

**Review Article**

**‘Social Cohesion’ and ‘Social Integration’ in Terms of Concepts and Models: A Türkiye-Germany Analysis**

*Kavramsal ve Modelsel Açıdan ‘Sosyal Uyum’ ve ‘Toplumsal Bütünleşme’: Türkiye-Almanya İncelemesi*

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**Abstract**

*This study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the concepts of social cohesion and social integration in the context of forced migration, with a focus on the migration and integration policies of Türkiye and Germany. As a review article, it systematically examines academic literature, legal frameworks, and policy documents to assess how both countries address the challenges of integrating large immigrant populations. The choice of Türkiye and Germany stems from their contrasting governance models. Türkiye’s centralized and reactive policy orientation contrasts with Germany’s federal, long-term, and structured integration strategies, reflecting fundamental differences in migration management. The study argues that Türkiye prioritizes short-term cohesion under the temporary protection regime, whereas Germany emphasizes integration through structured programs based on federal cooperation. Furthermore, the article explores the impact of both countries’ social cohesion policies on social relations and institutions, while also discussing the role of migration policies in shaping broader social transformation. By comparing legal frameworks and practices, the study offers a nuanced perspective on how different governance contexts influence the effectiveness and direction of social integration and cohesion efforts.*

**Keywords:** Forced migration, social cohesion, social integration, cohesion policies, integration programs.

**Öz**

*Bu çalışma, zorunlu göç bağlamında sosyal uyum ve sosyal entegrasyon kavramlarının karşılaştırmalı bir analizini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Odak noktası, Türkiye ve Almanya’nın göç ve entegrasyon politikalarıdır. Bir derleme makalesi olarak, akademik literatür, hukuki düzenlemeler ve politika belgeleri sistematik biçimde incelenmiş; her iki ülkenin yoğun göçmen nüfuslarının entegrasyonunda karşılaştıkları zorluklara yönelik yaklaşımları değerlendirilmiştir. Türkiye ile Almanya’nın seçilme nedeni, farklı yönetim modellerini temsil etmeleridir. Türkiye’nin merkeziyetçi ve daha çok tepkisel politik yönelimi ile Almanya’nın federal, uzun vadeli ve yapısal stratejileri, göç yönetimindeki temel ayrımları ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışmada, Türkiye’nin geçici koruma rejimi çerçevesinde kısa vadeli sosyal uyuma öncelik verdiği; buna karşılık Almanya’nın federal işbirliğine dayalı programlarla yapısal entegrasyonu vurguladığı ileri sürülmektedir. Ayrıca, iki ülkenin sosyal uyum politikalarının toplumsal ilişkiler ve kurumlar üzerindeki etkileri tartışılmış; göç politikalarının sosyal dönüşüme katkıları ele alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda, hukuki düzenlemeler ve uygulamalar karşılaştırmalı biçimde değerlendirilerek, farklı*

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*yönetişim bağlamlarının sosyal uyum ve entegrasyon politikalarının etkinliğini nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair nüanslı bir perspektif sunulmuştur.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Zorunlu göç, sosyal uyum, toplumsal bütünleşme, uyum politikaları, entegrasyon programları.

## 1. Introduction

Globalization and increasing migration mobility have profoundly reshaped the social structures of contemporary societies. Among the most critical dynamics, forced migration has necessitated that receiving countries adapt and redesign their policies on social cohesion and integration. Within this framework, the concepts of social cohesion and social integration have become central in both theoretical and practical debates concerning the incorporation of migrants into host societies. Against this backdrop, Türkiye and Germany—two countries with different governance traditions and migration experiences—offer distinctive yet comparable cases in terms of how they have developed and implemented policies of cohesion and integration in response to large-scale forced migration.

The comparative focus on Türkiye and Germany stems primarily from their contrasting migration trajectories and policy orientations. Türkiye has become the first-reception country for millions of forcibly displaced Syrians, particularly after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011. This unprecedented influx has largely been managed under the Temporary Protection regime, which embodies a centralized, state-led, and crisis management-oriented policy approach (İçduygu, 2016). Germany, on the other hand, long regarded as a key European destination for regular migration, experienced a profound transformation of its migration system during the 2015–2016 migration crisis. The arrival of more than one million asylum seekers, particularly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, exposed the limitations of its existing structures and accelerated reforms targeting forced migration and refugee reception (Bendel, 2014). These structural differences between Türkiye's reactive and centralized crisis management and Germany's federal, reform-oriented approach have significantly shaped how each country conceptualizes and enacts social cohesion policies.

