Syrians exceeded the local population, making Kilis the only city in the world where the number of refugees exceeded the local population. According to the field study of Koca and Altnoluk (2022), the arrival of more refugees to this small city in a very short time caused a “social shock”, and therefore the locals of Kilis started to feel like “pariahs in their own homeland” (p. 10).

Those who migrated to Kilis from Syria should be considered as urban refugees. What is meant by “urban” here is not an emphasis on the refugees coming from the cities, but rather people living in urban areas outside the camps in Türkiye, whether they come from urban or rural areas.

\textsuperscript{15} Serhat means border or frontier in English. The frequent usage of the term dates back to the Ottoman Empire to refer to the region between the Ottoman Empire and neighboring countries.

\textsuperscript{16} It is the phrase used by the governor of Kilis. For the relevant news, please see: \url{http://kentgazetesi.biz/kilisin-il-ofusunun-27-yil-donumu/}
3.1. “They contribute to the development of the city”

Impact of social changes are multidimensional and relative. Some aspects of social change might be interpreted positive, negative or may not be located anywhere depending on the relative perspectives and experiences of individuals. While the participants shared some of their observations, they were uncertain about their opinions on whether some of the effects of migration were positive or negative for Kilis. Taking this situation into consideration, this study aims to reveal the diversity in approaches to phenomena and change by directly reflecting the thoughts of the research participants.

According to the research participants, migration flow to Kilis has created several opportunities. One of the most notable impacts is the economic dynamism in the city. Ahmet (Senior Municipality Official) states this as follows:

Our commercial flow and cash balance were not that fast and intense. While the money traffic in the city was a little sluggish and the trade balance was a bit stagnant before, it accelerated after the arrival of the Syrians. Not a little, but a lot. Exports increased. With the investments and incentives made by the state, this development could be possible, but it would not be so fast. The commercial capacity and external connections of the Syrians increased the economy of the city. Hot money inflows increased. (...) The assets they brought, the commercial values they had brought here. They invested here. New businesses were opened, new factories were opened, new bakeries were opened. This was achieved through the investments they made with the values they brought here. Currently [their] external links are good at the moment. Because of this, Kilis experienced an increase in both production capacity and employment. But is it enough? It is not. What we lack is that the border is closed. I think that if the border were open, the Syrians here would do better, and they would do more with their connections here and there.

İncili and Akdemir (2016) address in their study that “the cash and valuables brought with them by the Syrian refugees started a liveliness in the city of Kilis” (p. 132). In addition to the own capacity and resources of refugees in the local economy, the role of social aid programs is also seen as an important economic resource for the city. According to Ahmet, “particularly, the fact that people who make a living through socio-economic aid, withdraw the money and distribute [spend] in the city at the same time on the same day, which accelerated the flow of hot money.”
Burak (Project Expert) thinks that there was a tolerance for refugees to live in the city in order for the resources they bring with themselves to have an impact on the city’s economy. He explains this as follows:

Kilis is actually a Turkmen city. Actually, I am also Turkmen, of course, these identities are not very important, I am just giving them as details. Why am I giving this detail? It is because Kilis is actually a frontier principality [historically], and it is a city deliberately created by Turkmens, because it is a border. In fact, it has always been viewed as something like a buffer zone. Turkmens live there. There is no Arab population at all. You know, it is thought of as Hatay, but actually the people in the church are too. Actually, there is no such situation. At first, I was worried that this could actually be a handicap or a threat. Afterwards, of course, I recognized it as a city and district where there was a lot of shopping, a lot of kinship relations, and a lot of interaction. (...) In other words, the general local population of Kilis was a people who did a lot of shopping and trading with Syria before it became a province. When the opportunities disappeared after the war, even though they did not speak the same language or come from the same culture, the people of Kilis clung to their common bonds and gave a truly unprecedented reaction. In fact, [Kilis] also showed this... It was very weak in socioeconomic terms, it had no other chance, partly due to the government’s policy, while trying to facilitate the adaptation of immigrants who were quickly included in social life, the state also thought of revitalizing the economy there, with its own efforts. Because there was this plan, it was very clear: people escaping from war settle in a region, and when they come to the region they settle, they bring their most valuable things with them and settle there. This was partly the reason why they were not found in the camps very much and were directly included in social life. It was actually a mistake, but I think that was the plan behind it.

After the mass migration to Kilis, there has been funding flow from various donors to the city, and many projects were launched in various areas such as protection, education, livelihood, shelter, and health. It has been a strong motivation for government institutions and humanitarian organizations to apply for projects for a small city on the border with excessive population. The scope of the projects varied including support for urban infrastructure, provision of equipment to government authorities, financing human resource, direct or indirect service provision to refugees and local people and capacity building. Social aid programs are also one of the significant post-2011 responses that are financed by external actors. It was stated by majority of the interviewees that the financing transferred to the locality through projects after the crisis had a positive impact on the economy of the city.
Here, it would be appropriate to point out that the humanitarian sector has become a new and dynamic employment field in Kilis as a result of the funding flow to the locality. Projects developed by justifying the local impacts of migration have an important role in increasing local employment. There have been opportunities to be employed directly as project personnel or to develop local business with the incentives of the projects. However, the ambiguity here is that the projects are carried out and completed within a certain period. On the other hand, local needs are permanent and unless sustainable approaches are developed within this framework, local employment is generally temporary and aid dependent. Local policy actors, specifically Kilis Municipality in this study, are interested in projects on local employment. While one reason for this is the tendency to increase the economic welfare of the local people, the priority of meeting local demand is also a matter of political concern.

Another impact of the war is the emergence of informal economy and cheap labor in the local market. Refugees are seen as “cheap labor” and “people who could rent their homes at high prices” by some local businesses (İncili and Akdemir, 2016, p. 132). In addition, increase in the local population is considered as an opportunity for some locals who were tended to mobilize their profit-making, for instance, by increasing house rents.

Cemal (Senior Municipality Official) claims the significance of Syrian refugees in the local labor market as follows:

They contribute to the development of the city. We are benefiting from them in many lines of business. (...) As Kilis, we also need skilled workers, we really do. When they are completely gone, we stumble. There is this danger too. (...) When we look at Syrians, they have many qualified employees in different fields of work, and we are currently benefiting from them.

Several research participants expressed the impact of migration on culinary culture in Kilis. Groceries, restaurants, bakeries, and cafes diversified in the city. Hakan (Senior Municipality Official) expresses his thoughts regarding this diversity with the following:
I have never seen so many fresh fruits and vegetables in Kilis in my life. (…) For example, I have never seen ready-made chicken sold in Kilis, I have never seen fried chicken sold. For example, Syrians brought this to us. (…) Right now, for example, Syrians are doing this a lot, and Syrians are doing it everywhere. (…) We didn't have much of a coffee culture, I mean coffee as you know it. (…) After the Syrians came, our style of coffee [was formed], they started smoking hookah a lot, etc. Such an effect. But I can't say whether this is a positive or negative thing.

Figure 10 shows a cross-section of a grocery store run by Syrians, which is known and shopped by a significant portion of the local population. It is understood from the interviews and observations made in the field that the perspectives related to the impacts of migration in Kilis point to a more pragmatic standpoint. However, although this perspective is sometimes a choice, it was argued as a necessity, recognizing the fact that a city is on the border line, the first crossing point of migration and therefore the first location to be exposed to its destructive effects.

![Figure 10. A Locally Known Greengrocer in Kilis Run by Syrians](image)

3.2. “These are the things that we do not welcome”

In the previous thread, the relatively positive effects of migration in Kilis are mentioned. Here, on the other hand, negative phenomena associated with migration
and related dynamics will be mentioned and it is obvious that it will be a longer section compared to the previous one.

The impacts of the sudden and large-scale migration to Kilis, from the perspective of the interviewees, were discussed in various dimensions in the sections above. These approaches are reflected in policy documents. According to the municipality, “increased demands”, “the experience of cultural and economic disruptions”, “the exclusion of the Syrian population in the budget distribution to municipalities”, and “dismantling the Syrian camp and sending Syrians from other provinces to the provinces where they are registered” are threats to the institutional capacity (Kilis Municipality, Activity Report, 2022, p. 137).

It should be noted that the proportion of the Syrian population in the refugee population, which increases the economic dynamism in the city, is relatively low. In this respect, although it is thought that the commercial connections and capacities of Syrians have a “positive” effect on the local economy, the general opinion is that refugees create an economic burden. Because “visionary people tried to go to the metropolitan cities, the coastal cities, the places where there were job opportunities. (...) People with low profile stayed in Kilis” (Bekir, Senior Municipal Official).

Ahmet also states that as follows:

People who needed more socioeconomic assistance stayed here with us. Since Antep was an industrial city, they took the masters or those who had a business and those who were good in the field of production. (...) There is no job for a good machinist in Kilis, so there is no employment area. (...) We went and saw in Antep, for example, there are Syrians who own a carpet factory.

Furkan (Field Officer) argues about the coping mechanisms of refugees in sustaining their economic mobilization in Kilis. According to him:

Syrians have their own economic cycle. They do shopping with each other. But Turkish people do not have such a thing. They do not have this cycle among themselves. (...) But a Syrian does not buy from a Turkish.

In fact, it can also be observed in the city that Syrians and Turkish people have developed a commercial relationship between each other to a certain extent. On the
other hand, according to what Furkan highlights, Syrians have an inward-oriented economic network. Hacı Mustafa Celkanlı, President of the Kilis Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in his speech at the Economy Council organized by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye states that it would not be possible for Kilis tradesmen to compete with Syrian tradesmen because an average of four people in a Syrian household are breadwinners and Syrians receives additional financial assistance (Celkanlı, 2022).

The general approach in the interviews was that Kilis “suffered from its geographical location”, and in this respect, it “deeply” experienced the effects of migration. Cemal and Hakan (senior municipality officials), describe the location of Kilis as follows:

Being a border province, it [Kilis] is in the most remote corner of Türkiye, that is, a place where the bird does not fly, the caravan does not pass [stuck in the middle of nowhere]. It is a place where there is no intercity transportation. Its only connection is Syria. Therefore, when we evaluate it in Türkiye [compared to other provinces], (...) Kilis is the place with the lowest economic and social development among eighty-one provinces (Cemal, Senior Municipality Official).

[Gaziantep] is our only provincial neighbor. We have no other neighbors. Antep is our only neighbor from the right, the left, and the north. (...) Apart from that, we are bordered by Syria. (...) So we can’t run away. These people cannot go anywhere else. We are trapped here (Hakan, Senior Municipality Official).

Actually, as a Kilis native, Cemal underlines the socioeconomic crisis felt in Kilis, and he finds geopolitical status as one of the factors triggering this crisis. When looked at the Socio-Economic Development Index Research conducted in 2017, Kilis is among the lowest, if not the last, in socioeconomic development (2019, p. 35). While its geopolitical status is ‘unfortunate’ as expressed by Hakan, there is also a concurrent perspective that perceives the potential for significant economic opportunity, particularly in terms of trade at the border, contingent upon the prospect of the gateway being opened.

The war in Syria has “blunted the smuggling economy” according to Cemal. Prior to the civil war in Syria, major livelihood activities included smuggling and agriculture.
The closing of the Türkiye-Syria border and construction of a 764 km-long wall between Türkiye and Syria, completed in 2018, has since resulted in a sharp decline in smuggling. Large-scale border trade and agriculture continue, yet small-scale trade and construction have become major sources of livelihood (Ensari et al., 2022, p. 2).

On the other hand, historically, “smuggling”, in other words, “suitcase trade” or “day-to-day trade” on the Turkish-Syrian border has been one of the main income sources of the dwellers in Kilis. As argued by Şenoğuz (2014), smuggling is at the core of the dwellers’ border perceptions. There are also local folk songs written and performed on smuggling. It can be said that smuggling has decreased compared to the past due to the war in Syria, but it is spoken among the local people that there is smuggling of goods and particularly people after the war, and this situation has also appeared in the press from time to time.

In highlighting the repercussions of the war on smuggling, Cemal underscores its adverse effects but also voices his dissatisfaction with the perceived “laziness” exhibited by the local population, attributing this phenomenon to the practice of “free-riding” that has been fueled by the prevalence of smuggling in the region. He states that “we do not attach importance to production, that is, we are not production-oriented. Maybe this is due to our historically ignorance of the value of production in Kilis.”

Burak underlines that the economic problems of Kilis actually predates migration:

Job opportunities were already scarce. It has evolved into a fear in people [after the refugee influx] that ‘we were completely unemployed’, but this was not the case anyway. Over the years, Kilis has always struggled with it. (...) The fact that the factories were closed for various reasons further fueled this [fear]. (...) I remember a long time ago, when I was very young, agriculture was very good there. There were queues in front of the Tekel Suma Factory. It was a city that could manage itself more or less. Beer, raki and wine were produced there and delivered to [other locations of Türkiye] (...) The vineyards of Kilis were world famous, I’m not exaggerating. (...) However, the closure of the factory, the alienation of people from agriculture, the fact that the creation of other employment areas in this sense was late or even not created. The increase in the number of people who actually got a share of the pie while the pastry itself did not get bigger and its uncontrolled execution inevitably caused other reflexes.
At that time [initial years of the conflict and migration], there was also a very serious economic crisis [in Türkiye]. How would people flee war and bring with them to places they have never known? They would come with their most valuable possessions, and they would be an incalculable input to the economy. This was the plan, but you can’t live off your capital indefinitely, no matter how large it may be. The increase in the number of people turned the situation into something else. Kilis has been a struggling city for years, struggling with too much unemployment and the shortage of employment opportunities.

While some cultural aspects are considered with more optimistic terms as aforementioned, the main concern of locals is “Arabization”. Actually, Kilis has been connected to the Aleppo Sanjak for centuries, and has made its main relations with Syria because it is on the trade and pilgrimage route, but it has been separated from Syria during Turkish nation-state building. According to Koca (2022), this separation was not only on the map but it was intended to separate in the minds of “imagined communities” through exposition of nationalism and use of “ideological state apparatuses” (pp. 50-52). Therefore, there is a Turkish-Syrian distinction in Kilis today, despite many commonalities and even kinship.
Almost all the research participants, those that are Kilis natives I interviewed with point to a certain degree of historical and geographical proximity to Syria. However, they underscored their perceived cultural distinctiveness, characterizing themselves as “quite different,” Ahmet expresses his thoughts as follows:

Although we are a border province, we have never experienced cultural interaction. (…) There were Arabs who came to Kilis seventy or eighty years ago, worker Arabs. They had already settled [in Kilis]. They were the Arabs who did not know Arabic. (…) Their names were Arabic only. They were called the Arabs of Kilis. (…) We are a Turkmen city. Even those who got married here settled on the Turkmen side.

Locals mostly talk about a bond between the Syrian Turkmen and themselves. This may be a fact, but the cultural relationship with the Arabs is not as far apart as Ahmet stated. In fact, Ahmet himself has learned Arabic in recent years and is actively using it in his daily life.

Ahmet expresses “the atmosphere of trust” in Kilis prior to the crisis as follows:

“Actually, maybe there is a special situation only in Kilis. Think of Kilis as a very big house. It was a city where everyone knew each other, who led in which field, who did what, and who was related to whom. So let me tell you, sometimes when we enter houses, when we go in and out, we leave the keys of the motorcycle or the car on and get out. There was such a degree of sincerity in Kilis. (…) Before the crisis, there were almost no Syrians living in Kilis. There were those who came and went on holiday visits. This drew our attention too much. In other words, they were different people with their clothes and things. They were very different people to us.”

Furkan thinks that the population increase in Kilis has created chaos, and expresses his thoughts as follows:

Kilis was a city for retirees before 2011. Life was not expensive. It was a quiet city. (…) It turned into a more chaotic form, especially after 2013-2014, with the population intensifying and the Syrians coming to the city due to the filling up of the camps. As a matter of fact, when we go down to the city center today, you rarely come across Turkish.

Referring to the feeling of ‘being trapped’ expressed by Hakan, the problem is not only geographical, but also psychological according to Bekir. He places special emphasis on the psychology of local people with the following:
The people here were also affected, their psychology was also affected. Some of them had ten neighbors, five of them a new, foreign culture. (…) This is never asked. I have never come across an institution that asks [this]. (…) I've never come across anyone asking, ‘what did you do, how are you doing’.

Hakan raises his concerns about “habits” relating to the cultural aspect and public order in Syria as follows:

I just went to the market, [and saw that] women never use the sidewalks. They put their children in a wheelbarrow and drive through the middle of the road. For example, [such a behavior] is considered very shameful by us. Let me tell you something very simple, for example, you can’t see any women of our local population laying cushions on the floor in any park, but both Syrian men and women of Syrians lay cushions on the floor and pull the hookah. (…) Alone or with her husband or friend. These are things that we do not welcome. These may seem so simple, but they are something that sets this society apart a bit. (…) While our number of fires was two or three, it increased to seven or eight after the arrival of the Syrians, because our way of life is very different. (…) We never use an electric stove in our house. We use a kitchen tube. They do everything with an electric stove. They cook their meals with electrical appliances and so on. (…) When these people first came, they settled in areas such as Karataş. Three or four families started to stay in one house because the rents were high. They began to live together. Social things started to happen when they started living together. (…) For example, while there should be two people in a house, there were ten people. The amount of food increases accordingly, the amount of heating increases accordingly, etc., and then the fires started to increase. (…) We had three traffic accidents a week, and all three of them started to be caused by Syrians. What’s the reason? There are not many such things in Syria, I mean, they do not have rules and so on in terms of traffic. But here, when these people did not comply with these rules, fatal traffic accidents began to occur frequently.

He further argues that although there is no explicit conflict in the society, there is a hidden tension. He explains this as follows:

All the shopkeepers on Murtaza Street are from them. All of them. For example, you go to Ekrem Çetin, you only go to one street of a neighborhood, the whole street is full of them. (…) I am expressing my opinion; I am saying what I see. There is some simmering, there is a tension in the society. This is true although there are similarities between the two societies. (…) The economic conditions of the country trigger this, the biggest reason is the economic conditions in the country. (…) There is a logic that while we used to share our bread and food with these people, now these people have taken our bread. (…) There is a logic that they have claimed our bread. And it was really thought that these people would go, but I think these
people will not go. Because they work like it won't go away. They act like they won't go.

According to the interviewees, another impact of the migration was that public services became inadequate in the face of sudden population increase in the city. Emre (Senior Municipality Official), argued that the traffic density, waste, environmental pollution and water consumption increased. Green space per capita decreased. The municipal capacity was also not equal to the daily consumption and human mobility in the city. In this sense, municipality was affected from the migration flow. Ahmet explains this as follows:

Kilis, which we both heard from our elders and saw when we were little, was a self-sufficient city. It was a city with its own master plans until 2040. (…) With earlier fixtures and personnel capacity, Kilis was a self-sufficient city and [the municipality as well] with allowances from the central government.