The purpose of this review is to trace the theoretical foundations of social cohesion and social integration while evaluating how these concepts are reflected in migration governance in Türkiye and Germany. By adopting a literature review methodology, the study systematically investigates both academic works and national as well as international policy documents. In doing so, it seeks to demonstrate how different governance models condition the inclusion processes of migrants and how these approaches diverge in terms of their sustainability and effectiveness.

In methodological terms, the study relies on conceptual analysis and systematic document review. A wide range of sources was examined, including the Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection (YUKK, 2013), the Harmonization Strategy Document (2018), and publications of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF, 2022). Additionally, reports by international organizations and a substantial body of academic literature were assessed, with the analysis focusing particularly on the post-2010 period when migration dynamics intensified. This periodization allows for an evaluation of both Türkiye's immediate responses to mass displacement and Germany's structural reforms triggered by the 2015 migration crisis.

Through this comparative lens, the study highlights that while social cohesion emphasizes interpersonal trust, mutual understanding, and community acceptance, social integration refers to migrants' systematic participation in institutional domains such as education, labor markets, and healthcare. In Türkiye, temporary protection has prioritized short-term humanitarian relief and service provision, yet created ambiguities regarding long-term integration pathways. In Germany, federal structures and integration-oriented reforms have sought to provide sustainable tools—such as language courses, vocational training, and social assistance—that facilitate migrants' institutional and social incorporation.

In conclusion, this article contributes both conceptually and empirically to the literature by situating Türkiye and Germany within a comparative framework that underscores the interplay between governance models and migration management. While much has been written on each country individually, studies explicitly addressing how different structural contexts shape responses to forced migration remain limited. This review aims to fill that gap by offering a nuanced understanding of how

divergent governance traditions condition the scope, orientation, and outcomes of social cohesion and integration policies in practice.

## 2. Social Cohesion and Social Integration

“Social cohesion” and “social integration” are often used in social sciences and policy studies to describe the elimination of conflict, violence, and tension between social groups. These concepts represent not only normative ideals but also policy models for managing diversity in contemporary societies. Social cohesion is broadly understood as the reduction of xenophobia and discrimination that often become pronounced after migration, while simultaneously referring to the “adaptation” of migrant individuals to the host society (Ager & Strang, 2008). In this sense, integration and harmonization processes function as complementary mechanisms that sustain cohesion. Conversely, in the absence of social cohesion, structural integration may become exclusionary, limiting the participation of migrant communities in the broader social system (Scholten, 2011).

The notion of cohesion first gained attention in the social sciences through the work of urban ecologists in the United States in the early twentieth century, particularly within the framework of the Chicago School. Emerging in the 1920s, this structural-functionalist approach positioned migration studies as a significant subfield of sociology. It emphasized empirical data and urban research, developing what became known as the “absorption” or “assimilation” model. Within this framework, cohesion was largely understood as the process of integrating new immigrants into the fabric of urban society, whereas absorption or assimilation was conceptualized as a deeper and longer-term relationship in which immigrants established lasting ties to the host community (Erder, 2020, p. 21). The distinction between these terms remains central in contemporary debates, as the concept of cohesion emphasizes immediate social adaptation, while assimilation invokes questions of identity, cultural continuity, and long-term integration.

Social cohesion has since evolved into a multidimensional concept closely linked to the quality of relationships both among individuals and groups and between these groups and the institutions governing them. Defining cohesion is challenging due to its multidimensional nature; nonetheless, scholars have identified key indicators such as personal, political, and developmental security, institutional trust, satisfaction with governance, civic engagement, reduction of perceived intergroup threats, and the enhancement of intergroup contact. These factors are seen as central to cultivating harmony, trust, and a culture of coexistence within societies that have experienced large-scale migration (Sarı-Çalışkan et al., 2021, p. 188). Thus, social cohesion should be conceptualized not as a static condition but as a dynamic process that requires sustained investment from both host communities and newcomers.