Kilis was caught “unprepared” to the conflict. It would not have been possible to prepare for such a situation “anyway”. Actually, Kilis is a “place” that some people in Türkiye do not even know where in Türkiye it is or in other terms, it is a “forgotten” part of the homeland. Until 1995, Kilis was a district of Gaziantep and administrated by district municipality. In 1995, Kilis got provincial status and the municipality turned into provincial municipality with the decree of the council of ministers. Elbeyli, Musabeyli and Polateli, which were sub-districts of Kilis before, got district and started to be governed by their district municipalities. It is small city with a short urbanization experience relatively. Considering this administrative change which happened due to merely some political concerns of some political elites rather than basing on socioeconomic and other levels, Kilis Municipality was also affected by the war and mass refugee influx, and it would affect the course of the situation as well.

The administrative area of Kilis Municipality is limited to the central district, characterized by high population density and heightened daily interactions.

Ahmet provides an explanation about the concentration in the central district by stating the following:
When we look at the field reality, the place where we share the city within the same area is the city center. Syrians are most concentrated in the city center. It is almost absent in Musabeyli and Polateli. A couple of families though. There are none in the villages connected to the center. It’s only in Elbeyli, and that’s because of the camp. People who are in the camp are still in the city center from the day they leave the camp until the time they enter the camp. They come to work, they come to visit, they come to shop. Again, the city center experiences the density of the people in Elbeyli and the people in the camp during the day. There seems to be some unregistered ones as well. We are experiencing their density as well.

Hakan thinks that the statistical data does not reflect the truth. Although the PMM declares that the refugee population in Kilis corresponds to 33% of the total population, Hakan contends that the actual population density in the city contradicts this assertion. In his perspective, the figures provided by the PMM fail to capture the true essence of the demographic landscape in Kilis by stating the following:

Numbers are like that. But when you tell people this, no one in Kilis believes it. Why? Because he sees something different on the street. (…) He sees more. This, in turn, is the loss of the credibility of institutions. (…) We, as a municipality, could not calculate that it would take ten years, and we could not calculate it as a citizen. Frankly, what I mean by being caught off guard is this; (…) for example, let’s say the population of Kilis is 100 thousand now. Perhaps forty or fifty years later, it was calculated to be 250 thousand, but suddenly the population increased from 200 thousand to 250 thousand. (…) Also, it is said that the number of Syrian refugees in Türkiye is around 3.5 - 4 million. Whichever way you look at it, at least 3 million of these 4 million have entered Türkiye, dispersed into Türkiye, or gone to Europe by using the route from Kilis. I can say that 90 percent [of refugees] have used the Kilis route in some way. (…) As I said, both as a municipality and as citizens, we were caught unprepared for this.

The concentration of the population in the central area, coupled with the daily mobility patterns, exerts significant pressure on municipal services, necessitating a comprehensive examination of infrastructure, resource allocation, and urban planning strategies to effectively address the evolving demands and challenges posed by this dynamic demographic distribution. Emre states that “doing everything is the
destiny of a municipality in a sense that from birth to death, the municipality is involved in a person’s life”. On the other hand, a relatively small municipality of a small city had insufficient service capacity in the face of the massive influx of migration. Due to the inadequacy of human resources and technical equipment, financial constraints, limited institutionalization and other internal and external factors, a challenging management process has begun for Kilis Municipality after 2011.

The next section will introduce stakeholder landscape within the context of migration governance in Kilis and present the key stakeholders (Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations) selected as the research samples of this study.

3.3. Stakeholder Landscape in Kilis and Key Stakeholders of the Thesis

In the aftermath of the Syria civil war, Kilis has become an important location of migration governance. Presently, Kilis stands as a nexus within a comprehensive governance network, where stakeholders exert influence across multiple levels and structures, shaping the dynamics of migration in the region. The significance of Kilis as a key location in migration governance is underscored by the diverse and extensive presence of these stakeholders.

Figure 12 simply aims to show the stakeholder landscape consisting of various actors at various levels. It is adapted from Bayrbağ’s (2013) policy network map, Figure 1 as a visual representation of various entities in migration governance. It should be noted that the network in the city is complex and interconnected that reproduces itself depending on the dynamic nature of the context. Although the figure seems linear with categories of stakeholders as listed, it should be read to the extent that each stakeholder has direct or indirect interaction with each other, and all these actors have bureaucratic extension in migration governance.

The figure shows the actors at institutional level. Because this study focuses on the inter-organization policy coordination. However, this study recognizes the reality that it is the people who establish formal and informal networks in the migration
governance and they are the ones who have influence in policy coordination from various aspects. This perspective is considered consistent with the fact that the study focuses not only on service delivery but on policy coordination among stakeholders, of which service delivery forms a part, thus showing the diversity in the way bureaucrats at different levels perceive the issues, and highlight the complexity in coordination processes. Due to this rationale, the primary data for this study was derived from the conduction of semi-structured interviews with municipal and humanitarian bureaucrats constituted one of the primary sources of this thesis study.

While the network in the city is impacted by the general national context, it also has its own dynamism. From this stakeholder landscape, this study focuses on the local scale and examines policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations that are mainly NGOs and UN agencies. Although the study is limited to these actors, the overall approach of the study acknowledges the multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional features in migration governance, and it recognizes the effect of this multiplicity to policy coordination processes of these two categories of stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Humanitarian Society</th>
<th>Local Government</th>
<th>Central Government</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>Bilateral donors (e.g. USAID) Multilateral donors (e.g. ECHO) UN NGOs</td>
<td>The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (UMT)</td>
<td>Ministries PMM AFAD</td>
<td>Media Political Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>HQs of NGOs, UN, and government donors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>UN and NGOs: Field offices Field implementation</td>
<td>Governorate (PDMM, AFAD, Directorate of Civil Society Relations) Kilis Municipality Provincial directorates of ministries Mukhtar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local media Political parties Chambers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 12.** Stakeholder Landscape in Kilis
Before discussing the policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and the humanitarian organizations during the implementation phase of the policy process, as underlined by Bayırbağ (2017), it is important to introduce the organization structure of these stakeholders that would provide preliminary insight regarding how work processes flow within different layers.

In Figure 13, the organization structure of Kilis Municipality is presented including different layers. In policy implementation, the mayor is the key person in making decisions on to engage in coordination with stakeholders. According to the decision of the municipal council in 2019, the mayor has been given the authority to sign protocols. The mayor is also the president of the Association for Combating Poverty and Unemployment (hereafter ACPU) that was established by the municipal managers in 2004. The ACPU is an important extension of the municipality since some projects are coordinated through this entity, in terms of recruiting the field...
officers and implementing activities. It is also known and serve as food bank that is administratively located under social aid affairs directorate. Basically, it is utilized for the distribution of in-kind assistance and assisting project activities in the field.

Deputy mayor is an important figure in having interactions with the humanitarian organizations. Deputy mayor, directors and senior personnel have an impact in decision-making process. They are the ones that the mayor consults and instructs during the implementation. In general, all directorates are linked to the local level migration governance within the scope of their area focus.

The bureaucrats from senior levels to junior levels, majority of whom are natives of Kilis, are important figures in leveraging communications, and they have impact to the coordination with the humanitarian organizations. From the institutional perspective, it has been identified in the field study that the study project, plan project and social aid affairs directorates play a key role in initiating communications with humanitarian organizations, managing the process and involving other units of the municipality according to the scope of the activities. While the study project and plan project directorates maintain initial communications, planning and coordination for overall project management, social aid affairs is assigned to implement activities in the field. However, this division of work depends on the scope of the project. If the scope is more related to the study project or plan project area of work, these units also take part in implementation.

Under the social aid affairs and study project directorates, community centers (called with different names such as women’s vocational enrichment centers) serve as implementation facilities for project activities. Migration unit is a new structure for the municipality. According to the municipal council decision in 2019, the unit is established to respond to the needs of wider population after 2011 in Kilis. On the other hand, according to the interviews with research participants from the municipality and observations, the unit does not seem effective as it is intended due to lack of qualified official and uncertainty in the role of the unit in the municipal organization structure. The municipality also has a company as seen in the figure. Similar to the ACPU, the company is utilized to recruit project-based field officers. All these extended parts of the municipality are critical structures in policy coordination in the field.
Figure 14 shows the abstract organization structure that would be applicable for both NGOs and UN agencies. The author of the study essentially acknowledges that UN agencies and NGOs are different organizations. NGOs are non-profit organizations that are independent of government control. NGOs operate at the local, national, or international level, and they can be small grassroots organizations or large international bodies. NGOs often rely on donations, grants, and volunteer work to fund their activities. On the other hand, the United Nations is an intergovernmental organization formed by states. The UN structure includes a variety of specialized agencies, programs and bodies that address a wide range of global issues and challenges, including migration. The UN agencies are funded primarily by contributions from its member states, but they may receive donations although they do not rely on donations in the same way that NGOs do. On the other hand, it should be noted that all the interviewed NGO staff who have worked in the NGOs that operate not only national and local context but operate within an international context or they have international linkages in migration governance.

In addition, as the stakeholders involved in migration governance after the Syria crisis, the visibility of these organizations on the field is similar from a humanitarian perspective. In examining the landscape of migration governance in the aftermath of
the Syria crisis, it is evident that these stakeholders emerged to provide humanitarian assistance in the field. Within the scope of this study, these organizations were categorized as humanitarian organizations, and since their organizational structures in the national and local context are similar at the basic level despite their unique differences, and it was found reasonable to generate a visual representation in the form of a diagram to illustrate the organizational structures of these entities in a standardized manner.

The organizational structure of humanitarian organizations varies depending on their size, mission, vision and specialization. In this sense, the length of the organization structure, reporting lines, division of work, and names of the departments and positions are changeable. However, Figure 14 helps to identify the most common categories in line with their main roles. As seen, humanitarian organizations consist of functioning mechanisms that are at least as layered bureaucratic and spread over time and space as state institutions. There is always a leadership position in the country office, which is categorized as director in the figure. The director may have deputy director(s). Each organization has a senior management consisting of the head of mission, deputy director(s) and department heads to discuss the overall progress of operations and the strategic direction of the organizations. The legal and regulatory framework is also a determining factor in the formation of the organization structure. These organizations adhere to the framework in the country that they operate. Operations of NGOs are regulated in the Turkish legislative framework. They are bound by their organizational regulations, and international humanitarian standards (e.g. 3RP, Sphere Standards). UN organizations are bound by regulatory framework in the country and international agreements and standards.

There is a substantial division between the programs department and support department. The programs department serves as the primary unit responsible for the management of projects and supervision of overall programming, while the support department supports the project from various aspects. The programs department mainly consists of three key positions: program director, project experts, and field officers. Depending on the program portfolio, staffing size varies. Support units provide essential services, resources, and offer assistance to the program department.
and the organization itself as part of their core functions. As seen in the figure, they have specific focus areas, and engage in coordination from their scope of specialization. In policy implementation with Kilis Municipality, it has been identified from the interviews and through field observations that external affairs and public relations and project experts are key focal points to liaise with the municipal counterparts.

It should be highlighted here that this study focuses on inter-organizational policy coordination, not intra-institutional coordination. Therefore, in the study, intra-institutional dynamics will be discussed within the framework of their impact on the inter-organizational coordination.

3.3.1. Historical Background of Relations Between Kilis Municipality and Humanitarian Organizations

In the first years of the Syria crisis, there was an intense influx of refugees to Kilis with multiple needs. In 2012, Öncüpınar and in 2013, Elbeyli camps began to serve as temporary accommodation centers for those fled from the war. In parallel with the national context, the camps focused on basic needs such as health, nutrition, and shelter as well as educational and social needs with the establishment of social facilities (Kilis Valiliği, n.d.). On the other hand, the capacity of the camps began to be insufficient for the increasing population and migration gradually spread to the urban area. As a result, the new residents of Kilis became “urban refugees”.

Starting from the first years of the crisis, government institutions were accompanied by the activities of humanitarian organizations with financial support provided by donors. Activities that started in the camps gradually shifted to urban areas in parallel with population mobility. On the other hand, the coordination network that emerged in the initial years has been fragmented, dispersed and random. Ahmet argues that “the organizations acted in the field on their own […] without data, just by the rhetoric.” Hakan emphasizes that “municipality, other public institutions, NGOs, that

is, everyone was caught unprepared for this.” Engin details this unpreparedness and gives an example regarding official accreditation process of NGOs as follows:

I remember that 35-40 international NGO representatives were in the hall at the coordination meetings I attended at that time. At that time, there were coordination groups run by state institutions, and there were also coordination groups that we now call clusters. […] We knew that many NGOs that attended those meetings were not registered in Türkiye, but they were working in the field.

[Our organization] obtained accreditation in 2013. There are certain forms of this accreditation. The NGOs made decisions with the guidance of a few lawyers working in the field at that time. Some of them received countrywide permission, some of them received permission for a few provinces, and some of them received permission for a single province. Some of them obtained project-based permission, which would later realize how wrong this was. Because the renewal of a permission has become a headache.

The main reason behind this unpreparedness was the lack of a legal and regulatory framework while the crisis and the needs in the field continued. This complexity has increased security concerns of the government, and several NGOs were closed.18 In Kilis context, Burak stated that one of the first developments that paved the way for the formation of inter-organizational interactions after the migration influx, was the open call made by the Kilis Governorate in 2012. This open call has been made to public institutions, NGOs, and all relevant actors. It was a request for support and coordination. Ahmet describes the initial years as follows:

At first, our local associations were involved. We saw the Turkish Red Crescent more in the field. After the Turkish Red Crescent, we saw the Humanitarian Relief Foundation a lot in the field. Let me say, various local NGOs, especially those which see that society as close to us, value them within the scope of certain values, that is, ensar-muhajir. (...) We first saw the associations operating in Kilis and throughout the country, or the associations operating in other countries and having cross border experience (...) Later on, I started to see other organizations such as UNHCR’s logos, I started to see their blankets and tents in the area. Later, these institutions came and started to partner. Welthungerhilfe came and made an agreement with the governorate. (...) The organizations that came were first meeting with the governorate. Later, municipalities got involved, (...) and then, other public institutions stepped in.

18 For more information, please visit: https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/yurt-disi- kaynakli-5-stknin-faaliyet-izinleri-durduruldu/797272
In general, the governorate has been the primary authority, and its execution of the central government’s decisions has had impact on migration governance. As will be discussed in the sections on social cohesion and coordination, the governorate, specifically the PDMM, has a predominantly security perspective that affects social cohesion policy coordination from various aspects. The governorate with the relevant directorates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (e.g. AFAD, provincial directorates) has had a central role in migration governance in the city as dictated by the legislation. The governorate executes the decisions of the government, and it is responsible for the supervision of all public authorities. It has the authority to supervise the activities of humanitarian organizations in the relevant provinces and joint projects carried out with public institutions and organizations. It oversees an entire province, which may include multiple municipalities.

Establishment of the PMM and its extension to provincial level as linked to the governorate, was an important step in bureaucratizing the migration governance at local level. Various coordination mechanisms (e.g. migration board) were utilized to discuss migration dynamics in the city. In the following years, there would be “consultation meetings” organized by the Kilis Provincial Directorate of Migration Management on an ad hoc basis. Representatives from some public institutions, UN and NGO representatives attended the meetings. While the meetings have a minimal role in bringing together these representatives and have potential to extend bilateral networks among the stakeholders, these coordination mechanisms were not effective in strengthening the overall implementation and coordination on the ground. For instance, Ahmet claims that there is a coordination problem between public institutions, and exemplify it as follows: “I met the personnel responsible for harmonization from Kilis PDMM [Harmony and Communication Working Group Presidency] at a meeting organized by the UN in Gaziantep.” He further explains that communication with public institutions has increased with the arrival of the stakeholder organizations in Kilis. From 2019, “harmonization neighborhood meetings” were organized by the PDMM in coordination with the UNHCR intermittently. Ahmet explains his observations about these meetings as follows:

A Turkish woman said, “I can't speak.” “We don't know the language,” she said. I don't know whether it was due to the characteristics of the people who
came or not, but it took place in a friendly atmosphere. So, everyone told each other everything. “You are making too much noise,” someone said to another one. The woman turned to another woman and said, “You are giving birth to ten babies.” There were community leaders, there were people from the locals... Our two Turkish women spoke very nice things. I mean, she openly talked about the problem that is happening in this neighborhood. But has something been resolved? There was no solution. Everyone just described what they observed. They had done this before with c leaders, but it was not productive. Opinion leaders are focused on their own problems. When we called the wing leader for a problem for the society in general, the man said personally, my daughter does not have an identity card, it went to these issues after seeing the president. I gathered these at the provincial headquarters of the ruling party and at the municipality. They told us that this man is a shah, and his words are widely listened to among Syrians. So we looked at the man, so we called him a bearded, bald-looking man. But most of them were presidents of associations. In fact, the list of opinion leaders needs to be updated here. They have representation problems.

Compared to the governorate and the PDMM, Kilis Municipality has a more localized focus, and it is central to the impacts of the crisis as nature of its work. As an institution, it is the municipality that is a key actor serving to sustain urban daily life with specific focus on local needs and services. Bekir explains this as follows:

Since the municipality’s service scope is very broad, it has more relations with other institutions [compared to other public institutions] because everyone has something to do with the municipality. (...) The municipality is an institution that interacts more because it appeals to every segment and every part of the city. If you turn on the tap in the morning and water comes out of the tap, the municipality is working. If the garbage does not smell, the municipality is working. [...] you have a funeral, a relative of yours has died. If you want to host the guests somewhere, there is a condolence house. The municipality is with you. Your child is born. As soon as your child is born, the municipality is the first to welcome him/her. (...) Municipality is everywhere, in every aspect of life, from birth to death.

As a result of the shift towards neoliberal transformation in public administration and the departure from the social state approach, municipalities have increasingly shifted transitioned to adopting project-based service delivery to public. Before 2011, Kilis Municipality was already engaged in several projects and programs. According to Cemal, “projects at that time were mostly planned and carried out on the basis of cooperation between the central government and the Bank of Provinces [İller Bankası].”
The reflection of the EU accession process, which gained momentum in the 2000s, was particularly evident in urban areas, primarily manifested through various projects. Cemal, who has been working in the municipality since the 1980s, describes that period as follows:

There were not many social projects. Social projects showed themselves more after 2008 and 2009, after the bilateral agreements we made with the EU. (...) After the EU stepped in, social projects peaked in our region.

Ahmet summarizes the reflection of these developments in Kilis from his point of view as follows:

After our state signed the European adjustment laws, there was a development. Let me speak on behalf of Kilis, for example, institutional collaborations were established, EU aid funds began to arrive after 2007. Especially in agricultural activities. (...) I was not in the municipality at that time. Let me just say what I have observed. Various trainings were provided especially for the people working in the field to be more qualified. (...) Programs were made through the Turkish Employment Agency (...) We were always seeing those EU flags. After Syrians came, it grew different. Funds increased.

Social projects carried out by the municipality within the scope of the Social Support Program (SODES)\(^\text{19}\) can be given as an example to specific focus on the local and social development efforts because of the EU accession process. From a geographical perspective, there were other interactions carried out during these years. Under the Turkey-Syria Interregional Cooperation Program\(^\text{20}\) which was launched in 2006, and covered Gaziantep and Kilis and Aleppo city of Syria, the municipality has been part of several projects (Kilis Municipality Activity Reports, 2008, 2009, 2011).

As a response to the Syria crisis, Kilis Municipality started to provide municipal services to refugee such as marriage, funeral, burial procedures, daily food distribution with a field team and allocated vehicle (Kilis Municipality Activity Reports 2012, 2013). The municipality has been involved in various project

\(^{19}\) Please see: https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/bilgimerkezi/sosyal-destek-programi-sodes

\(^{20}\) Please see: http://www.sebcsyria.com/web2008/art.php?art_id=970&ViewMode=Print
preparation and implementation processes with various government institutions (Kilis Municipality Activity Report 2014). In the upcoming years, the municipality was engaged more in communications with humanitarian organizations and international donors for fundraising and business development purposes. Eventually, the municipality has become an institution with the most extensive portfolio of projects within the local landscape. The post-2011 period, from 2016 onwards in particular, corresponds to a time when there was a ‘project boom’ in Kilis. As a reflection of the national context to the local level in terms of the adoption of the reality as a long-standing crisis, and the mainstream approach towards social cohesion, Kilis Municipality has started to ‘advertise’ more about the situation in Kilis, been a central actor for the humanitarian organizations to coordinate activities on the ground. A project expert from a humanitarian organization explains the start of the interactions with Kilis Municipality as follows:

I can only speak from the time that I’ve been here back since 2017 and as far as I can see from then, there was already a big focus on working with the municipalities and I would venture to guess that before that time, there was limited engagement. [Before] more focus was directed towards the governorate and the district governorates because of the mass influx that came in and the security concerns around that as well. Once the influx had sorted of died down let’s say, and things became a bit more stable in 2016 and 2017 that's when I would have venture to guess that there was a shift towards supporting municipalities.

Engin also referred to a similar timeline to launch communication with public institutions, and Kilis Municipality that “since 2016, we have reached all the institutions we work with in [each location]. Because we had to ensure that coordination.”

However, there was distrust among the state and local people towards humanitarian organizations in the national and local context. Although local interactions increased in 2016 and later, the feeling of distrust continued and diversified towards humanitarian organizations. Engin expresses his thoughts as follows:

21 For the discourse that Kilis should receive the Nobel Peace Prize, which continued for a while with the idea that the city showed “an example of self-sacrifice that will go down in world history”, please see: https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/kilisten-guinnesse-aday-dev-davetiye/530322
There is a perception about foreign non-governmental organizations. […] After the crisis broke out, when these institutions started working in Turkey, they came with zero defeats. They come with a disadvantage because when you met with the authorities, they were told […] you are an agency. So, I was exposed to these labels in an incredibly serious way. (...) Especially after the July 15 period, being a representative of a foreign institution in the field was a very difficult environment for me. (...) Moreover, I mean, I am someone who works closely with mayors and many governors, and (...) they know that I will never allow anything to harm this country, they know that I act very sensitively.

To summarize, it can be said that the communication and interaction between the municipality and humanitarian organizations began especially in 2016 and later. This is due to the relative decrease in the severity of the crisis in the first years and its transformation into an uncertain process that spreads over a longer period. Related to this situation, the perception that those who came to Syria would return after the war was over. This approach was replaced by the realization that these people would stay here, social cohesion has been a policy discourse. Although the enactment of the LFIP law has controversial effects on local migration governance, the migration governance has found an institutional face with the PDMM. Regarding the regulatory framework for NGOs, it can be claimed that the permission processes for humanitarian organizations, especially international NGOs, to operate in Türkiye has been activated in 2013, and in the following years, activities began to be carried out within the scope of the legal status, although there were some complex instances in practice according to explanations of some research participants.

From the social cohesion aspect, Kilis Municipality can be considered as a projection of the political character of Türkiye at the local level. The municipality elaborates the government’s discourse and policies in a pragmatic way to channel funding sources to the locality. Humanitarian organizations, on the other hand, set social cohesion as a “sector” and “expected outcome” in their projects due to the change in the overall governance context from 2016.

3.3.2. Analysis Principal Stakeholder Interests in Policy Coordination: Kilis Municipality

The sudden increase in urban population because of the Syrian conflict, has put local governments, particularly Kilis Municipality, under substantial pressure. As
discussed above sections, municipalities at local levels appear as frontline stakeholders to coordinate with. In addition to their wide range of responsibilities, municipalities are the main authorities to represent their location and engage in relations with various actors and initiatives at local, national, and international levels.

Municipalities are both administrative and political entities. It is important to discuss the extent of the ability of such an organization with such a wide scope of service, that is dependent on various dynamics and located in the middle of the Turkish bureaucracy system, in the face of the mass migration influx. Especially discussing this around a small city with dense population, can make an important contribution to migration literature to present coping mechanisms of a local government in the face high service delivery demand of public. Although the issue of whether municipalities are to provide services to refugees living in their adjacent areas is uncertain as discussed in the previous sections, municipalities are important interlocutors of this issue, because migration is especially concentrated in cities and therefore is an urban issue.

As observed in Türkiye context, the public resources allocated for social policies and services, which the neoliberal policy and the public management approaches have pushed into the background, are in gradual decrease (Bayırbağ, 2017). Historically, local governments have been under the relative control of the central government. In fact, centralization is both the most distinctive feature and one of the most important problems of the Turkish public administration system (Aydın, 2017, p. 244). Although decentralization is one of the main discourses of neoliberal political economy from 1980s, it intrinsically includes political centralization and administrative and economic dependency. This contradictory situation is also reflected in the urban policy planning and management. The size of the population in the adjacent area is an important determinant in the calculation of the income to be allocated to the municipality from the central budget, but the proportion of the refugee population is not included in this calculation (Bayırbağ, 2017; Danış Şenyüz & Sert, 2019). At this point, there is an attractive alternative for decision makers who seek to find tools and opportunities for direct as well as indirect interventions: working with humanitarian organizations.
In the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan of Kilis Municipality, it is underlined as an “opportunity” to benefit from international funds “due to the presence of Syrian refugees in Kilis” (2020, p. 22). In the stakeholder analysis chart of the plan, several actors including public institutions, including the PDMM, officials, chambers, some unions, political parties and citizens are considered as stakeholders. Humanitarian organizations are not included in the chart explicitly. On the other hand, as it was mandated by the broader context of migration governance ecology, and identified in the interviews with research participants that these actors are considered as one of the main stakeholders to channel international funds to the city and support the municipality’s service delivery and institutional capacity, and deal with other issues that became significant after the migration influx. It has been emphasized by Hakan that Kilis Municipality “needs [the support from] these organizations as long as Syrians stay because we cannot afford this in terms of economic, technical capacity and employment.” Similarly, Frieda (Project Expert) underlines the need for assistance by saying that “the resources allocated from the national government to the municipalities are very limited for migration, it is not likely that they can do meaningful work quite often with the resources that are given to them.”

In the strategic plan of the municipality, there are five outcomes: institutional development, sustainable urban development, social development, environmental development, and cultural and artistic development. Institutional development and social development are two outcomes linked to the prevalence of migration influx and institutional interest in working with stakeholders. The emphasis on institutional development is underlined as a precursor to ensure quality service delivery (2020, p. 33). Social development outcome involves safeguarding urban and social stability by guaranteeing equitable, transparent, and prompt access to municipal services for all citizens (p. 34). Among the objectives listed under these outcomes, there are four objectives that are prominent in addressing funding mechanisms and cooperation:

Institutional Development Objective 4 - To activate project preparation and implementation processes to benefit more from national and international funds in order to facilitate the social life and adaptation of vulnerable groups and refugees living in Kilis.

Institutional Development Objective 5 - To establish sustainable relationships by organizing joint projects and events with international institutions and
organizations in order to improve the service quality of the institution and to reach universal standards and to improve relations between countries and cultures.

Social Development Objective 1 - To ensure that children, youth, women, the elderly, the disabled and refugees benefit more from the education, activities and services they need.

Social Development Objective 2 - To meet/increase the economic and social living standards of our citizens in need.

Social Development Objective 10 - To carry out employment-increasing activities and to carry out joint projects with public institutions, NGOs and the private sector (p. 33–34).

Although there is an ongoing uncertainty if the term “citizen” refers to those living in the city including refugees or not, the objectives 4 and 1 explicitly include refugees among the targeted groups in the service provision. These objectives prioritize funding mechanisms primarily intended for cooperation with ‘national and international organizations’, including NGOs and UN agencies, both implicitly and in the development of individual or joint projects.

These objectives prioritize funding mechanisms primarily intended for cooperation with ‘national and international organizations’, including humanitarian organizations, both implicitly and in the development of individual or joint projects. However, there is no specific emphasis on the term social cohesion, and it is debatable whether the municipality has an interest in promoting social cohesion. This will be discussed in more detail in the policy documents, perceptions, and practices sections of the thesis.

In the municipality’s activity report from 2017 to 2022. Among the duties of the study project directorate, especially business development with international stakeholders, is expressed as follows:

To conduct research and studies on fund-grant support loans provided to European Union member and candidate countries or third countries, to create projects regarding fund-grant support loans provided by EU institutions and other international organizations, to apply to relevant institutions and carry out projects. To participate in or organize capacity building activities deemed necessary at every stage of the project (Kilis Municipality, Activity Report, 2022, p. 73).
In this sense, access to funding sources is of fundamental interest to the municipality, and establishing relationships with these organizations is a ‘necessity’ for channeling these resources into the city. Considering Kilis’ short history of urbanization and urban municipal experience, the impact of intense population flow on urban infrastructure, insufficient municipal capacity to cope with this, and budget inadequacy, these stakeholder organizations are considered as ‘the intermediaries’ in directing fund resources to the city.

The form of assistance and coordination may vary based on donor priorities, expertise of the stakeholder organizations, expectations of the municipality and realities in the field. Which of these factors is more decisive varies depending on many dynamics. As it will be discussed in the sections related to social cohesion and coordination in detail below, it can be argued briefly here is that the municipality is more interested in ‘tangible’ support (e.g. rehabilitation of communal areas, cash or in-kind assistance, and employment). This tendency in the municipality is especially evident in the negotiation processes regarding initiating and maintaining coordination. In this sense, responses with more ‘intangible’ approaches (e.g. protection services) are not considered ‘essential’ as long as they are linked to tangible support.

Engin working as an expert in an international NGO, argues that it is important for municipalities to work with international NGOs in particular, as follows:

There is a mechanism that works [in the city], that is, people go out to the streets, go to parks, get into vehicles. The central budget is transferred to the provinces for citizens, but nothing is transferred for immigrants. (…) The projects that local governments have developed or will develop regarding subsidizing this work are important. When thinking about projects and with whom to do them, […] civil society comes to the fore. When we think about civil society, it is necessary to distinguish local non-governmental organizations from foreign non-governmental organizations because look […] I meet with the authorities in Ankara very often. There is a department within the ministry called the General Directorate of Civil Society Relations. [From there], let me share some data with you so you can confirm it. There are approximately 100-120,000 local associations. The total budget of 130 [international] associations is larger than the combined budget of 120,000 associations. Why am I saying this? It is important who local governments decide to work with. (…) There are many NGOs in the field, but when you
work with large non-governmental organizations, you can develop more effective and efficient projects at the point of impact.

From a local perspective, Hakan claims that working with local governments is among donors’ priorities, and explains this as follows:

Donors naturally want to see the areas where there are many Syrians, which is Kilis, especially Kilis. Although there are 400 thousand or 500 thousand Syrians in Istanbul, we are now with more Syrians than our own population. People see this. When you go to Ankara, or I give an example, when you go to Antalya, maybe if you wander in the bazaar for a day, you will encounter ten Syrians, but you may encounter ten Syrians in Kilis at any time.

The municipality’s interest in engaging with stakeholders, and humanitarian organizations in particular, has a political dimension at the local level. On the one hand, the municipality is the local authority in charge of providing municipal services to its dwellers, there is also an expectation to generate funding channels to the city from the public, ‘the voters’ and their representatives in particular. Ahmet argues about this as follows:

I was a municipal council member. For example, the common view of all parties was this: the more investment is made in the country, the better it will be. Even council members from other parties came and asked what we could do together and what contribution we could make. These projects are seen as things, contributions and investments made to Kilis from outside. No problem. On the contrary, there is more satisfaction in all parties.

During a dialogue, a local administrator shared some reflections concerning the discussed topic as follows:

Since municipalities are political institutions and come with the votes of the citizens, it is necessary to measure the pulse. (...) The integration of Syrians is important. The structure of society is also important. If the citizens look at me reactively, I have to look at [the issue] as reactively as they do. From time to time, citizens may complain. I can get down to their tone. This is what politics is like.

The municipality has permanent and contracted staff and workers that are in charge of management of municipal services at various levels and specializations. On the one hand, it is administrative work to manage relations and coordination. On the
other hand, it is a ‘political concern’ to perform these relations and establish coordination mechanisms considering the fact that the municipality is a political entity with an elected mayor and municipal council, and there is a diffusion of politics to decision-making process, relations and priorities.

In relation to the political concerns, some research participants argued that the municipality tends to pass the responsibility for addressing the needs of refugee communities onto humanitarian organizations. The emphasis here is that this approach of the municipality stems from “desperation”. Engin shares his thoughts as follows:

[The municipality] deals with hundreds, thousands of people every day. There is also the problem of social cohesion. (...) When we include the economic crisis, under current conditions, local people do not approve of public institutions providing services to immigrants. So, there is also a political situation now. (...) The mayor or the relevant authority wants to use its existing resources for its own citizens. While doing this, they expect to contact institutions and associations and see if [they] can do a project and whether [they] can meet the needs of immigrant citizens in these projects.

Engin's insights reveal that, the municipality has interest in channeling resources to Kilis and to mitigate gaps and challenges in overall service delivery and capacity.

3.3.3. Analysis Principal Stakeholders Interest in Policy Coordination:

Humanitarian Organizations

Kilis became a location of humanitarian organizations. Among these, there are local and international NGOs such as Relief International, Malteser International, RET International, Welthungerhilfe (World Hunger Help), CARE International, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation, Turkish Red Crescent, and several Syrian NGOs; UN agencies, such as World Food Programme, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and United Nations Development Programme. In the field, the presence of these organizations may vary based on the scope of legal permission and legal framework,
and network relations with authorities. In addition, the proximity to the field is also based on the scope of the projects. Some of these organizations carry out some of their activities directly in the field with the involvement of their project experts, field officers and support teams, and have project offices in Kilis, while some includes Kilis as a project location to accept referrals and coordinate with the referee organization for delivering the service or support for those identified in need. Some activities are carried out in liaison with the municipality without a physical presence in Kilis such as conducting training to municipal officials and providing equipment. In addition, some organizations engage with local authorities, and operate through their implementing partners located in Kilis.

Multi-level policy coordination (e.g. 3RP) and funding mechanisms (e.g. FRIT) are among the main determinants of the formation and dynamism of migration governance and they are effective in integrating the stakeholder organizations into the local policy coordination. In addition, given the mandates and diverse expertise of these stakeholder organizations and their programming focus, they seek for opportunities to carry out their activities in the localities. When examining the issue from the social cohesion aspect, the stakeholder organizations are counted among the policymakers and policy implementers of social cohesion. Considering wide ranges of roles and responsibilities of the municipalities and their significance at local level, it can be argued that there is always a potential area to coordinate with municipalities, and these stakeholders have strategic interest to engage in coordination with municipalities. On the other hand, how this is coordinated with the municipality will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

According to Ahmet, Kilis Municipality is the key local actor for these stakeholders because “it is Kilis Municipality that knows the city street by street and door to door. Water, garbage, infrastructure, parks, cleaning, distribution of aid to poor people... All of them are under the control of the municipality.”

Humanitarian organizations liaise with the governments within the context that they intend to respond the humanitarian needs. They tend to work with the government, and municipalities in particular, to scale up their own recognition in the context that they are embedded, engage in policymaking, respond to local needs, and intend to
While migration governance was discussed in the previous chapter, the importance of the 3RP policy platform in the formation of this governance system was highlighted. To underline here, responding to the needs at local level and with local interactions is inherent to the 3RP approach. In parallel with this, the mandates of the organizations also emphasize the importance of working with the governments, including their local extension. For instance, the UNHCR presents its rationale and framework in working with host governments, and underlines the importance of working with local governments as follows:

Local government may include governors, mayors, municipalities, local councils, police, security forces, and branches of line ministries. The influence and role of local government authorities should not be underestimated. They are usually responsible for all local public services, land and settlement issues, and security and law and order. In both out-of-camp and camp operations, the success of a response will depend significantly on the degree to which persons of concern have access to public services. UNHCR may put in place capacity-building initiatives or community support projects (CSPs) to facilitate service delivery and ensure the good will of local populations.

Frieda emphasizes the organizational interest of UN in engaging with local governments, and Kilis Municipality in particular as follows:

[...] Because it does not work any other way. There were a lot of agencies who were expelled from Türkiye because they did not operate within the local structures. On the one hand, this is problematic obviously how that was done. On the other hand, there are things that needs to be done through some kind of relationship and liaison between local governments, other stakeholders and [our organization] so that any response can be effective, can be managed, and the resources are not strained from just [our organization] or just from the municipality. I do think that [through] this kind of collaboration, you can share your expertise, you can share resources, you can share networks, or you can make sure that services are not duplicated. You can exchange knowledge, and you can ensure coordination. I think to some extent you can also do advocacy work like raising awareness about issues that we identify in the field and share with local government, higher up as necessary.

According to a project expert from a humanitarian organization, these organizations are here “at the invitation of the government”, and they “try to work within the boundaries that are set up.” The expert underlines the need for particular attention to Kilis, and explains the interest in coordinating with the Kilis Municipality as follows:
Kilis is extremely important because it is probably the only city in the country, as you well know that has a larger refugee population compared to the host community. That is a huge burden that has been replaced on the municipality itself to provide services for double amount of people that they have been accustomed. (...) It is also an important location because it is very close to the border and a lot of people have settled there now. Our organization has a base in the southeast and tries to support the municipalities around this area. (...) So it’s a recognizing that there is a need to support such a municipality that has a very low capacity in terms of social cohesion and migration management but then also the large refugee population that has now settled there, has to be integrated in the long term.

Similarly, NGOs emphasize the importance of coordinating with local governments, and municipalities in particular, in their mandates and policy initiatives to which they are a party. According to the Sphere Handbook (2018) that is the product of international efforts to set for minimum standards while providing humanitarian aid, urban settings areas typically differ from other contexts in terms of density, diversity and dynamics with high mobility and rapidly shifting power relationships. In this complex environment, municipalities are considered as key government authorities with links to other government entities. According to the handbook, working with local actors (such as the private sector, local government, neighborhood leaders and community groups) can be vital in restarting, supporting and strengthening existing services instead of replacing them” (p. 18).