Underlying sociological theories emphasize that social phenomena should be examined through cause-and-effect relationships, highlighting that social change is both necessary and inevitable for development. Migration, within this framework, can be understood as a driver of socio-cultural transformation, initiating processes of adaptation that are crucial for long-term settlement. Defined as movement arising from changes in individual perceptions and resulting in adaptation processes in new environments, migration cannot be regarded as complete without successful adaptation. The absence of adaptation, in turn, risks producing individuals who remain socially marginal and potentially mobile, prone to repeated displacement. For this reason, the causes and patterns of migration—whether voluntary or forced—play a determining role in shaping the behavior and expectations of migrants (Akıncı, Nergiz & Gedik, 2015, p. 67).

In practical terms, social cohesion is achieved when individuals develop a sense of belonging to society through meaningful social contact. Yet the process is fraught with challenges, with racism and xenophobia consistently identified as the greatest obstacles. At the local level, cohesion is often measured through individuals’ perceptions of their communities, their sense of mutual respect, and the extent to which they feel secure in their social environment (Bolgün, 2020, p. 7). Scholars therefore distinguish between two main dimensions of cohesion: first, the reduction of disharmony and exclusion between different groups; and second, the strengthening of social ties and the accumulation of social capital (Bolgün, p. 9). Social integration complements this perspective by emphasizing the establishment of shared norms and behavioral criteria that facilitate collective goals. Whereas social cohesion

highlights interpersonal trust and relations, integration focuses on institutional linkages and the consolidation of ties between migrants and the structures of the host society (Berger-Schmitt, 2000).

Adaptation and belonging, as conceptual categories, are most frequently examined within the broader framework of “social integration.” Parliamentary discussions, such as the 2023 Migration and Adaptation Minutes of the TBMM Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, underline how concepts like multiculturalism, empathy, tolerance, participation, coexistence, assimilation, acceptance, and integration are interconnected in policy debates (TBMM, 2023). In practice, integration is understood as a process through which migrants maintain their distinct cultural identities while simultaneously establishing stable and cooperative relationships within their new social environments. Integration must therefore be analyzed not only as a socio-cultural adjustment but also as a socio-political process that situates migrants within the wider political and institutional structures of the host society (Sözer, 2019, pp. 422–423).

One of the most influential theoretical perspectives on migration and settlement has been assimilation theory. This approach examines the relationship between immigrants and host societies by focusing on adaptation, integration, and identity formation. Building on this foundation, political scientists have increasingly emphasized the critical role of state structures and policy frameworks in shaping integration outcomes. The work of Erder (2020, pp. 23–24) illustrates how migration policies—whether inclusive or restrictive—directly influence the degree to which cohesion and integration can be realized. Over time, however, assimilation policies have faced strong criticism for being ideologically driven and incompatible with democratic values. Such coercive practices, often associated with forced cultural conformity, have come under increasing scrutiny from human rights advocates and minority rights defenders, who argue for policies that safeguard diversity and recognize cultural pluralism (Erder, p. 21).

Taken together, these theoretical and empirical perspectives underscore that social cohesion and social integration are deeply intertwined yet distinct processes. While cohesion captures the interpersonal and communal dimensions of coexistence, integration highlights institutional structures and the role of governance in shaping long-term settlement outcomes. Migration thus emerges as both a catalyst for social transformation and a test of societies’ capacity to foster inclusivity, tolerance, and mutual respect.

### **3. The Relationship Between Forced Migration and Social Cohesion & Social Integration**

Asylum seekers and refugees—millions displaced by war, poverty, violence, and persecution—have become central figures in the contemporary era of global migration. Yet, despite their vulnerable status, they are often perceived negatively in host countries, frequently regarded as threats or burdens to social, economic, and cultural stability (Erder, 2020, p. 7). These perceptions underscore the necessity of addressing adaptation together with social integration, which should be conceived as a shared responsibility between migrants, the state, institutions, and society at large. When effectively implemented, integration fosters self-esteem and cultural identity among migrants, strengthening their confidence and facilitating greater acceptance within the host society (Akıncı et al., 2015, p. 70).

The capacity of individuals displaced by forced migration to coexist peacefully with host communities is recognized as one of the most urgent and human-centered approaches in public policy. Consequently, understanding the dynamics of “social cohesion” and “social integration” and identifying the conditions necessary for their effective realization are of great significance (Özçürümez & İçduygu, 2022, p. 18). While both concepts rest on sociological foundations, they are also deeply embedded in state policies that prioritize social harmony. Cohesion, in this respect, can be seen as a form of integration, since it does not necessarily demand full cultural assimilation. However, the absence of clear definitional boundaries leaves room for multiple interpretations, often shaped by the political preferences of decision makers.

Within the broader field of forced migration studies, the search for “sustainable” or “permanent” solutions has gained prominence. Such solutions emphasize enabling migrants to live dignified lives while fostering constructive and peaceful relations with local populations. At the same time, they highlight the necessity for host states to safeguard their sovereign rights even as they commit to international protection mechanisms. Nevertheless, the literature indicates that although integration frameworks are gaining greater importance, concepts such as “social adaptation” and “social

integration” remain less prominent and sometimes secondary in migration policy debates (Özçürümez & İçduygu, 2022, p. 16).

Migration, however, influences not only institutional structures and host societies but also the psychology of individuals who experience it. Separation from family, perilous journeys, and the alienation of being uprooted can produce deep feelings of loneliness and worthlessness. Migrants unable to establish meaningful and healthy relations with host communities may develop prejudices of their own, which further complicate adaptation. The psychological trauma endured by many immigrants therefore constitutes a serious obstacle to the success of social adaptation processes (Keskinel & Doğan, 2020, p. 57). In this regard, it has been argued that asylum seekers who acquire sufficient knowledge about the rules of social life, cultural values, traditions, legal systems, and services such as education and healthcare in their host countries are more likely to be accepted by the local society. Such knowledge also eases their path toward independent living and smoother integration (Sarı et al., 2021, p. 191).

Human mobility, in its various forms—whether voluntary, economic, or forced—has historically been a constant and continues to present challenges and opportunities for societies worldwide. Among these, forced migration remains the most pressing, both because of its humanitarian urgency and its political implications. The process can generate traumatic consequences not only for migrants themselves but also for host societies, which are tasked with managing the associated social and cultural shifts. Although cultural similarities between migrants and host communities can help facilitate adaptation, the decisive factor shaping outcomes is often the numerical scale of migration. As the numbers of arrivals grow, anxieties and concerns within host societies tend to intensify, while among migrants, the search for identity and the inclination toward withdrawal may become more pronounced. The effective management of such complex processes can only be achieved through the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders, including migrants, governments, institutions, and host communities (Erdoğan, 2020a, p. 86).

In sum, the dynamics of forced migration demand comprehensive frameworks that combine both social cohesion and social integration. These approaches must balance the humanitarian imperative of protecting displaced populations with the political and social priorities of host states. Success lies in recognizing the mutual responsibilities of all actors involved and fostering policies that not only address basic needs but also enable the development of dignified, secure, and inclusive communities.

#### **4. Social Cohesion and Social Integration From a Governance Perspective**

The concept of governance is often examined in three interrelated dimensions: systemic, political, and administrative. From a systemic perspective, governance refers to a broader framework that transcends the traditional authoritarian structure of the state. Politically, it encompasses citizen participation in decision-making processes and the legitimacy of state authority. Administratively, it emphasizes the delivery of effective, transparent, and accountable public services (Ökmen, Yılmaz & Baştan, 2004, pp. 31–32). In this sense, governance reflects multi-actor and multi-dimensional interactions, bringing together the public sector, private sector, civil society, and individuals within an inclusive framework of cooperation.

When approached through the lens of governance, the meanings and implications of social cohesion and integration gain new dimensions, especially in the context of forced migration. As Özçürümez and İçduygu (2022, pp. 17–18) observe, international protection practices are typically structured around three main options: local integration, voluntary repatriation, and resettlement in a third country. Germany’s approach prioritizes integration, aiming to establish long-term settlement pathways; Türkiye focuses primarily on voluntary, safe, and dignified return; while the UK frequently utilizes third-country resettlement programs. These strategic choices not only shape state-level migration policies but also directly influence migrants’ own perceptions of their status, determining whether they see themselves as temporary guests or permanent residents.

The governance of forced migration is not limited to national frameworks; it significantly affects both central and local policy processes (Mavi, 2021, p. 3). Local governments, particularly municipalities, have become indispensable actors in integration, even though they are often not legally assigned direct responsibilities. Driven by necessity, municipalities engage in service delivery and policy implementation, thereby contributing to the creation of inclusive environments for migrants (Batuk &

Adıgüzel, 2022, p. 58). In this regard, clarity of institutional roles, adequate capacity to respond, and strong accountability mechanisms are crucial for building effective governance structures capable of addressing migration-related challenges.