Another interest in engagement with municipalities in particular, is related to legal and regulatory framework. For NGOs, international NGOs in particular, engaging with local authorities is not a choice but an obligation based on the permission obtained from the government. Engin (Manager, INGO) explains this as follows:

The operation of foreign non-governmental organizations in the provinces is subject to ministry permission. You cannot work there unless the Ministry of Internal Affairs gives permission. You cannot cooperate with local non-governmental organizations unless the Ministry gives permission. (...) We cannot work with local non-governmental organizations, so we do not have that permission. Since we do not have this permission, we have two options to fully comply with the relevant laws of the state: direct implementation, which we do, and in addition, we need to cooperate because sharing knowledge and experience is important. (...) There is no permission, so you cannot work with local NGOs, so what will you do? You work with public institutions.
Nidal also stated the need to coordinate with Kilis Municipality by giving an example from the pandemic period while working on a project that has focused on Syrians who operate unlicensed businesses, as follows:

There has been something like coordination between us for a long time. But after 2020, after the pandemic, we contact them more often. (...) In fact, after 2020, all organizations’ field permits were canceled [permission to carry out outreach activities]. (...) So, we are not allowed to work in the field right now. (...) When the municipality went to the field, it was giving warnings to people while leaving our contact information. We definitely needed to work with them at that time.

In addition to the interests aforementioned in the light of the interviews, policy documents and observations, it should be underlined that humanitarian organizations have non-profit and humanitarian standpoint to respond to populations in the localities. In parallel, the existential argument for these organizations is to work within coordination mechanisms to respond the humanitarian needs when governments ask for assistance.

On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter 2, these organizations are actors of neoliberal form of governance, and policy coordination in particular. In this context, these organizations monitor their performance and experience in the projects they carry out, and in the landscape that they are involved in, and generally they tend to expand their program portfolio. In general, organizations tend to grow. They tend to expand their capacity and scope of work in the country that operate in. In this sense, these organizations attach strategic importance to establish coordination relations with municipalities, which are one of the essential local authorities in the governance context.

According to Kerim, influencing and advocacy are among the reasons why humanitarian organizations remain willing to continue to exist in a country where they operate. On the other hand, these organizations play a role in the control mechanisms of the migration issue within the relevant country to some degree, and he articulates this viewpoint in the following manner:

Because they own something, they are included in a certain control mechanism, right? In other words, the refugee problem in Türkiye most likely
benefits the United States and the EU as well. (…) Refugees should not migrate to Europe, they should stay in Türkiye.

In fact, Kerim addresses the broader context of migration governance and externalization of problems to other countries as discussed in the previous chapter.

Kerim further discusses about individual concerns of personnel and role of these concerns at project development and strategic thinking as follows:

I think program managers are moving away from changing these projects in order to maintain job security, I think they are avoiding taking risks. (…) If you take the whole project and change it very strategically, I think there will be no approval from the country director to submit that project. Because s/he has this concern; s/he does not want people working in assistant or officer positions to become unemployed. But if you ask me, it is quite clear that Türkiye program will not continue this way if there is no change.

3.4. Social Cohesion in Policy Documents, Practices and Perceptions

The discussion on social cohesion delves into the policy framework embraced by stakeholders in migration governance, and as the subjects of this thesis study, the interplay between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations is salient in the complex landscape of migration governance in Kilis.

3.4.1. Analysis of Social Cohesion in the Policy Documents of Kilis Municipality

To identify the stakeholders’ approaches on social cohesion, policy documents were reviewed within the scope of this study. Regarding Kilis Municipality, available documents were reviewed. These documents are the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan, and activity reports from 2008 to 2022. When we look at policy documents, we can say that Kilis Municipality does not have an explicit definition or policy approach for social cohesion. This situation is related, on the one hand, to the uncertainty in the legal and administrative structure of municipalities in the context of social cohesion as discussed in previous sections, and at the same time to social, cultural, economic, and political concerns. Although there is no explicit approach towards social cohesion, some policy objectives in the municipality’s strategic plan can give an idea
about the municipality’s standpoint about social cohesion at the policy level. Some of these objectives were referred to as one of the policy interests of the municipality in interacting and coordinating the humanitarian organizations in previous section. In this section, they will be examined from with social cohesion lens. Objective 4 of the institutional development outcome and Objective 1 of the social development outcome explicitly includes refugees acknowledging their presence and needs, while Objective 2 of the social development outcome prioritizes citizens. In fact, conceptual complexity about how to address people continues.

Institutional Development Objective 4 - To activate project preparation and implementation processes to benefit more from national and international funds in order to facilitate the social life and adaptation of vulnerable groups and refugees living in Kilis.

Social Development Objective 1 - To ensure that children, youth, women, the elderly, the disabled and refugees benefit more from the education, activities and services they need (p. 33–34).

There are two main findings that lay foundation to the Objective 4 of the institutional outcome. These are the lack of funds to ensure the integration of refugees into social life and the lack of an administrative unit to execute and monitor the affairs regarding the refugees. The proposed activities under this objective are to design projects for national and international donors and to establish a migration unit within the municipality (Kilis Municipality, 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan, n.d., p. 37).

Regarding Objective 1 of the social development outcome in the plan, the findings are the high demand for art and culture courses. As a response, it is targeted to organize courses and workshops, creating play and education areas for children. Utilizing from the municipality’s “women’s vocational enrichment centers” and finally, ensuring cooperation between public institutions and NGOs and carrying out joint projects and events are among the activities for this objective (Kilis Municipality, 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan, n.d., p. 70).

Throughout the plan, there are no explicitly stated policy objectives for refugees other than those above. Other objectives in the plan place more emphasis on citizens and townsmen (hemşeri). In this context, conceptual confusion continues here as in the legal legislation. For instance, Objective 2 of the social development outcome
aims “to increase the economic and social standards of citizens in need”, while the Objective 4 of the cultural and artistic development is about “carrying out activities aimed at developing and consolidating townspeople’s law (hemşeri hukuku) in Kilis” (Kilis Municipality, 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan, n.d., pp. 35 – 71). Some policy targets in the plan focus on some problems in the city and it is stated that one of the reasons for these problems is migration and refugees. For example, social housing and donation activities are targeted under sustainable urban development because “housing in the city has become insufficient as a result of the Syria war and the stagnation in the construction sector.” (Kilis Municipality, 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan, n.d., p. 41).

The sudden and large-scale refugee migration is considered as a threat to the city and to the institutional capacity of the municipality in various aspects. In addition, the report highlights the existence of an unemployment issue within the city, attributing part of its escalation to migration. (Kilis Municipality, Activity Report, 2022, p. 137).

It can be argued that there is no clear social cohesion approach of the municipality. The emphasis is mostly on the adaptation of the newcomers to the city. However, the municipality does not ignore the existence and needs of refugees on a policy basis. One of the consequences of this situation is that the municipality interacts with various stakeholders, including humanitarian organizations, and carries out various activities in the city. It is not reasonable to evaluate an institution just by looking at its policy documents, and this thesis is grounded in the recognition of that fact. Examining the activities carried out in the field, perceptions of bureaucrats on social cohesion, and coordination processes will help to understand the local course of the issue.

3.4.2. Analysis of Social Cohesion in the Policy Documents of Humanitarian Organizations

The formation of the policy framework of humanitarian organizations regarding social cohesion is determined by the national and international policy documents
and, the strategic focuses of the organizations and the context. The national and international policy documents were mentioned in Chapter 3 (e.g., the 3RP, Humanitarian Charter and HSDNAP). These documents address local response to the local needs, and they prioritize social cohesion among the main policy objectives particularly after 2016. In this section, policy approaches of some organizations will be addressed.

In its 2021 – 2025 country program strategy (2020), UNDP mentions “the three most effective instruments” to deploy at its disposal in addressing the needs of people. These instruments are skills formation, social cohesion and the design and implementation of inclusive social policies, including social care services. The framework of the social cohesion instrument is described in the document as follows:

Social cohesion interventions will involve building on the support provided to municipalities to strengthen their role in fostering dialogue and participation to identify joint solutions to common problems. UNDP will seek to improve the living conditions of Syrians and host communities by investing in core local public services, especially in areas where Syrians make up a large proportion of local population. The timely delivery of quality municipal support will be a niche area for the UNDP response to the impact of crisis at the city level. Besides investing in critical infrastructure related to basic services, efforts will be made to improve strategic decision-making at the local level for better service provision. Improved facilitation of access to judicial services will help to enhance social cohesion among communities. All this will directly support the implementation of the Government’s Harmonization Strategy for 2018-2023. Partnerships with 3RP partners and IFIs will be strengthened in connection with these issues (p. 6).

UNHCR coordinates the 3RP together with UNDP and leads the protection and basic needs sectors and leads the higher education within the overall education sector which UNICEF leads. The agency places a significant emphasis on addressing "social cohesion and harmonization" as key strategic directions, and these aspects are elucidated in the following detailed explanation:

UNHCR implements social cohesion initiatives aimed at encouraging dialogue and interaction between refugees, host communities and service providers, and supporting local communities in receiving refugees. Supporting the implementation of the National Strategy on Harmonization and the National Action Plan which were adopted by the Government of
Turkey in February 2018 continues to be a priority for UNHCR, as are the engagement with local administrations, municipalities, NGOs, imams and mukhtars to strengthen social cohesion between refugee and host communities. [...] UNHCR also cooperates with municipalities in order to strengthen engagement with refugees at the local level, including by strengthening the technical capacities of municipalities. UNHCR works on expanding opportunities for Turkish language education through Public Education Centres.

Another UN agency that has several operations in Kilis is IOM. According to IOM,

Inclusion and social cohesion are factors that work together when it comes to the healthy integration of migrants in host communities and implies the mutual adaptation of migrants and the host society. Social inclusion refers to the process of improving the capacity, opportunity and dignity of people in unfavorable conditions based on their identity, so that they can participate in society. Social cohesion, although it does not have a universal definition, is related to a sense of belonging to a community, and with solidarity and tolerance among its members.

IOM addresses social cohesion in its refugee response programming and harmonization and social cohesion programming as follows:

Refugee Response Programming - IOM’s humanitarian programming will continue to focus on assisting Syrian refugees living outside of TACs [temporary accommodation centres] as well as host communities and other migrant populations. IOM will work within the framework of the 3RP to ensure in-country interventions are aligned with regional, national, and local priorities. Community stabilization interventions with refugee and host community populations will encourage integration and social cohesion between the communities as a priority, mitigating risks of intercommunal tensions. Quick-impact rehabilitation of communal spaces such as parks, playgrounds, sporting grounds, learning centres and launderettes will help bring refugee and host communities together, encouraging interaction and supporting harmonization in the long-term. CBI [cash-based interventions] will support the basic needs of the most vulnerable in the migrant population. Building on existing field operations, Emergency Case Management (ECM) will support both individuals and families with specific, complex or multiple assistance needs not addressed through existing services. Moreover, IOM’s Psychosocial Mobile Teams (PMTs) will continue to provide MHPSS activities tailored to the needs of each adult and child migrant and host community, prioritizing ideas that come directly from participants themselves. IOM’s shelter programme will continue to improve accommodation facilities and will work with local property owners to offer a secure rental period at fixed rates for migrants. Alongside shelter activities, migrants will receive training, and help construct their own shelters as a cash-
for-work activity, providing employment opportunities. As integration moves to the forefront of IOM Turkey's approach, so too do sustainable livelihoods solutions. IOM’s Livelihoods team will work to connect the skillset of migrants to gaps in local labour markets. The team currently offers in-kind support to budding migrant businesses and training, grants and mentorship to young entrepreneurial teams made up of Syrian and Turkish students. The team also places skilled Syrian workers in local Turkish businesses and supports the hiring process.

Harmonization and Social Cohesion - IOM will prioritize harmonization and social cohesion between Syrian refugees and Turkish host communities through a focus on inter-group contact dynamics. IOM’s social cohesion approach seeks to integrate basic needs, livelihood, socio-cultural, shelter and protection programming to promote social cohesion holistically. A key component of this will be the support provided to local Migrant and Community Centres, coordinated with the respective municipalities to enable Syrian refugees and other migrants to better navigate Turkish administration and encourage interaction between migrants and members of the host community. Capacity development of municipalities to support migrant-friendly services and eventual handover of services will contribute to the sustainability of services. Furthermore, IOM will continue to support DGMM’s extension of services and reach, including awareness-raising on migrant’s rights and support for vulnerable Turkish households. Based on lessons learned, the Social Cohesion model will shift from large, one-off outreach events to smaller-scale activities in which the same participants and groups are engaged over time, encouraging greater and more impactful social interaction. Activities under this pillar will be guided by IOM’s Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations Framework and utilizing IOM’s ‘The Power of Contact’ under the Joint Global Initiative on Diversity, Inclusion and Social Cohesion (DISC) (International Organization for Migration, IOM Turkey Mission Strategy 2021 – 2025, 2021, pp. 25 - 26).

As can be seen from above statement, refugees and host communities are targeted groups in Türkiye strategy document. In addition to social cohesion, various different conceptual frameworks are addressed in various documents22, including integration, inclusion, harmonization, and social mixing23 and all these concepts are linked to each other from different aspects.

It would be useful to give some examples regarding the policy framework of NGOs. International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (hereafter IBC) is a

---


23 Please see: https://publications.iom.int/books/power-contact-designing-facilitating-and-evaluating-social-mixing-activities-strengthen
member of the Sphere, and the International Community of Volunteer Associations. The organization has consultant status in the UN Economic and Social Council. On its website, there is confusion regarding the areas of focus. In the “What We Do” section, emergency relief, risk mitigation, rehabilitation and development are the main areas of focus. On the other hand, there are six major areas –relief and rehabilitation, housing and reconstruction, rural development, civil society and community development, education and training, and health, that are addressed in “General Principles”.

Conceptual complexity continues in the annual report of the organization (International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation, Annual Report, 2019).24 There is the term “(re)integration to society” on the IBC website and annual report as one of fields “to enhance and create opportunities” through projects, but it is not described what the term refers to in both sources. The organization does not provide explicit definition on social cohesion, but the term is included in project summaries addressing “to strengthen social cohesion between host and Syrian communities (International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation, Annual Report, 2019, p. 34).

Danish Refugee Council is one of the active NGOs working in Kilis focuses on protection and economic recovery activities. While the protection services target the refugees experiencing “the most acute protection risks” in Türkiye, economic recovery operations are focused on “the integration of refugees and vulnerable host community members into Türkiye’s formal economy through wage and self-employment and increased access to inclusive economic growth” (DRC, n.d.).

It is possible to draw various inferences from the policy examples above. It was discussed throughout the thesis that migration governance has a multi-stakeholder nature, which is also evident in the Kilis. Multi-stakeholder governance ecology has a ‘policy overload’ and multitude of concepts. Stakeholders explain the framework of problems and answers to problems with similar and different strategic approaches and policies. However, as seen in the IBC example, it is also observed that social cohesion is expressed superficially rather than providing a framework. It should be

remembered that Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations, which constitute the sample of this study, are just a few of the stakeholders of migration governance. These structures are stakeholders within larger and more complex governance networks. Therefore, from a social cohesion perspective, migration governance is multi-layered, and ‘overloaded’ with policies. Although some regulatory coordination mechanisms exist (e.g. 3RP, SDGs, Humanitarian Charter), it is doubtful to talk about the existence of holistic policy coordination with clear guidance tools.

3.4.3. Practicing Social Cohesion: Project Activities

Migration governance relies on projects as key initiatives that bring stakeholders together to coordinate policies at local level. This is due to the project-oriented nature of humanitarian crisis response and policy implementation on the ground. Considering this fact, this study focuses more on the policy coordination processes between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations in social cohesion-oriented projects. Given that each humanitarian organization has both similar and distinct areas of focus, extensive service scope and needs of Kilis Municipality, as well as the multidimensionality of the needs of refugees and locals in Kilis, it should be noted that a diverse array of project activities is conducted in Kilis.

Based on the interviews, the municipality’s activity reports and website, the websites of humanitarian organizations, activity reports and information forms, and the author’s field knowledge, it can be said that, the projects that humanitarian organizations have with Kilis Municipality, encompass a range of activities. These activities can be categorized and as follows:

- Protection services (case management, counselling and referral services, outreach, awareness raising sessions, psychosocial support),
- Educational activities (education counselling, vocational and basic skills courses for adults, hobby courses for children and youth, and library services),
• Child-friendly spaces as integrated to education activities and protection services,
• Basic needs (in-kind assistance such as non-food items including stationary kits and hygiene kits and cash assistance such as multi-purpose cash assistance and conditional winterization assistance),
• Health services (health counselling, providing assistive devices such as wheelchairs, glasses),
• Economic recovery (vocational guidance, short-term employment through cash-for-work initiatives, entrepreneurship support through grants and microcredits),
• Shelter and communal space rehabilitation,
• Socio-cultural activities (one-off activities in special days, sightseeing, sports tournaments, art and creative workshops)
• Material and equipment support to the municipality (personal protective equipment, hygiene and cleaning materials during the pandemic period, garbage containers, road sweeping vehicle, firefighting vehicle, kitchen equipment and supplies for hot meal workshops of the municipality, and blankets, food supplies and heaters during the earthquake period, equipment for municipal community centers),
• Municipal infrastructure and capacity (waste management, community center construction, training).

In parallel with the historical perspective, the municipality has implemented and continues to carry out projects in many areas with humanitarian organizations. However, it is not possible to list each individual project in this study. The presentation of a general scope of the projects that have been carried out so far through the above categorization was deemed appropriate.

It should be noted that the scope of projects is not strictly confined to linear categories. For example, one project may include multiple activities (e.g. protection, education and economic recovery), while another project may focus only on socio-cultural activities. In addition, examples of activities falling into each category are
given in parentheses. What is written in parentheses can be expanded further, but it is thought that it is to the extent that can give an idea about the scope the project activities. The targeted communities may be the same for the components of some projects, while they may differ in others.