At the same time, the social dimension of migration highlights the importance of immigrants' relationships with institutions and their participation in building a shared social future. Local administrations, due to their proximity to communities, are uniquely positioned to identify the needs of migrant populations and foster direct engagement between newcomers and local residents (Batuk & Adıgüzel, 2022, p. 54). This dynamic supports a participatory governance model, or co-governance, that stresses collaboration and joint decision-making processes between multiple stakeholders (Ökmen et al., 2004, pp. 49–50). In contemporary governance discourse, concepts such as “local sustainable development,” “social municipalism,” and “urban citizenship” have gained prominence, reflecting the expanded role of municipalities in promoting social cohesion and integration (Mavi, 2021, p. 14; Özçürümez & İçduygu, 2022, p. 21).

As migration governance continues to evolve in response to the complexities of forced migration, the involvement of local actors becomes increasingly central. National-level policies may provide the overarching legal and institutional frameworks, but the lived experience of integration is shaped primarily at the municipal level, where migrants access services and build relations with host communities. Consequently, a multilevel governance model that combines the authority of central governments with the flexibility and responsiveness of local administrations is essential for ensuring effective and sustainable social cohesion. The success of integration policies thus depends not only on their initial design but also on the adaptability, inclusivity, and accountability of governance mechanisms across scales.

## **5. The Place of Culture in Social Cohesion and Social Integration Processes**

The transition from an agricultural society to an industrial society and, more recently, to an information society has been accompanied by large-scale migration movements. These transformations have brought the concept of multiculturalism to the forefront of international organizations and unions established for economic, social, and political cooperation. Multiculturalism broadly refers to awareness of the diversity of language, religion, race, gender, age, social status, ethnicity, disability, and other cultural characteristics. It simultaneously reflects the ability of an individual to acquire competence in another culture while preserving his or her own cultural identity (Ergin & Ermeğan, 2011, p. 1755).

In migration studies, assimilation and integration theories traditionally argue that migrants should undergo a one-way process of adaptation, abandoning their cultural identities in order to merge with the host society. By contrast, the multicultural approach accepts that while migrants must adapt to basic social values, they should also be allowed to maintain their cultural differences, with the recognition that all individuals deserve equal rights (Göker, 2013, p. 89). Culture, as a determinant of identity, encompasses both human relationships and material as well as spiritual values (Ergin & Ermeğan, 2011, p. 1755). Multiculturalism therefore evaluates individuals within the framework of the communities to which they belong, emphasizing that cultural diversity produces hybrid identities and that cultural equality must be a guiding principle. In this respect, the recognition of difference and the freedom to express cultural identity form the basis of multicultural policies (Çağlar & Onay, 2015, pp. 66–67).

Culture, identity, and community also represent central points of resistance against the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and capitalism. For migrant groups and ethnic minorities, culture not only provides a sense of identity but also becomes a means of resisting exclusion and discrimination. Retaining the culture of origin may serve as a protective mechanism that helps individuals maintain self-esteem, particularly when their skills or experiences are undervalued in host societies (Castles, Miller & Haas, 2022, p. 95). In this context, the concept of acculturation describes the interaction between groups from different cultural backgrounds and the mutual changes that occur as a result of cultural diffusion. This process involves both material and spiritual dimensions and tends to unfold over extended periods, sometimes spanning generations or even centuries (Çağlar & Onay, 2015, p. 46; Göker, 2013, p. 88).

According to Price, acculturation can be considered synonymous with cultural assimilation, and it is often the most common form of assimilation experienced by minority groups. In such cases, the process

also entails a transformation of individual or collective identity (as cited in Çağlar & Onay, 2015). However, unlike traditional assimilation theory, acculturation theory highlights reciprocity, positing that the dominant group is influenced by minority cultures as much as it influences them. Migration thus emerges as a catalyst that inevitably reshapes the identities of both migrants and host societies, making acculturation an unavoidable outcome of intercultural encounters (Çiçek, 2022, p. 31).

Acculturation operates simultaneously at individual and group levels. While groups undergo cultural change, individuals experience psychological adjustments as they navigate between cultural frameworks. Although integration is theoretically grounded in mutual communication and interaction, the specific policies guiding this process vary according to the historical, institutional, and national traditions of states. Thus, the management of integration and acculturation ultimately lies within the responsibility of each state, which designs policies to align with its own social and political structures (Göker, 2013, p. 88). At times, the presence of shared cultural elements between migrants and host societies—such as language or religion—can accelerate adaptation, facilitating smoother acculturation processes (Çiçek, 2022, p. 31).

International migration is therefore frequently evaluated in terms of the cultural adaptation processes that result from sustained intercultural interaction. In this process, active participation by both the host society and migrant communities is essential to fostering successful integration. Where migrants find their own cultural frameworks inadequate, they may reinterpret traditional values or, alternatively, adopt the norms and values of the host society (Özçürümez & İçduygu, pp. 22–23; as cited in Balcı, 2022). These dynamics underscore the two-way nature of adaptation: while migrants adjust to new environments, host societies must also remain open to the contributions that migrants bring with them.

Debates around cultural adaptation also highlight the importance of analyzing integration through governance structures. For individuals arriving through forced migration, adopting the cultural codes of the host society can be crucial for progress and stability. Yet, at the same time, local populations must also recognize that migrants' cultural resources can enrich the adaptation process and contribute to the broader social fabric (Özçürümez & İçduygu, pp. 22–23). Without this reciprocity, integration risks becoming a one-sided expectation rather than a collaborative process.

The sense of belonging is another critical element in adaptation and integration. Migrants often carry a sense of belonging rooted in their previous lives, which shapes their engagement with the host society. This feeling influences how and where they attempt to settle. Migrants typically gravitate toward communities where they feel an immediate sense of belonging, and when this is not possible, they gradually establish new bonds over time. Language, belief systems, and cultural values play decisive roles in shaping these affiliations (Karluk, 2022, p. 12). Belonging thus becomes both a personal and collective experience, central to the formation of identity in migration contexts.

In migration processes, adaptation and belonging should be understood not only in terms of meeting basic needs but also in relation to social, cultural, and educational dimensions. The transformation of legal equality into substantive equality enables migrants to be recognized as legitimate insiders within the host society. Yet this transformation is rarely smooth, often accompanied by challenges in achieving social acceptance and mutual respect (Sözer, 2019, p. 424). Recognition, therefore, must extend beyond formal legal frameworks to include practices of inclusion in everyday social and cultural life.

Despite the normative emphasis placed on multiculturalism and acculturation, the realities of host societies often fall short of these ideals. While official policies may appear inclusive on paper, their implementation may reproduce exclusionary dynamics if not supported by institutional sensitivity or societal acceptance. Moreover, although cultural adaptation is presented as a reciprocal process, power asymmetries frequently render it one-sided, with the burden of adjustment disproportionately placed on migrants. In addition, integration strategies that fail to address structural inequalities—such as restricted access to education, limited participation in labor markets, or barriers to political engagement—risk deepening the marginalization of migrant communities.

For this reason, critical assessments of integration must go beyond cultural narratives to interrogate the socio-economic and political conditions under which belonging is constructed, negotiated, or denied. Ultimately, multiculturalism and acculturation are not merely abstract ideals but contested processes shaped by both opportunities for inclusion and persistent barriers of exclusion. The challenge lies in

ensuring that the principles of cultural equality and mutual adaptation are translated into effective practices that foster social cohesion, respect for diversity, and genuine participation in collective life.

## **6. Migration Policies on the Axis of Social Cohesion and Social Integration**

According to United Nations data, 387.8 million people—representing 3.6% of the world’s population—live outside their country of origin. When ranked by population, 21 out of 196 countries are classified as immigrant countries (Duruel, 2017, p. 2). This reality demonstrates that migration has become a global humanitarian issue with profound implications for societies and state policies. The settlement of migrants raises questions regarding sovereignty and national identity, making migration control a political priority. In particular, the arrival of low-skilled workers and refugees is often perceived as a challenge in high-welfare states, where such groups are considered potential economic and social burdens (Castles et al., 2022, p. 291).