As for the social cohesion argument of the projects, it varies, but in general terms it is as follows:

- Increasing the opportunities for refugees and local community members to spend time together and strengthening intergroup interaction (educational activities, child-friendly spaces, socio-cultural activities),
- Assisting refugees and the local community’s access to public services and ensuring their compliance with the public administration system, and access to their rights (protection services),
- Providing Turkish language courses to support language skills of refugees with the local people, integration into the Turkish education system and labor market (educational activities, economic recovery),
- Supporting work culture and strengthening social cohesion through employment (economic recovery),

---


26 A public library was opened in the city center in 2020 by the municipality and IOM. The mayor of the time stated the following about the purpose of opening the library: “The library will be a safe social space for everyone and the integration between the youth from both Turkish and Syrian communities is important for the growth and prosperity of this city.” Please see: [https://turkiye.iom.int/stories/library-opens-pave-way-social-cohesion](https://turkiye.iom.int/stories/library-opens-pave-way-social-cohesion)


28 Kilis Municipality and IOM opened a social cohesion center in 2021. The center offers counselling and referral services in five key areas: legal and protection, education, social services, health, and vocational guidance. The center also organizes social activities and awareness sessions on various topics. Please see: [https://twitter.com/IOMTurkiye/status/1473618554700414984?t=Znk-9AmJZBwqLEva5p3Aw&s=19](https://twitter.com/IOMTurkiye/status/1473618554700414984?t=Znk-9AmJZBwqLEva5p3Aw&s=19) [https://twitter.com/IOMTurkiye/status/1556671528330207240?t=2a89wRHq7K6dFspPzQzhDQ&s=08](https://twitter.com/IOMTurkiye/status/1556671528330207240?t=2a89wRHq7K6dFspPzQzhDQ&s=08)
• Promoting social cohesion through waste management engagement.29

As can be understood from the categories above, various projects are being carried out in various areas in Kilis. The relationship of some of these projects with social cohesion is exemplified. Each project includes a social cohesion approach within its own scope. In addition, considering the interviewees’ perceptions of social cohesion, it can be said that there are ‘many social cohesions’ that are similar and different from each other. In the next section, perceptions of municipal and humanitarian bureaucrats will be discussed.

3.4.4. Perceptions of Bureaucrats on Social Cohesion

Within the scope of the study, the research participants were asked about their perceptions of social cohesion. This is an important issue because, as bureaucrats working in key roles in both Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations, they are engaged in the various levels of project management. It can be critical for this study that attempting to reveal their perceptions on social cohesion provide insight about the extent of difference or similarities between perceptions, perspectives towards projects, limitations of projects and overall coordination. The likelihood of implementing policies may be diminished if there is a weak belief and commitment among those responsible for their execution. In other words, the probability of putting policies into practice may decrease when there is a lack of strong conviction and dedication among those tasked with carrying them out.

3.4.4.1. Perceptions of Municipal Bureaucrats on Social Cohesion

Furkan thinks that issues related to social cohesion are a structural problem and therefore the projects have no effect on social cohesion. He explains this as follows:

The word integration rather than harmonization is a more accurate word because we are trying to integrate to the whole. Harmonization seems to be a

29 UNDP’s Effective Urban Waste Management for Host Communities Phase II: Strengthening Social Cohesion through Participatory Waste Management Project provides equipment support to the municipalities for supporting waste management capacity, zero waste trainings to promote domestic waste management as well as the establishment of waste collection center. Please see: https://www.undp.org/tr/turkiye/news/kilis-ve-halliyede-sifir-atik-toplumu-olusturma-hedefiyle-faaliyetler-devam-ediyor
little up in the air for me, but integrating and including seems to describe the purpose of doing that work. Is bringing children to school integration? It is integration. But if the people at school are not concerned about this, if the Ministry of National Education is not concerned about this, then what you are doing does not serve this purpose. Maybe you’re just helping a child maintain his or her well-being. […] After we bring an unschooled child to school, it is not our business whether that child adapts to society or not. After going to school, it is the job of that teacher, and apart from that teacher, it is the job of the Ministry of National Education. When you put 30 Syrian students and 10 Turkish students in the same classroom, you cannot talk about harmonization there. (…) Here a reverse acculturation occurs. (…) This time, you will Syrianize Turks. (…) When there are 30 Syrian children and 10 Turkish children, there is no need for 30 Syrians to speak Turkish. Turkish is not needed outside of class. He spends his social life in Arabic. This is also pedagogically harmful for the child. […] The project does not contribute to social harmony. These projects do not have such a concern anyway. […] How can psychological support assist the child in adaptation? […] For example, we make the child see a psychologist because he is introverted. […] If we are talking about social cohesion, does this contribute anything? I think not. Or, if the Ministry of National Education’s own curriculum or its own activities do not worry about how we can make these children live in harmony in the right way, how we can adapt to society, any activity you do as a project does not contribute to harmonization (…) all problems in Türkiye are structural. (…) We prevented child marriage and sent many children to school. These are, of course, important achievements, but do they serve social cohesion? This should be our main question.

Ahmet defines social cohesion as “bringing two people together in a medium where they can understand each other and having common values.” He emphasizes that everyone is exposed to disasters, and, in a sense, they are ‘equal’ to the extent of their losses, he states that this equality cannot create cohesion. He explains his thoughts as follows:

In other words, they need to create a bond between each other by imparting shared values. But we did not have anything to connect us with the Syrians. It just did not occur. After the latest missile incidents, we saw that everyone was harmed by the violence, regardless of race, language, or religion. We saw it in the earthquake. I mean, I saw Syrians and Turks who were homeless after the earthquake. We fell into the same status. For example, we stayed in the camps where we had previously put Syrians. I went personally and spent a night with my family. I took my own family to the place where I took Syrians with my own hands. (…) When we heard about social cohesion, we loved it. There were very good activities. We were coming together with the children. Women were coming together. But nothing was happening. I mean, you can’t make two irons fuse together just by holding them to each other.
We need a chemical that will fuse it, but we were missing that. First, it was very difficult to destroy the cultural values of the society that we talk about, the society we were exposed to. For example, sometimes citizens reacted like this: women dressed in black are walking around outside, or men in long skirts and men with beards, we don’t know who they are, are walking around outside. There was such a prejudice. Then it started to break down. But I think there was always something missing because we just couldn’t succeed. When I was a field worker, I learned from that two children were beaten because they spoke Turkish at home. We were faced with a very conservative structure. Secondly, while social cohesion is being made, one society is harmonized to another, the less population adapts to the more, or let’s say, for example, the Syrians came here. What language do they need to be exposed to here? Turkish. They are supposed to learn Turkish here, but we learned Arabic, on the contrary. Because when we went out to the streets, every greengrocer, butcher, barber, baker, and worker we were exposed to was mostly Syrian. It was more than us. That’s why reverse integration started here.

Ahmet also points out that language learning remains an issue. There are Turkish courses given by the public education center in Kilis, coordinated and supported by various organizations. On the other hand, Ahmet claims that the low level of language learning is due to “ghettoization.” In other words, he thinks that these people can continue their lives in the city without needing to speak Turkish and expresses it as follows:

For example, Syrians living in Antep and Istanbul speak Turkish very well. This did not happen in Kilis. It didn’t happen due to population density. In fact, let me give you our Ekrem Çetin neighborhood as an example. Start from Nihat Bağoğlu secondary school in Ekrem Çetin neighborhood, on the other side of the Directorate of Culture, a very long street... So, ninety percent of them [dwellers] are Syrians. So, a ghettoization had begun there. Thanks to our esteemed minister [Ministry of Interior], it was a measure taken by our government. They closed densely populated neighborhoods [to registration].

According to Emre, “first, two people must want this [social cohesion between them]. For example, let’s say you opened a cinema for Turks and Syrians. What if

---

30 In June 2022, PMM shared a neighborhood closure announcement. “Considering the density of foreigners”, neighborhoods in certain provinces, including Kilis, have been closed to temporary protection registration, international protection registration, residence permit and change of residence province of foreigners. In the annex of the announcement on this date, 74 neighborhoods in the central district of Kilis and 9 neighborhoods in Elbeyli district were closed to registration. No other announcement was made after this date, but field observations and interviewees reported that only 4 neighborhoods in the central district of Kilis are open for registration in the research period of this study. Please see the announcement: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/mahalle-kapatma-duyurusu-hk2](https://www.goc.gov.tr/mahalle-kapatma-duyurusu-hk2)
they don't want to come? Cohesion cannot be achieved.” He also emphasizes that the priority of the municipality is municipal infrastructure, not social cohesion.

Cemal thinks that social cohesion is “an issue that should be taken seriously and a factor that has been very important since the birth of humanity until today” and continues:

We generally use social cohesion to mean ensuring the harmony between Syrians who come from abroad temporarily and the local population. There needs to be [social cohesion], we need to figure that out. Naturally, Syrian culture and social life cannot be the same as the social life and culture of another country. Social cohesion is a matter of explaining this [to both sides], making this happen and making both parties accept it. Even if it is temporary, I think it is an important matter to explain and introduce the social life and culture of the place you have come to, and, of course, to emphasize that the social lives and cultures of newcomers are like these for the local people.

Cemal thinks that the projects and the activities of international actors in Kilis have a positive impact on social cohesion and expresses his thoughts as follows:

Various projects and studies on social cohesion were carried out with the contributions of NGOs. (...) If we had not tried to implement the projects, to what extent could we, as a municipality, have achieved this social harmony within our own means? Also, we are a novice province in terms of migration, so even though there are people coming and going to Syria, there is a war on the other side, there are Syrian immigrants coming because of the war (...) Approaching this issue locally, within the scope of the project and from an international perspective It’s very different. If we had tried to solve this problem on our own, it might not have been possible to be this successful. Because opinions on this subject are in a vicious circle. Naturally, local people are always worried. It is a little difficult to accept. Municipalities are also part of the local community. Therefore, they cannot act independently of their views and actions. This is where it became healthier and better for foreign organizations to be involved in projects and to explain and implement them more easily to the local people. There has also been considerable success in social cohesion. So, it brought us to advanced stages.

Cemal also explains the issue with a criticism to the municipality:

Municipalities do not take [social cohesion] seriously. The above does not take the meaning of social cohesion very seriously. That’s the main point. Analyzing, directing, and managing some situations in our lives is a different matter. So those who govern us do not fully have that awareness. (...) They
say that we have traditions and customs anyway (...) They say that this social cohesion may negatively affect our traditions. This is an unnecessary concern.

He answers to the following question of why the municipality is involved in social projects as follows:

Let’s say something like opportunism. Funding comes from Project A. The attractive part is this, they say, forget about the other side, I think. Therefore, we cannot reach the results, you know. Everything ends where it ends, that’s the sad part.

According to Bekir, social cohesion is something about “people living in peace, everyone being happy” and “creating a city consciousness, a citizenship awareness in the people living in the city and making them feel like they belong to this city.” He expresses his thoughts by referencing daily life and everyday experiences with the following:

I spent my childhood in this city. In this city, people used to sweep in front of their doors, everyone had a garbage bin in front of their doors. The municipality would come and take them away. Suddenly, a society appeared. They take the garbage and throw it out the window, but this is a social life. Explaining that what they did was not right (...) I have a small child. When I took him to the park, [...] I see a child who is 7 years old and has six siblings of different ages. There are two swings. Those 6 people can swing until noon. (...) Telling them to take turns and that other children may need to swing on a swing too. (...) These are also social cohesion, a part of social cohesion. (...) We experience this a lot during the day (...) The behaviors we get from them also include the positive things they bring to us. For example, I see that working people have great work discipline. (...) They attach more importance to working because they have seen the difficult conditions. (...) They keep their workplaces open until 12 at night. Seeing this, Turkish tradesmen kept their businesses open. What happened? It was reflected as a positive service to the public. There are beautiful things that we are influenced by. So, nothing is one-sided. [...] Social cohesion happens on its own. Even though we try to do the project on paper, you see that social cohesion happens on its own at some points.

He further explains the impact of projects and standpoint of the municipality as follows:

We strive to ensure equal opportunities for every child. We have projects as our own directorate in the centers of our municipality. When our children are
in school, we contribute to increasing their academic success by providing homework support through our teachers. (...) We provide pre-school nursery services free of charge, whether Syrian or Turkish. (...) We have programs to prevent forced early marriages. We have psychological support programs. (...) We organized a children’s festival last year. Syrian children came and Turkish children also came and had fun together. We showed these people that children are children everywhere and children should have fun together everywhere. We organize Ramadan events. (...) Anyone can come to these events. (...) Due to the earthquake, there were not many entertainment programs. When you look at the shopkeepers on the street, temporary mobile shopkeepers opened, and the municipality allowed them during Ramadan. Many of them were Syrian citizens. They came and set up a stall in front of a Turkish citizen’s shop. There was no fight, no noise, you probably didn’t hear it. Let people earn their bread. People know this is the right thing to do.

Hakan thinks that the municipality has a motivation to increase social cohesion and that this is because it is a local institution, and he expresses this with examples from various project activities as follows:

I think the municipality is concerned about [social cohesion], but I don’t think any institution is as concerned as we are. Because we provide the service to these people. When these people are born, we bring them a children’s kit, and when they die, we bury these people. These people receive all services from our municipality from the day they are born to the day they die. Both Turkish and Syrian. But the governorate doesn’t have much to do with this. The Turkish Employment Agency does not have much to do with Syrians. They are not that knowledgeable about this subject. (...) The municipality is local, truly local. Its employees are also local. For example, the police chief is appointed and leaves after two years. (...) In general, most of these people come from different provinces. They don’t know the dynamics here. They don’t know the customs and traditions. They do not have a kinship with Syrians. They have not engaged in cross-border trade. Above all else, the personnel working in the municipality... For example [mentioning about a municipal official], has been working in the municipality for 35 years. (...) I’ve been working here for 10 years. I don’t think of leaving here, after all, I will stay here, I will die here. (...) For me [Kilis] is the end.

The municipality opened social facilities. We opened women’s vocational training centers. Syrian women were more in demand here than Turkish women. We have 20 social centers. When we opened these centers, we ensured that everyone could benefit from these centers, regardless of Syrians or Turks. The main objective of establishing women’s vocational training centers is for Syrians and Turks to spend time together in that neighborhood. Children will come to nurseries and socialize there. Yes, they bonded. But Turkish or Syrian men do not come to these centers. Because all these people are struggling to make ends meet and are working. (...) It draws my attention
that most Syrian women can speak Turkish. Why can most of the children speak Turkish? They play on the street. They learn something while playing. Women to the center, drink coffee or tea with others, and somehow, they bond. The men could not integrate in any way. Turkish men work in the field until the evening. I think my missing guess is economic. [Mentioning about two Syrian workers] worked with us through [an organization]. They are qualified people, very good electricians. They are excellent people, both morally and business-wise. Those friends are Syrian. When one project was finished, we took it from another project. (...) We somehow employed these guys for 3 years. They are truly wonderful people. (...) The municipality has no possibility of recruiting people because these people are not Turkish citizens. (...) Some legal procedures are required for the recruitment of Turkish people. (...) There must be a need in that area. (...) We could not get any productivity from the 3-month projects. When we first started in 2019-2020, all projects were 3 months long. The projects were completed within 3 months, and we couldn’t even get to know the people. We wanted these projects to be extended for 6 months, 9 months, 12 months. How can they bond with each other in such a short time when we can’t even get to know them? To integrate, men need to know Turkish, or we need to know Arabic. (...) I think we won at least 40-50 people. We got to know each other, they got to know us. The reason for this was partly because the projects took a long time. We were also humane about it. We pushed them a little, they came to us a little.

According to Hakan, municipal centers play a crucial role in fostering social bonds among women, affording them the opportunity to socialize, given that the primary responsibility for supporting the household falls on men; in contrast, Ahmet emphasizes a noticeable deficiency in interpersonal interactions among women specifically in Kilis, elucidating his perspective with the following thoughts:

Social cohesion remained incomplete. Especially among women. Women are still conservative. They hang newspapers and bags on the windows of their houses. For example, you can enter the house directly from our exterior door. They also draw separate sheets. So even if the door is opened, you can’t see inside. (…) For example, Syrians turn on lights in their homes during the day. Why? Because all the places that receive light and can be seen from the outside are closed. Covered with a blanket, covered with newspaper. This is the culture. It was like this in Syria too. In fact, this is not just a problem of our social cohesion, it is a problem of equality between men and women or the oppression of women within their own culture.

While the research participants were asked about their understanding on social cohesion, they were also asked what they thought about voluntary repatriation and whether it was time to discuss social cohesion or repatriation. The reason for this is
that the political discourse has turned into the repatriation of refugees to their countries. Examining the perspectives of research participants has been found crucial to identify complexities or dualisms in their perspectives.

Regarding this topic, Bekir reflects his thoughts with the following:

(Though) They put the nightingale into a golden cage, it still moaned for its home (Bülbüle altın kafese koymuşlar, yine de vatanım demiş).31 Everyone is happy in their own city. (…) these people also missed their city. I don’t know what the security situation is there or how it can be ensured, so I think they will be happy if they can return safely. (…) Even though there is a repatriation, people continue to live. Social cohesion will always be important. (…) Even if there are no people left, different situations may arise even until they leave. Social cohesion is a dynamic thing, it is an ongoing process.

Ahmet also supports the voluntary repatriation, and explains his argument with the following:

This problem will not be solved overnight. No such thing. Saying that I will send the person away overnight is not something that has any real meaning. Because we, as a society, have adopted it, so as the Turkish society, we are trying to find a solution. We say these people should go, but at the same time, their safety and livelihood conditions should be ensured. We, as the people, want this. (…) No one can send these people away like this unless dignity and safe return is ensured. Even if there is an attempt, we will oppose it this time. Because if we adopted it this way, we wouldn’t want to end it like this.

As seen in the interviews, there are various perceptions and approaches among the research participants regarding social cohesion. This shows us that there are structural problems that might decrease credibility of activities aiming to foster social cohesion in Kilis. This diversity of thought, in a way, shows that central-level policies regarding migration are not the answer to local problems and concerns.

The benefits of the projects were stated by various interviewees, but in Emre’s words, “the project solves a part of the problem, but it does not eliminate the problem.” Projects are endeavors that have certain objectives to be achieved within a defined timeframe. On the other hand, the fact that migration governance is

31 Turkish proverb.
dependent on projects in the field may not answer the ongoing needs and concerns of those living in Kilis in the long run.

3.4.4.2. Perceptions of Humanitarian Bureaucrats on Social Cohesion

As integrated element of this study, this section will focus on the perceptions of humanitarian bureaucrats regarding social cohesion. Frieda criticizes that the concept of social cohesion is not clear at the institutional level and therefore various rationales are derived for activities and continues:

[One of the program units in the organization] framed their work under social cohesion. I find it very complicated to accept. (...) A lot of their work is framed under social cohesion. For example, park rehabilitation. They would call it a social cohesion activity. But for me, you haven't done anything. You have just created a framework based on which you can work on social cohesion but for that we need to be on the same page on what it is, right? For me, social cohesion is a connection as sense of trust and solidarity within a community so that they can lift together without conflict, even though they have differences. It also means that people have a sense of belonging, respect, and support. They share the values their actions contribute to the inclusive and diverse society, and our programming, our social cohesion work should foster these kinds of values. Because in the end, that means that you are integrating people successfully. If they can speak with their neighbor, if they can speak the language, if they can go to school without conflict in every step of, the way, that means social cohesion.

She further claims that it is difficult to measure the impact even in a single project as follows:

It is super hard as a concept to monitor. (...) My background is mental health. So mental health is similarly complicated. How do you measure someone’s improved well being based on one thing that you are doing? (...) Social cohesion is a little bit similar in this regard that “okay maybe I had one positive interaction today but what if I still cant go and open a bank account, or what if people call me nasty things on the street, you know? So, I think, it is super difficult to see the outcomes of your work because maybe the environment still does not promote cohesion. (...) Also it is not easy to do, right? You run an activity over multiple sessions. Yes, maybe you got along better with this group. That is great and that is an outcome but I think for sure, it is not an easy thing to monitor at all. I also always think that people are probably biased in answering because they know exactly what it is that you wanted to hear.
Like Frieda, Ezgi (Field Officer) mentions that there is no grounded institutional approach to social cohesion and exemplifies this as follows:

The impact of the projects is in terms of people knowing their rights. These are very important results. But I do not find it right that the social cohesion perceived by the sector is reduced to PSS [psychosocial support] activities. (...) I think awareness sessions contribute more to social cohesion than PSS activities. Because you directly teach people their rights. (...) There is no structured mechanism or system regarding social harmony in Turkey. Each [stakeholder] proceeds randomly. [The organization] is one of them. There are no specific pillars regarding social cohesion. It aims to achieve PSS through single-day PSS activities. But strangely, in [the organization], social cohesion is perceived as only providing protection. But social cohesion is not such a limited concept. (...) [The organization] does not have a good background in terms of social cohesion or a good vision in this regard.

Burak expresses his thoughts on social cohesion as follows:

We need to think in the context of forced migration. In fact, social cohesion is also important in voluntary migration. But while people migrate voluntarily, knowing that they will be involved in those social adaptation processes by taking some risks and believing that they should be involved, the situation is a little different in forced migration. A slightly more conservative structure is at the forefront. But in general terms, social cohesion is all-encompassing. To develop a sense of confidence and belonging by being involved and included in the society in which they plan to live in cultural, social, and economic terms. Of course, for this, intercultural interaction needs to be strengthened. There must be some opportunities for this, we call it intercultural interaction, but for this to happen, two cultures or two communities need to come together so that an interaction can be talked about, and it can be strengthened. In this sense, within the framework of social dialogue, we first need to recognize differences. Differences need to be explained correctly to both communities, and if there are situations that will create obstacles in this regard, some precautions should be taken. To support coexistence as much as possible, these studies must be carried out in a sustainable and regular manner. (...) Activities must be carried out continuously in a meaningful and traceable manner.

Serdar associates social cohesion with being more integrated into “the system.” According to him, “social cohesion is not assimilation. Let me say that first. In my opinion, social cohesion is not adaptation to people, but rather adaptation to the system within the country established by those people.” Referring to the discourse of repatriation, Serdar claims that sending people back to their countries is “an impossible thing”, that people are “here to stay.” He also adds that “Their [refugees’]
priority is to leave, [this is] the desire of all of them without exception is going to a third country. But this is impossible in practice. Those to be sent have been sent. (…) So actually, this is a dream now.” For these reasons, he thinks that social cohesion is a “necessity.” On the other hand, he sees the fact that the municipality is a political institution as an obstacle to projects and explains it as follows:

Local politics is the biggest obstacle [to social cohesion]. When you look here from Ankara, everything is going smoothly. A lot of donors provide a lot of funds, but when it comes to the local level, which deals with the people, you see that things are disrupted. (…) The municipality as required by politics, while gives one to these people [refugees], it will either hide it or while gives one to them one and it will give two to the Turkish citizen. There is no other way. Because this will be remembered in the next election. (…) This is the sword of democracy that is constantly swinging over [the municipality]. I don’t think they can get over this. This is the biggest obstacle to projects.

Nidal makes a distinction between those coming from rural and urban areas to Kilis. He says that most of the refugees in Kilis come from Syrian villages and continues as follows:

Most of the Syrians who come to Kilis from Syria are from villages, not city centers. This is a very important thing because for example, I grew up in the city and I may encounter a hundred people a day in the city, and I may have to socialize with a hundred people. But the person living in the village is not exposed to this. Because everyone knows each other. (…) They know each other, so they may have had some problems with social adaptation or socialization. (…) Syrians are dividing among themselves. For example, our way of life is different [compared to those living in rural areas]. I live differently. The things they do may not seem very attractive or right to me. (…) For example, when I get on a bus, I criticize people who talk loudly, no matter who they are.

Nidal thinks that repatriation is a problem in itself and that the adaptation of refugees to Türkiye is also problematic, and explains his thoughts as follows:

Why don’t some people adapt here? Because they don’t feel like they belong here. Because they don’t want to live here. An environment needs to be created for these people to return. The current environment never allows it. (…) Because there is no social life in Syria anymore.

Ezgi expresses her thoughts and perspectives about social cohesion phenomenon with the following:
When it comes to social cohesion, the first thing that comes to my mind is not people spending time together. Many more things come to my mind: has the person been able to integrate there, does s/he know the legal procedures there, does s/he know his rights there, can s/he access livelihood opportunities, can s/he access education, can s/he access health?

Ezgi thinks that repatriation and social cohesion are issues that need to be discussed and explains this as follows:

If [repatriation] is going to happen, I think it needs to be systematic and at the same time, social cohesion needs to be discussed for those who will stay. Of course, this is not something that only Türkiye can decide. (...) There also needs to be volunteering. (...) The number of people who want to leave [Türkiye] and the number of people who want [refugees] to leave Türkiye clearly demonstrate [the state of] social cohesion. There can be no social cohesion here if the majority wants them to leave. If the majority wants to go, it won’t happen either. I think this is an important thing. (...) I don’t think [this issue] will be solved. There will never be social cohesion in Türkiye. “There will be compulsory coexistence” and we cannot call this social cohesion.

Feryal thinks that discussing and thinking about social cohesion is a necessity. However, she also points out several problems surrounding political atmosphere and complexities in Türkiye as follows:

It is clearly obvious that this is needed. There are also certain problems. You can’t ignore this. Syrians have become politicized. Anthony Giddens uses the term scapegoating, you know, as the economy goes backwards, in the world for example, refugees are being scapegoated right now, especially under the leadership of more right-wing conservative leaders, and this is something that has already existed in Türkiye for years. (...) The things people said were taken into consideration more. Afterwards, the earthquake, the pandemic, many things happened.

Based on the insights gathered from interviews with municipal bureaucrats, it is evident that humanitarian bureaucrats similarly exhibit a range of perspectives on social cohesion, a complexity arising from the abstract nature of the concept and the inherent challenge associated with directing concerted efforts towards its promotion. It is also important to mention here that while the research participants hold the belief that the ongoing projects yield local benefits to a certain extent in Kilis, their perspectives on the future of migration governance and social cohesion are not
imbued with optimism. This finding can be considered as an important sign to question the break between policies and practices on the ground.

3.5. Analysis of Policy Coordination within the Scope of Social Cohesion-Oriented Projects

This section will focus on the coordination problems and good practices between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. As discussed in the previous sections and chapters, forced migration is a set of problems in terms of its causes and consequences. Forced migration is also the subject of policy making and implementation for receiving countries, cities, regions and structures (e.g. Türkiye, Kilis, EU) that are ‘exposed to or likely to be exposed to receive’. The relative position of stakeholders at various levels in the face of the ‘threat’ of forced migration, or in more civil society jargon, the humanitarian crisis, is an important determinant of their position in migration governance. The reasons and areas of interest that push Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations to interact with each other were discussed in the sections above. It should be underlined that these interests affect coordination in various aspects. Ultimately, policy coordination requires different stakeholders to work together. In this respect, examining how things work, or more precisely, how what is written on paper is put into practice and the dynamics in stakeholder relations, is reasonable to make constructive policy recommendations.

3.5.1. First Contact and Subsequent Negotiation Process for Project Design

Stakeholders in migration governance often find each other through various channels, which is also observed in the first contact between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. These channels include network events (e.g. meetings, forums at various levels), formal networks (e.g. government institutions and other stakeholders as intermediaries) and individual networks. Ahmet noted that “the incoming organizations were first contacting the governorate, and then municipalities got involved. Later, other public institutions also got involved.” One interviewee stated that one of the managers had an informal connection with a senior governorate official and that the organization was invited to Kilis.
The first contact is followed by the subsequent communications to negotiate about potential areas to coordinate. Referring to the various interests of the stakeholders as discussed in the previous sections, the negotiation process can turn into a process in which both parties take positions in line with their own interests. While Nidal argues that “the municipality always has expectations, so we cannot [do project] close-out because they always make requests”, Emre says that “we do not depend on funds for our work. After all, we are the state.” Although it does not handover all its scope of work, it can be said that Kilis Municipality is in a more demanding position as a local government responsible for responding to local needs, and humanitarian organizations make the efforts to manage expectations. Engin exemplifies this situation as follows:

Municipalities have all kinds of needs. When you talk to the mayor, he says that there are no garbage containers, Syrians are wandering around the parks, [they are] breaking and dumping, nothing comes from the central budget (...) but he tells these without knowing in which sectors the institution he is meeting with is carrying out projects.

Frieda underlines the gaps in the negotiation process that is related to the unclarity in the organization policy. She also highlights the necessity of prioritizing local considerations for sustainability as follows:

It is a lot of saying “yes” in the beginning. (...) We do have a mandate, but it is not as clear as other mandates. (...) [For the organization], if there is money, then there is an interest in working together. Lots of funding bodies require these kinds of partnerships. Because of course the only way to sustainably ensure any kind of support is by investing in the local structure. Because otherwise you have some kind of aid dependency eventually with the uncertainty of humanitarian funding all these international actors eventually will leave and then if you have not invested in and partnered with local partners, then that means, all the efforts will end.

Referring to the organization structure of the humanitarian organizations, liaison experts, project management experts, and field officers have key roles in maintaining stakeholder relations and influencing decisions in the organization. However, it is the senior management that makes the final decision. In Kilis Municipality, the mayor is the ultimate figure to negotiate. Deputy mayor and bureaucrats working in the study project, plan project, social aid affairs directorates and municipal board are key
figures in engaging with humanitarian organizations, and influencing the mayor. Frieda emphasizes this process as follows:

It is really hard. It really depends on who you negotiate with. (...) There is always a give and take, and there are things that you definitely need to do that the municipality requests because I mean, for both parties there needs to be a benefit of their partnership, and migration is not a topic that is always very welcomed in the first place or that actors do not want to do anything about.

While coordination through bureaucratic processes in both the municipality and the organizations is important in terms of involving various bureaucrats according to their areas of expertise, it also creates confusion and complexity. Too many procedures and decision mechanisms can cause planning and activities to be disrupted and disconnected from context. Referring to Peters’ (2015) understanding on coordination issues, these complex negotiation processes can result in redundancies or gaps in coverage.

Negotiation can be challenging while discussing potential project activities. Ahmet says that,

They [bureaucrats of humanitarian organizations] come to us with the rules in hand. They do not come by considering the uniqueness of Kilis. They say that we did it like this in Antep, we did it like this in Urfa, we will do it like this here too. They say that the donor has conditions. (...) Each province should be evaluated on its own, by making a model. For example, you mentioned social cohesion, there should not be the same social cohesion everywhere. [Bureaucrats] come with conditions or with certain rules but this should be flexible.

However, Ahmet also highlights good practices in terms of consultation to the municipality while designing a project. He says that “an organization was planning to write a project. The organization arranged to meet with us, shaped the project and submitted it. We liked this because [the organization] went to the donor with the information it received from us, directly from the local source.”

Hakan thinks that the target group poses a significant challenge, and the fact that targeting only refugees as a target group has been the main reason of social conflict in previous years and explains it as follows:
The social conflict started from here. People started to say that these people came, took our house, took our bread, we hosted these people and hosted them. Now you are giving them jobs and we are left unemployed. (...) The municipality said that the worst should be fifty percent [local] and fifty percent [refugee]. (...) Municipalities are political institutions. After all, Syrians do not vote. Turkish citizens vote. This distinction occurred very often. Conflicts started here too. So, think about it, there is a Syrian next to you, you are in need, and the Syrian is also in need. People do not ask why you gave it to the Syrian or why you didn’t give it to him/her, they ask why you didn’t give it to me, I’m in need too. When we started experiencing such problems, we told all the NGOs: If you want to work with us, the target group will be fifty percent [local] and fifty percent [refugee].

Regarding target group, Kerim underlines donor perspective as a determining factor. A minimum of fifty percent and above is required to be refugee population. He also adds that “the basis of our registration in Türkiye is not Turkish citizens, but to help refugees and to move to a more balanced program after integration is achieved.” The target group issue is a problematic that requires discussion. Many organizations in the field determine the target group for their projects depending on various factors, but especially by taking into account the priorities of the donors, which are the source of financing. In practice, it is not possible to talk about the existence of an inclusive approach towards the target group in most organizations, and this situation involves social problems and risks. Organizations prioritize various groups in their activities according to their mandates. For example, some organizations put forward women and girls, some people with disabilities, and some “vulnerable” groups as the target groups of their missions. On the other hand, this strategic perspective may not guarantee to cover the sociological sensitivities of refugees and local communities, cultural norms and other dynamics in the location where the activities are carried out. While some projects target refugees entirely, in others the refugees include the majority group, and the local community is included if need is identified ‘randomly’. Some projects aim to include refugees and local communities in projects with a ‘fifty-fifty’ ratio. It can be argued that this situation is a problem, especially in a small city like Kilis, in terms of public accountability and the relationship and coordination processes between stakeholders. After the earthquake in February 2023, there has been emergency funding flow to Türkiye, and humanitarian organizations started to carry out projects by targeting “those affected from the earthquake” regardless of nationality as project argument. On the other hand, it is controversial
that the change in the definition of the target group provides a solution to the mentioned problem. It can be argued that unless meaningful advocacy is carried out by humanitarian organizations and other actors of migration governance, projects will continue to be dependent on donor priorities and dispersed coordination processes.

According to Hakan, since organizations plan projects in specific areas and the criteria for project participants are very specific, he is not very sure whether these projects will achieve their main objectives. At the same time, he thinks that the municipality do not follow up on this. He explains this with the following expressions:

[Humanitarian organizations] want the projects to be in a certain area, so I can give an example. [they say] I can do projects for employment, I can do projects based on social cohesion, [they say] or I can help people start a business themselves, I can give them technical support, I can give them materials. They come with conditions like this. People cannot meet these conditions. You come, you give seminars, you give courses, you look at the number of applications. Ten applications only. When it comes to an end, there are only two left. Ultimately, I think many projects fail to achieve their goal, or we do not see that it does. For example, [an organization] comes and says, I am doing a young entrepreneur project, send me entrepreneurs. (...) Ten entrepreneur candidates appear but we don’t know what the situation of those ten candidates is. (...) Even if they give information, we do not pay much attention to it. We don’t know anymore.

Engin believes that donor priorities determine project design and may result in mismatch with local needs. He explains this as follows:

When preparing projects, if you ask me [personally], I would say that when preparing projects, it is necessary to sit down with the public institution and prepare a project together. For example, I think that a project aimed at the employment of both Turkish and Syrian youth within the scope of cash for work in Kilis Municipality should be supported. But the donor does not prioritize this. Donor says: I support projects related to GBV [gender-based violence] cases. But when you talk about this with the municipality, the needs and projects may not match there.

When asked whether the community is consulted in the design of projects and planning of priorities, various answers were received from the interviewees. Some projects have been prepared without any need assessment or public consultation, by
adapting them to the bilateral communications of municipalities and humanitarian organizations and to experiences in other locations, while some participants highlighted that they have based their projects on needs assessment and community consultation. Frieda finds the lack of evidence-based programming worrying and expresses her thoughts as follows:

I think that continuing the community center model having seen that it does not necessarily work always, does not make so much sense. But it is again this like “yes” saying so that you can get into the context in the location and okay yes you are maybe doing 80% of things that you do not see value in, but you have 20% that now “okay, we are here now we get to do this type of work which no one else is doing”. (...) [The organization] sacrifices for the work that they get eventually to do. It is so time consuming to do the other stuff that I do not think there is enough time to prioritize the work that is potentially meaningful and impactful. (...) This is usually someone “we want this” and then senior management without much a strategic vision saying “yes, let's do this, we have money here”. I think this is the biggest problem.

From the municipality’s perspective, Ahmet thinks there is no need for consulting people because “we [the municipality] see, we are already the people. Because we always listen to the people’s demands every day. (...) We already listen to the people directly and we are very easily reachable.”

According to the discussion in this section, it can be argued that there are many factors affecting the negotiation process between the stakeholders. Negotiation processes can turn into managing expectations and compromising, directing efforts to convince bureaucrats at various levels regarding organizational priorities and donor priorities. Although there seems to be some good practices in terms of consulting the municipality for identifying the concerns of the locality and addressing it at project design phases, it does not guarantee to address the real needs on the ground and avoiding redundancy or duplications in the activities. At this point it is also important to note that although there are inter-agency coordination mechanisms in the humanitarian sector, it does not prevent redundancies of similar projects or gaps in coverage.

3.5.2. Roles and Responsibilities and Implementation

The official basis of policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations is signing protocols. These documents can be given
different names, such as memorandum of understanding or memorandum of agreement. Protocols summarize the conditions, responsibilities, and objectives of the coordination between the municipality and humanitarian organizations. While some of them are prepared to serve as a ‘goodwill agreement’ in general terms, some can be prepared separately for each project. On the municipality side, the mayor signs the document, and on the organization side, the senior representative with signature authority (e.g. country director, regional office director) signs the document. Therefore, the process of formalizing the negotiation process requires high-level decisions from both sides.

The general practice understood from the interviews is that the relevant units of the humanitarian organizations prepare the draft of the protocol and submit it to the municipality for review. This again brings about an inter-stakeholder negotiation process. Parties who sign the protocol remain each other’s stakeholders. Engin explains this as follows:

The municipality becomes a stakeholder. Partnership is a slightly different issue, especially from the programming modality of [the organization]. The term partnership should be evaluated as follows: there is a cooperation in the form of a sub-grantee. [The organization] transfers funds, but when there are normal protocols, there is no fund transfer.

What Engin is actually referring to here is the decision that an organization, whose project proposal has been approved by the donor and has received funding from the donor and is obligated to both manage and report the project to the donor, in other words, the main-recipient, will make during the implementation of the project. This main-recipient may directly implement the project in the field, depending on the legal permission in the country where it is operational, or may enter into a partnership relationship with other stakeholders such as local NGOs to carry out field implementation. In this relationship, a portion of the funding received from the donor is transferred to that local NGO. The local NGO is the implementing partner or, in other words, the sub-recipient in this partnership relationship, and this financial and managerial relationship brings with it various commitments and obligations. On the other hand, the protocols signed with the municipality do not foresee a similar relationship and a regulation that gives obligations to the parties. In this sense, it is
not clear whether the protocols are binding on the parties and the processes to be followed in case any party fails to comply with a provision or fulfill its duty. At the same time, it is unclear whether these documents protect the parties on legal grounds. Organizations and municipalities have legal consultants who follow legal processes and various policies regarding compliance. However, the existence of these mechanisms does not eliminate this uncertainty in the formal basis of coordination. An important reason for this is that the parties consciously avoid making commitments. Engin explains this as follows:

We prepare our projects according to donor priorities. When funds arrive, a protocol is made with the municipalities. Kilis Municipality is one of them. Within the scope of the protocol, there are general phrases in the protocol, there is no commitment from us or the municipality. (...) we are hesitant to make commitments, that is, we do not make commitments in general. So, as [the organization], let me tell you, in all our protocols there is a general, open-ended statement that support for projects depends on the donor's transfer of funds and the development of conditions.

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders are written in protocols in general terms. On the other hand, the issue of being aware of, adopting and fulfilling roles and responsibilities requires some discussion. This situation is closely related to the stakeholders’ culture of working with each other, state of tolerance, project scope and their expectations from each other. For example, Ezgi talks about the role that humanitarian organizations attribute to the municipality in serving refugee population and criticizes it as follows:

Municipalities do not do anything individually. They do through projects. (...) they attribute it to the budget; they attribute it to the capacity. They are right about the budget. Because the money given to the municipalities is the money transferred from the provincial bank according to the Turkish citizens living in that province. Let’s think about it this way, for example, if the money [from a donor] comes to [the organization] only for Syrians, we cannot spend that money for Turks. Why? Just because the money came for Syrians. At this point, we criticize the municipality, but it is not a very accurate criticism. That money was already given to the municipality for the Turks. Then we say why don’t you do anything for the Syrians? While you are doing the same thing yourself, you are expecting something different from the other party. The municipality is trying to close this gap with the projects I observed. (...) At this point, I do not find it right to criticize municipalities mercilessly.
It can be understood from the presented findings that roles and responsibilities are not clear from the beginning. Having signed protocols do not guarantee the commitments of parties and their accountability to public and each other. Frieda, on the other hand, claims that municipalities are a part of the political landscape in the country and therefore it is not always possible for what is written on paper to work in practice and continues:

On paper, [roles and responsibilities] are often very clear, and everyone agrees with them. In practice, that does not always work this way. In Kilis case, there needs to be some kind of commitment, but you can’t force people to have that commitment. A big issue is that in Türkiye, there is not necessarily political stability that you can invest in one municipality and continue working with them. Because they might shift as the party landscape changes. I think that is one complicated factor. (...) As we saw in Kilis, there was willingness on paper to participate in all of these but then when it came to the practice, and actually being there, supporting the programs, being invested in this, there was very little buy-in. How to enforce that and ensure that, I think it is super difficult. (...) I mean you cannot really force them to it. I really do not know how that can be improved in a context where people are necessarily interested in supporting the circumstances of migrants. I think it is a much bigger question on how we can shift the narrative towards migration has also positive aspects. (...) The contexts like Türkiye were in the media, you will very hardly ever hear positive word about Syrians. I think for sure this influences municipalities and their priorities. They see a lot of issues on a daily basis. It is not like easy to take this amount of people, especially in a context like Kilis.

According to Hakan, the municipality cannot help refugees much because the current legislative framework does not allow this and continues with the following:

(...) But that does not mean that we do not provide aid to Syrians here. [...] Our priority is Turkish citizens. [But] what I mean by priority here is that we do not discriminate. We never turned away anyone who came to us, anyone in need of help. We shared everything we had with them.

It can be understood from Hakan’s expressions that the approach of Kilis Municipality towards refugees is charity oriented, and unclarity in the legislative framework can be considered a determining factor of this approach. Examining how conflicts and consensus in roles and responsibilities manifest in practice, specifically in the implementation of projects, is a crucial aspect of this study. This is emphasized
because project implementations serve as the fundamental means of policy coordination in the field.

Burak states that the municipality allocates space for activities for the public benefit. He claims that coordination is not beyond this and continues as follows:

We only received [space allocation] support from the municipality specifically for dissemination, but we did not receive any major technical support. We already had consultants, we had qualified friends who could do the necessary preliminary work during the project implementation processes. (...) We know that we need each other in the process, but do we receive this regularly, directly, and effectively, according to our expectations from each other? No. But we act knowing that we will need each other. They do not want to break their ties with civil society, I think this is partly due to [the organization’s] facilitator mission in the past. They are looking at “what we may need in the future”. Cash for work has been implemented in the past. We are going to them with projects that will allow people, both local and Syrian, to work together, for whom the municipality does not pay any fee, but are assigned to work [for the municipality]. This is good for us too. Good for locals too. This is good for the people who benefit from the project, and it is good for the municipality. As far as I understand, our ties have remained alive through these projects. However, do both institutions make a direct and effective demand on a regular basis? No.

It was stated by some interviewees that the municipality provided co-financing in some project implementations, especially cash for work activities. Here, of course, the municipality’s temporary employment gap of local and Syrian workers and their provision of services can be considered as an important motivation for the municipality to provide financing. On the other hand, co-financing is not a preferred situation by the municipality and is seen as a “burden” for the municipality. Hakan gives the following example:

The municipality is trying to continue the project. Because we have 500 families, poor people who cannot cook. 252 of them are Syrian, 248 of them are Turkish. We are currently providing food to 500 people from the municipal budget. (...) Normally [the organization] was doing this. Since they stopped the project and cannot do the project until August, we, the municipality, cover the 5-month period. This is a burden for the municipality. You know the minimum wage today. I just covered the food expenses. (...) Currently, we estimate that a meal costs around 60 liras, excluding labor. When you give it to 500 people, it generates 30,000 Turkish Liras per day.
From Hakan’s thoughts, it can be inferred that the municipality is in need of projects and that there is an institutional stickiness between it and the stakeholders in service delivery. This situation appears to be a structural problem for both parties, but it is the municipality that is most affected by it. It can be claimed that while organizations enter into a relationship with the municipality through various projects, they do not adequately take into account the secondary effects of their relationship and potential burden on the municipality at the local level.

Cemal emphasizes the importance of efficiency in projects. What is meant by this is to increase service capacity and, in parallel, to increase personnel employment and access to more people at the local level.

When [the organization] first started, we couldn’t see its efficiency. Working model, services, and number of staff. We concluded that it did not employ enough personnel. Secondly, this is in a sense a social cohesion project. Here again, it was concluded that the necessary studies and activities were not carried out with various organizations and when we looked at it, for example, when we looked at the activity report, the numbers were very small. This was showing what was wrong with that project, showing its inadequacy, that is, showing that it was not working. (...) But now we see the difference in one year. This is a matter of importance. If the municipality sees this, of course it wants the project to continue. But if he [the mayor] doesn’t see this... The protocol had to be renewed, but the president was not in favor of it.

As discussed in the sections above, one of the municipality’s interests in projects is their potential to increase local employment. It has been observed that this sometimes becomes the main issue in the negotiation process, regardless of the content of the project, and in some cases, this issue overshadows the roles and responsibilities.

Furkan, who was hired through the municipality's company and whose salary was paid by an organization within the scope of the project, thinks that, based on his observations in the field, the project management units of the organizations do not carry out adequate field inspections and expresses this as follows:

If there is work [to do] but there is no functioning, there is a clue here. I don’t think this is just the municipality’s responsibility. Representatives of the
organizations or field coordinators do the same thing. Because if [the organization] has a blindsight to this, I think they are not doing their job properly.

A project expert from a humanitarian organization state that the project design as well as implementation is mostly undertaken by the humanitarian organizations and explains it as follows:

To be critical I would say, the process of designing activities and working on social cohesion is done largely by the organization. (...) That’s an area that has to be improved so usually there’s more into the process, activity or implementation whatever it might be, they have to be more involved in that.

According to the statement of the project expert, unclarity of roles and responsibilities can result in workload on one side. It can be argued that coordination issues highlighted both at negotiation and implementation phases remain as critical stressors on project closure and intended project outcome.

3.5.3. Project Closure

Generally, at the end of each project, the donor asks the main recipient, the organization managing the project, about the exit strategy from the field in the project final report. This question is usually asked to address towards the last sections of project reports. If the project is about the delivery of equipment to the municipality, this question can be easily answered as long as the organization has had a strong rationale behind this assistance. On the other hand, if the project has provided in-kind and cash aid to those in need, for instance, it is a question mark how there will be a ‘way out of this’ while the people continue to suffer from multiple deprivation. The same applies to short-term employment projects, as well as projects aimed at target groups that continue to need protection services.

In short, the exit strategies of the projects that aim to find answers, even if short-term, to structural problems (e.g. economic crisis) in the post-2011 period and the contribution of these projects to sustainability, that is, the sustainability of the municipality's activities after their end, as well as the assurance of community
members’ (both locals and refugees) access to services, rights, and opportunities, are controversial. While some interviewees think that the municipality has the capacity to continue its activities in various areas in the absence of projects, others claim that this is not possible.

Ahmet explains that the municipality needs projects, otherwise the municipality will not focus on social cohesion as follows:

This is also a way to do something on-the-job coaching. When you are ready to hand over these projects these services can continue with the know-how. (...) But I think also the big turnover is also starting investing in somebody [in the municipality] then they’re taken to another location or to another department and it just starts up again and again and also it has an effect on the sustainability as well. (...) There is largely no municipal engagement in the process of social cohesion.

Believe me, I don’t know what will happen if the funds are cut. But I don’t think the municipality can provide this much service. If I were the mayor, I wouldn’t worry about social harmony at all, if the funding was cut. It is my priority because it is to provide the water of this country, clean its waste, and take care of its green areas. My priority is not social harmony. It is not about making people do cultural activities. I can’t hold a concert here while untreated water flows in one side of the city. We will shift to more basic needs. Consider family life, for example. As income decreases, don’t people turn more to their needs for shelter, heating and food? As a municipality staff, I think they [social cohesion efforts] should be cut. (...) Without such grants, we would go to the provincial bank and borrow money, we would mortgage the 20-year income of our municipality, but we would still provide [the services]. But they were going to deduct it from our income every month. We wouldn’t do other activities, we wouldn’t want to do them. I wouldn’t keep 19-20 mansions [municipal community centers] open. It is an expense. I don’t employ that many staff. I would fire them, I would fire them immediately.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Neoliberalism proposes to transform and reproduce problems rather than solving them. In this sense, neoliberalism as a palliative, offers temporary relief and superficial measures to problems. Governance, as the management form of neoliberalism, produces fragmented, eclectic and, in a sense, pragmatic responses and deadlocks to social problems and changes, depending on the discretion and interests of stakeholders and dynamisms with each other in various structures and at levels. This also manifests itself in the context of forced migration. Reality is reinterpreted through policies and projects produced by many stakeholders. As a result of the post-2011 migration influx to Türkiye and Kilis in particular, Kilis has become a hub where many stakeholders are nucleated and interact. These stakeholders and their networks are considered as components of the broader migration governance ecology and as representations extending locally.

In this study, policy coordination between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations was examined with stakeholder conceptualization which belongs to business literature. The study unveils distinct periods in this coordination: the initial phase from 2011 to 2013 marked by a protection-oriented operational principle, followed by the transitional period between 2013 and 2016, characterized by a shift from a humanitarian life support-focused approach to interactional social integration. The third period, continuing from 2016 to the present, emphasizes emergence of social cohesion as a policy concept. However, it is also a period marked by increasing concerns and contradictions within the policy discourse, aligned with concurrent social, political, and economic developments in the country. These temporal stages highlight the evolving dynamics and approaches in coordination efforts within the broader framework of migration governance and provide contextual framework. The coordination between Kilis Municipality and
humanitarian organizations is located within this contextual framework and also contains its own uniqueness. The local level appears as a place where many problems and needs are experienced simultaneously.

Kilis has experienced a major social change after 2011. The city served as a key hub for both transit migration and settlement. Over the years after the migration, with the institutionalization processes in migration governance until 2016 and especially with the change in policy discourse after 2016, Kilis entered a period in which various stakeholders interacted with each other. As can be seen in the stakeholder landscape presented in the study, public, civil society and other stakeholders at various are integrated into the migration governance and policy coordination process on a random and situational basis, and have various effects and are affected by it at the local level.

Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations are bureaucratic structures that have various decision-making dynamics within themselves and are also affected and influenced by the contextual framework. The context of the projects began to be associated with social cohesion in parallel with the change in policy discourse after 2016. The main reasons behind this are that the refugee issue has become not a temporary but a protracted issue in Türkiye. From the perspective of migration governance, it can be said that the decisions and strategies of international actors, have a decisive role in this. Because they are the structures that provide the financial resources or have a role in directing the decisions. While some research participants highlighted that there is a way to advocate for dynamics in the field, however it does not seem to change their decisive position in the migration governance. The main emphasis of the projects being put forward in a way that is somehow oriented with social cohesion is that the activities to be carried out within the scope of the project target both refugees and local people.

4.1. Findings

This study has key critical findings based on the interviews conducted with research participants and field observations regarding the policy coordination problems
between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations embedded in the broader migration governance ecology. In this section, these findings are presented with critical evaluation. They are introduced as follows:

- The migration has had various impacts on Kilis according to the observations, perceptions, and experiences of the research participants. While these effects can be perceived as positive or negative, some participants have hesitated to position certain effects in their statements. An identified significant reason for this hesitation is the uncertainty of how the migration to Kilis, located away from the country’s temporal and spatial center but next the border, should be addressed in relation to the prevailing political and administrative uncertainties and contradictions.

- After migration, there have been various efforts for institutionalization (e.g. establishment of PMM), formation of legal and administrative framework (e.g. LFIP) and policy development (e.g. HSDNAP). However, in the dynamic and multi-stakeholder migration governance ecology, these developments are not useful enough to effectively carry out local policy coordination processes. One of the main points of discussion in this study is the reduction of policy coordination to projects at the local level. Although projects have various positive social impacts within their scope, the needs and problems are diverse and complex. In addition, each project has a potential harm because of its temporary nature. In addition, it is emphasized by humanitarian bureaucrats that humanitarian organizations do not have an exit strategy and that a project closure process is not adequately planned with the municipality.

- As presented in the stakeholder landscape, Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations are important stakeholders in this landscape of migration governance. Although the study focuses on these two categorical stakeholders, what is understood from the interviews and field observations is that there is no framework migration governance mechanism and an associated coordination initiative throughout the city. Most of the research participants stated that institutions and organizations, including PMM and the
provincial directorate, which are the main actors of migration governance, are closed structures and that both public institutions and humanitarian organizations are not very interested in sharing information and coordination with each other. For this reason, policy coordination between stakeholders depends mostly on situational, fragmented, random and bilateral network relations. The absence of effective framework governance mechanisms for coordination in the city results in the field execution of repetitive, discrete or too sophisticated many projects.

• Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations, which are the principal stakeholders of this study, enter into relations with each other with various interests related to their own inherent existence and survival concerns. When we look at the interest of stakeholders in interacting with each other, at first glance, the basic perspective suggested by policy documents is to be in coordination to respond to local needs and to benefit from each other’s networks and capacities. In fact, this is the local perspective suggested by the contextual framework of migration governance, and this perspective is seen as an important approach in terms of drawing attention to the dynamics of the local and creating projects and coordination mechanisms accordingly. Diverse interests and expectations play a decisive role in various stages of coordination (design, implementation, closure). Although stakeholder interests include community-based objectives such as supporting individuals and communities, meeting their needs, and advocacy as important elements of neoliberal migration governance, a significant part of the interests are pragmatic. For organizations, working with the municipality, which is a public institution, may be a requirement due to the legal framework to which it is bound. In addition, the municipality with its multi-service profile offers these organizations the opportunity to produce projects from various perspectives. For the municipality, benefiting from the capacity of these organizations is supportive of municipal services. However, the main concern for both sides is securing funds. The municipality seeks to externalize some of its municipal services through projects, without creating a burden on the budget allocated to it from the general budget. Organizations tend to expand
their program portfolio in the country. It can be seen understandable that an organization seeks financial resources to ensure its operational ability to respond to crises. On the other hand, if this gradually evolves into a growth strategy or turns into a concern for survival, this may reveal the sectoralization and competitiveness of the field of humanitarian aid.

- Within the scope of the study, the differences between stakeholders’ policy documents, practices within the scope of projects and bureaucrats’ perceptions of social cohesion as a policy item are discussed. This triple comparison shows that this conceptual framework has many policy makers and many policy discourses have been derived, on the other hand, in practices, more precisely in project activities, social cohesion is reduced to individual activities. In addition, the way bureaucrats perceive and interpret reality is an important determinant as they play a key role in policy making and implementation processes, and a significant part of the discussions on social cohesion is the return of refugees to their countries. It is also affected by the political environment in the country and broader migration context. It can be argued that this multiplicity of complexity should be considered together with Türkiye’s geopolitical position and problematic network relations with the EU and western countries, both historically and in relation to the post-2011 issue of forced migration. It can be said that social cohesion has became an agenda of post-2011 migration governance as an ‘imported’ policy concept, in parallel with the externalization of problems to other geographies.

- The coordination process is generally divided into three phases: design, implementation, and closure. The design process is the process in which stakeholders learn each other’s fields of activity and negotiate about possible projects. However, the execution of this process is highly dependent on the attitudes of the stakeholders. What is reflected from the interviews is that there are various challenging factors in this process. From the municipality's perspective, the fact that organizations come to the municipality with the same rules and conditions, do not take local needs into account sufficiently, and lack of flexibility make the decision-making process of the municipality
difficult. What some bureaucrats from the organizations say is that the municipality has multiple needs and is therefore demanding. Both challenging situations are factors that weaken the coordination process from the very beginning. In this process, information transfer and the fact that the parties do not fully agree on the design process affect the other phases of the project. In addition, the bureaucratic nature of the process results in negotiating with many bureaucrats who are decision-makers or have significant influence in decision-making processes.

- In the implementation process, roles and responsibilities are generally not clear among stakeholders. The uncertainty in the legislative framework of municipalities leaves the way municipalities handle migration issues to the discretion of bureaucrats at administrative levels. What is understood from the interviews with municipal bureaucrats is that it is not clear whether the municipality has a responsibility regarding migration and, if so, where this responsibility begins and ends at the local level. This situation can be considered as one of the main gaps that determine the sharing of roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations with the municipality and the course of coordination. In addition to the gap in the municipal legislation, it is controversial if the protocols that serve as the main official documents between the municipality and humanitarian organizations have a legally binding feature for the parties or not. These documents, which are more of a goodwill agreement rather than putting forward mutual commitment and compliance mechanisms that will form the basis for coordination, weaken the accountability of the stakeholders both before the society and to each other. It can be said that the protocols may not be effective in problem identification and solving it.

- Project closure is a complicated phase of the process. The humanitarian organizations where the research participants work have worked with the municipality in various periods. Although the existence of various stakeholders increases potential opportunities to coordinate, migration governance and the contextual framework in Türkiye have no other suggestions other than project-based solutions to migration related issues.
This situation increases aid dependency at the social level and institutional stickiness among stakeholders. To underline here again, every project carried out locally has the potential to create a positive impact, but also to cause harm. Because the positive effect it creates may not be permanent. Many of the research participants stated that the strategic perspectives of the municipality and organizations towards chronic problems and needs are insufficient. It is also affected by the decisive role of donor priorities as the financing sources of the humanitarian response.

- In relation to the diverse interests and other factors complicating migration governance ecology further as aforementioned, framework of social cohesion in the policy coordination is neither clear nor the main interest for the stakeholders. What is understood from the interviews and field observations is that the framework of social cohesion in the policy coordination not clear for the parties. Negotiations between stakeholders can be reduced to the numerical ratio of local people and refugees, especially in projects where tangible activities are planned, such as in-kind assistance and shelter rehabilitations, can cause heated debate. As summarized in the study, many projects have been carried out in Kilis. It was stated by the research participants that these projects had various positive effects at the individual, household or community level. On the other hand, among the notes drawn from the interviews is that the migration issue is a structural problem in relation to many other problems of Türkiye and that individual projects have no sufficient effect on ensuring social cohesion at the local level.

- Each stakeholder has a specific policy agenda and reads the problem from their own perspective. It is understandable that they look at the issue from their own field of experience and can make their own implementation plans within the limits of their capacity. However, unless the activities of municipalities and organizations evolve into an inclusive coordination that is informed by the field, efforts remain inward-oriented. Because needs are already diverse, persistent and complex, the situation remains highly specific and it becomes difficult to propose an overarching approach to problems, or at least a complementary approach to solutions, in policy coordination. As a
general practice, organizations are required to inform donors about available services and justify the rationale behind a proposed project. For this reason, organizations conduct service mapping efforts. In addition to this, there are several coordination meetings in Kilis regarding coordination between civil society and public institutions but these meetings focuses on already existing activities to meet project targets or they are part of too general discussions that do not propose a framework for planning a more enhanced coordination. These efforts does not end up with effective coordination between organizations at the field level. An important reason for this is that humanitarian organizations interact with the municipality individually and without making any coordination efforts with other organizations at this point.

- It is identified from the interviews and field observations that there is a lack of meaningful participation of locals and refugees in the coordination processes. Projects have monitoring, evaluation and accountability tools and procedures to identify complaint and feedback of individuals towards the services received or the activities that they are involved in. On the other hand, these accountability efforts are more of inward-oriented rather than effectively serving to strengthen coordination between stakeholders, and inform and consult individuals and communities effectively.

4.2. Policy Implication Recommendations

Considering the key findings of this study, there is a necessity to discuss about potential policy implication recommendations. First of all, it can be underlined that although the current governance ecology and policy coordination at the local level have critical problems and challenges, it seems unrealistic to propose recommendations out of this ecology. This thesis study recognizes the challenges and contradictions of neoliberalism and its reflection on migration governance. The study recognizes the problems and deficiencies of the municipality and humanitarian organizations in various aspects, as well as the gaps, constraints and obstacles of the broad neoliberal migration governance and contextual framework in Türkiye. On the
other hand, there is potential to promote effective policy measures and coordination initiatives in this ecology. Specific to the case study, policy implication recommendations are sorted below.

- As the primary local government in Kilis in terms of its service scope and accessibility, Kilis Municipality can take a leading role in enhancing city-level coordination between stakeholders considering the unique position and importance of Kilis in migration governance.

- Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations should collectively lead on initiating discussions and efforts for master planning to encompass projects as informed and coordinated by all public authorities, humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders of migration governance. Efforts should envisage strategies that go beyond proposing individual projects, but design a policy process plan for Kilis by taking into the city’s unique features, problems and potentials with its social capital.

- It seems crucial that humanitarian organizations should ensure meaningful communication with each other and focus on complementary policy coordination in Kilis.

- Considering the gaps in the legislative framework, legal basis of inter-organizational coordination should be reviewed by the stakeholders in a way that they remain accountable both for the communities and each other with clear guidance for the roles and responsibilities through the application of relevant compliance measures.

- Humanitarian organizations should mitigate aid dependency of municipality and prioritize institutional development. Considering their involvement in wide range of network relations from international to local levels, these organizations should review their capacity to advocate for addressing local needs to the donors rather than proposing repeated project proposals. In addition, the advocacy efforts should also target donor awareness regarding the protracted nature of migration phenomenon in Türkiye, and they should engage with donors to have impact on their priorities strategically. Although
governments and donors hold relative power in current migration governance, local advocacy efforts, good coordination practices and shared responsibility can both reveal the potential of the locality. This requires active participation in the governance of ecology at the local level, rather than individualistic and fragmented interactions.

- Stakeholders should seek for effective participation channels of people to decision-making processes as they constitute the target groups of projects. The perspective on the issue needs to be reconsidered. The basic approach of projects or programs should be rights-based. The philanthropic approach and the portrayal of the local community and refugees as passive, “needy” and “deprived” should be abandoned. Stakeholders should derive the necessity of their presence, policies, and practices from the community from design to closure. For this reason, developing mechanisms that will ensure meaningful participation of society in the processes should be one of the main objectives of coordination. Considering the increasing anti-refugee sentiment in Türkiye and around the world, it is thought that strengthening the coordination of social cohesion-oriented projects and producing approaches focusing on long-term effects will play an important role in mitigating conflicts at the local level. Strengthening migration governance and coordination in Kilis, a border city with a high number of refugees, can serve as an exemplary model for other cities and societies.

The key findings presented above are reached through the field research which has some limitations. Those limitations of this research and recommendations for further researches in this field can be listed as follows:

- This study reveals the policy coordination process between Kilis Municipality and humanitarian organizations. These stakeholders are included in the stakeholder landscape of Kilis and broader migration governance ecology. Although this study is limited to the coordination processes between these two categories of stakeholders, it does not exclude the impact of other stakeholders and frameworks because their relations are embedded in and
affected by the dynamic governance ecology from various aspects. On the other hand, a critical study focusing on the impact of other stakeholders in Kilis or other locations would be a contribution to the literature.

- The humanitarian organizations are mainly NGOs having international formal and informal ties, and UN agencies. On the other hand, there are also more community-based organizations focusing on specific groups. Studying on research aiming to examine their coping strategies in the competitive migration governance ecology would be an important contribution to the literature.

- This study is focused on inter-organizational coordination. An intra-organizational analysis of governance actors would reveal existential contradictions in more detail. In relation to this, this study considers bureaucrats as active representatives of their institutions. On the other hand, analyzing the determinants of decision-making and other determining processes at the institutional level would provide further insight about dynamic structures of institutions.
REFERENCES


3RP Syria Crisis – In Response to the Syria Crisis. The 3RP model. https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/


Bonnafous-Boucher, M., Rendtorff, J.D. (2016). From “the stakeholder” to stakeholder theory. In: *Stakeholder Theory A Model for Strategic Management*, 1–20. Springer Briefs in Ethics. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44356-0_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44356-0_1)


Friendship gives us a safety net and the sweetest memories. (2022, August 8). In *IOM Türkiye*. Retrieved September 3, 2023, from https://twitter.com/IOMTurkiye/status/1556671528330207240?t=2a89wRHq7K6dfspPzQZhDQ&s=08


of health psychology, 18(11), 1385–1399.  
https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105311435983


Karauz, E. (2022). *Yeni yardımseverlik (Hümaniteryenizm) bağlamında insani*


https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends-report-2023

https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/41626fb64.pdf


APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

15 MAYIS 2023

Kırmızı Chow Yun-Fat

Gönderen: ODTU İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (IAEK)
Ilgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Ahmet Burak Büyükcevlek


Bilgilerinize saygıyla sunanım,

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

Prof. Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
Üye

Doç. Dr. Şerife SEVINÇ
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Öğesi Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Öğesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Öğesi Müge GÜNDOZ
Üye

157
B. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION
Surname, Name: Karakaya Koca, Pelin

EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>METU Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Çukurova University International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Hürriyet Anatolian High School, Ankara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORK EXPERIENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023-2023</td>
<td>CARE International</td>
<td>Grants and Business Development Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022-2023</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</td>
<td>Project Field Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-2022</td>
<td>Relief International</td>
<td>Senior Grants and Reporting Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2021</td>
<td>Relief International</td>
<td>Senior Project Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>International Labour Organization (ILO)</td>
<td>External Collaborator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Rulmeca</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

HOBBIES

Music, Painting, Collage Making, Cycling, Cooking, Movies, Travelling

158


Tez giriş ve sonucu dahil toplam dört bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünde araştırma konusu, araştırma soruları, literatür taraması, çalışmanın literatüre katkısı ve metodoloji yer almaktadır. İkinci bölümde tezin temel kavramları ve Türkiye’nin göc yönetimi bağlamında sosyal uyum politikası tartışmaktadır. Tez çalışması dört temel kavram ile oğluları tartışmaktadır: yönetim, politika eğgüdümü, paydaş.

Yönetişı, özellikle Batı’da, Türkiye’de ve dünyada neoliberalizmle birlikte uygulanmaya başlanmıştır. Alan veya konu bazında pek çok sosyal, politik ve ekonomik olgu ‘yönetişı’ meselesi olarak tartışılacaktır. Benzer şekilde yönetişı terimi, bu tezde incelendiği gibi, insan hareketliliği de dahil olmak üzere sosyal değişimlerin yönetilmesi bağlamında yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Çok düzeyli ekolojide çeşitli paydaşların politikaları ve etkileşimleri yoluya göç süreçlerini koordine etmek ve düzenlemek için bir yönetim modeli olarak önerilmektedir.


Paydaşların projeler aracılığıyla politika uygulaması, neoliberal göç yönetişiminin ve bu çalışma bağlamında Türkiye’de 2011 sonrası göç yönetişiminin temel bir aracıdır. Yerel düzey, politika uygulamalarının yapıldığı veya yapılamadığı ve eğgidümün temel bir sorun olarak ortaya çıktığı düzeydir ve bu çalışma politika uygulama
süreçlerindeki eğüdüm sorunlarını incelemektedir. Eğüdümün projeler aracılığıyla incelenmesi, göç yönetişiiminin diğer dinamiklerini dışlamaz. Çünkü proje yönetimi 2011 sonrası göç yönetişiimin ekolojisinin 7c ve aynı zamanda tartışmalı bir unsurdur.


Dördüncü temel kavram ise sosyal uyumdur. Sosyal uyum yeni bir olgu, kavram ya da sorun değildir. Asına bakılsa, kökenleri, topluluklar halinde yaşayan bireylerin


Kilis mevcut haliyle birçok düzeyde ve birçok yapıda yaygın olduğu olan paydaşların varlığı ve etkilerinin olduğu bir yönetişim ağının lokasyonudur. Çalışmada
Bayırbağ’ın (2013) politika ağı haritasından (Şekil 1) uyarlanarak çeşitli düzeylerdeki çeşitli aktörlerden oluşan bir paydaş haritası (Şekil 12) hazırlanmıştır. Şehirdeki ağını karmaşık ve birbirine bağlı olduğu ve bağlamın dinamik doğasına bağlı olarak kendini yeniden ürettiğinin altı çizilmesi durumundadır. Şekil her ne kadar doğrusal gibi görünse de her bir paydaşın birbirine doğrudan veya dolaylı etkileşim içinde olduğu ve tüm bu aktörlerin göç yönetimi içinde bürokratik uzantılarını dikkate alarak harita okunmalıdır.


165
arasında, göç meselesinin Türkiye’nin birçok diğer sorunuya ilişkili olarak yapısal bir sorun olduğu ve bireysel projelerin yerel düzeyde sosyal uyumu sağlaması konusundaki etkinisin yetersiz olduğu ifade edilmektedir.


Bürokratlardan sosyal uyum algısının, sahada yürütülen faaliyetlerin ve eğitmede süreçlerinin incelenmesi, konunun yereldeki seyirinin anlaşılmasında etkili olmuştur. Araştırma kapsamında, araştırma katılımcılarından sosyal uyum algıları sorgulanmıştır. Bu sorgulama, Kilis Belediyesi ve insani yardım kuruluşlarında önemli rollerde çalışan bürokratlar olarak, proje yönetiminin çeşitli seviyelerinde yer aldıkları ve sosyal uyum konusundaki algılarını ortaya koymalarının, projelere yönelik algılarının, projelere yönelik perspektiflerinin, projelerin sınırlamalarının ve eğitmede düzeyi hakkında bilgi sağladığı için önemli görülmüştür.

Eğitim süreci çalışmada üç aşamaya ayrılarak tartışılmuştur: tasarım, uygulama ve kapandır. Aşamalardaki eğitimin sonları çalışmada çeşitli boyutlarıyla tartışılmıştır ve çalışmanın temel bulguları aşağıda özetlenmektedir:
Gerçekleştirdikleri mülakatlar ve saha gözlemleri çerçevesinde çeşitli bulgular elde edilmiştir. Bu bulgular eleştirel bir değerlendirme kapsamında şöyle sıralanabilir:


- Kilis Belediyesi ve insani yardım kuruluşları çeşitli çıkarlarla birbirleriyle etkileşimde girmektedir. Paydaşların birbirleriyle etkileşime girmeye motivasyonuna baktığımızda, ilk baktısta politika belgelerinin önerdiği temel bakış açısı, yerel ihtiyaçlarla cevap verecek şekilde eşgüdüm içinde olmak ve birbirlerinin ağlarından ve kapasitelerinden yararlanmak zorundadır. Paydaş çıkarları, neoliberal göç yönetiminin önemli unsurları olarak bireyleri ve toplulukları desteklemek, onların ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak ve savunuculuk gibi toplum temelli hedefleri içersese de, çıkarların önemli bir kısmı pratikleştirilmiştir. Kuruluşlar için bir kamu kurumu olan belediye ile çalışmaya bağlı olduğu yasal çerçeve nedeniyle bu zorunluluk olabilir. Ayrıca belediye çoku hizmet profiliyle bu kuruluşlara çeşitli perspektiflerden proje ürete olanağı


Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, göç yönetimi ekolojisinin daha da karmaşıklık hale getiren çeşitli çıkarlar ve diğer faktörlerle ilgili olarak, politika eşgüdümünde paydaşların temel ilgi alanı değildir. Yapılan görüşmelerden ve saha gözlemlerinden anlaşılan, politika eşgüdümünde sosyal uyumun çerçevesinin taraflar açısından net olmadığıdır. Özellikle aynı yardımlar, barınma rehabilitasyonları gibi somut faaliyetlerin planlandığı projelerde paydaşların arasındaki müzakerelerin yerel halk ve mültecilerin sayısal oranına indirgenmesi tartışımalara neden olmaktadır. Çalışmada özenle olduğu üzere Kilis’te birçok proje yürütülmüştür. Araştırma katılımcıları tarafından bu projelerin bireysel, hane halkı veya toplum düzeyinde çeşitli olumlu etkilerinin olduğu ifade edilmiştir. Öte yandan görüşmelerden alınan notlar arasında göç meselesinin Türkiye’nin pek çok sorunuyla birlikte yapısal bir sorun olduğu ve bireysel projelerin yerel düzeyde sosyal uyumun sağlanmasında yeterli etkisinin olmadığı da yer almıştır.

herhangi bir eğitendum çalışması yapmadan, bireysel olarak belediye ile etkileşime girmesidir.

- Yerel halkın ve mültecilerin eğitendum süreçlerine anlamlı katmanın sağlanamadığı, yapılan görüşmeler ve saha gözlemlerinden tespit edilmiştir. Projeler, bireylerin aldıkları hizmetlere veya katıldıkları faaliyetlere ilişkin şikayet ve geri bildirimlerini tespit etmeye yönelik izleme, değerlendirme ve hesap verebilirlik araç ve prosedürlerine sahiptir. Öte yandan, bu süreç ve araçlar, paydaşlar arasındaki eğitendumu güçlendirmeye, bireyleri ve toplulukları etkili bir şekilde bilgilendirmeye ve onlara danışma yollarını içe döndüktür.

Temel bulgulara ilişkin olarak çalışma politika önerileri sunmaktadır. Bu öneriler aşağıdaki özetlenmektedir:

- Kilis Belediyesi, Kilis’in göç yönetişimindeki özgün konumu ve önemi göz önüne alınında, paydaşlar arasında şehir düzeyinde eğitendumün geliştirilmesinde öncü bir rol üstlenebilir.
- Kilis Belediyesi ve insani yardım kuruluşları, tüm kamu otoriteleri, insani yardım kuruluşları ve göç yönetişiminin diğer paydaşları tarafından bilgilendirilen ve koordine edilen projeleri kapsayacak master planlamaya yönelik tartışmaların ve çabaların başlatılmasına toplu olarak öncülük edebilir.
- İnsani yardım kuruluşlarının birbirleriyle anlamlı bir iletişim kurması ve Kilis’te tamamlayıcı politika eğitendumüne odaklanması önemli görülmektedir.
- Yasal çerçevedeki boşluklar göz önüne alınında, kuruluşlar arası koordinasyonun yasal dayanak tekrar gözden geçirilerek rol ve sorumlulukların ilgili denetim mekanizmaları oluşturularak belirlenmesi eğitendum süreçlerinin güçlenmesi katkıda bulunabilir.
- İnsani yardım kuruluşları belediyanın yardım bağımlılığını azaltacak ve kurumsal gelişime öncelik verecek şekilde gündemini oluşturabilir.
Uluslararası düzeyden yerel düzeyeye kadar geniş bir yelpazedeki ağ ilişkilerine katılımları göz önüne alındığında, bu kuruluşların tekrarlanan proje teklifleri sunmak yerine bağışçılarnı yerel ihtiyaçlarının karşılanması yönünde savunuculuk yapma kapasitelerini gözden geçirmeleri gerekmektedir. Ayrıca, savunuculuk çabaları, Türkiye’deki göç olgusunun uzun süreli özelliğine ilişkin bağışçın farkındalığını da hedeflemeli ve bağışçılara etkileşime geçerek önceliklerini stratejik olarak etkileyecek planlamaları içermelidir.

- Paydaşlar, projelerin hedef kitlesini oluşturan birey ve grupların karar verme süreçlerine anlamli katılım kanallarını geliştirebildiği sürece yerelin ihtiyaçlarına karşılık verebilir.
D. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

(Please fill out this form on computer. Double click on the boxes to fill them)

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences ☐
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences ☒
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics ☐
Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics ☐
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences ☐

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Karakaya Koca
Adı / Name : Pelin
Bölümü / Department : Kentse Politika Planlaması ve Yerel Yönetimler / Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English): POLICY COORDINATION IN NEOLIBERAL MIGRATION GOVERNANCE: THE CASE STUDY OF KILIS MUNICIPALITY AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: Yüksek Lisans / Master ☒ Doktora / PhD ☐

1. Tez tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide. ☒
2. Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of two years. * ☐
3. Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for period of six months. * ☐

* Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının başılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. /

A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.

Yazanın imzası / Signature ............................ Tarih / Date ............................

(Kütüphaneye teslim ettğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)

(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)

Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.

174