Although international migration policies differ from one country to another, the overarching objective of protecting the economic, social, and cultural integrity of nation-states remains a common denominator. Managing the number and composition of migrants is seen as essential for safeguarding national identity. Consequently, states sometimes encourage immigration and sometimes impose restrictions depending on their perceived interests (Şimşek & İçduygu, 2017, p. 7). While cultural assimilation is normatively criticized, in practice, many countries adopt harmonization policies framed within multicultural programs. With the rise of immigration, particularly in the late twentieth century, European Union countries began seeking a common migration regime. During the 1990s, debates on how to apply multiculturalism became particularly salient, as the presence of settled minorities and new arrivals turned integration into a multidimensional and complex policy field (Erder, 2020, p. 28).

The full integration of immigrants into host societies, however, entails significant economic and social costs. For this reason, rather than admitting migrants indiscriminately, many states have pursued selective strategies: implementing open-door policies for certain groups, excluding others entirely, or accepting only limited numbers (Karluk, 2022, p. 13). Local governments, especially municipalities, are often at the forefront of dealing with the immediate consequences of migration. They face practical challenges related to service delivery, economic management, and social cohesion. In cities with large immigrant populations, mayors and municipal councils frequently lobby central governments for more flexible and inclusive policies, as they are more directly confronted with the daily realities of migration (Castles et al., 2022, p. 295).

In theoretical debates, Kymlicka’s notion of “multicultural citizenship” emphasizes the state’s obligation to recognize and support cultural diversity. His perspective, influenced by successful experiences in Canada and Australia, underscores that cultural exclusion is a key driver of integration difficulties. For Kymlicka, a renewed understanding of citizenship—grounded in recognition and equality—is required to address these challenges. Nevertheless, global political developments, particularly in the aftermath of September 11, led to a re-evaluation of multicultural and integration policies in many Western states (cit. Erder, 2020). National migration strategies are also shaped by transnational influences, as states observe and respond to each other’s practices. Major refugee crises, therefore, can only be effectively managed through international cooperation. Institutions such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Refugee Convention were established precisely to meet this need, striving to design new integration frameworks that reduce social conflict while addressing migrants’ vulnerabilities (Castles et al., 2022, p. 296; Erder, 2020, p. 30).

## **7. Some Challenges in Implementing Migration Policies**

From a historical perspective, the causes, forms, and directions of international migration are constantly evolving, influenced by economic systems, political contexts, and countries’ responses (İnce, 2018, p. 4). Migration policies are shaped not only by internal national priorities but also by broader global economic and political trends. Yet, gaps often emerge between policy discourse and implementation. For instance, limited cooperation between states, inadequate documentation, or rising humanitarian protection requests can complicate deportation procedures. Such measures are not only financially burdensome but also emotionally taxing, and their success frequently depends on the attitudes of institutions as well as the level of public support (Castles et al., 2022, p. 306).



Policies aimed at controlling migration flows typically extend their focus beyond temporary arrivals to encompass future generations, seeking long-term integration. However, in practice, many of these policies result in isolation and exclusion of refugees, reinforcing social divides and racism. In several developed countries, political campaigns advocating the deportation of refugees have intensified, reflecting growing public resistance to immigration. Yet these policies are often criticized in academic debates for neglecting the human dimension of migration and overlooking migrants' rights (Şimşek, 2017, p. 12). Furthermore, migration is shaped not only by state actors but also by employers, intermediaries, and human traffickers, who play influential roles in determining migrants' conditions. This dynamic frequently forces governments to provide permanent legal status to migrants who were initially admitted under temporary arrangements. Deportation practices themselves also raise profound ethical and psychological concerns for both enforcers and affected communities (Castles et al., 2022, p. 306).

In conclusion, the challenges surrounding the implementation of migration policies extend far beyond technical and administrative issues. They encompass ethical dilemmas, socio-economic constraints, and political contradictions inherent in the multidimensional nature of migration. While security-oriented strategies may alleviate short-term public anxieties, they often create significant long-term problems, particularly regarding social integration, human rights, and compliance with international obligations. These tensions complicate decision-making processes, producing contradictions between policy goals and implementation outcomes. Moreover, practices such as employing migrants in informal, low-wage sectors highlight the disjuncture between official objectives and lived realities, thereby undermining the legitimacy and effectiveness of state migration governance. Ultimately, the success of migration policies depends not only on legal regulations but also on a comprehensive approach that accounts for economic structures, social perceptions, and international norms in shaping sustainable and humane migration management.

## **8. Türkiye – Germany in Terms of Integration Policies**

### **8.1. Harmonization Policies in Türkiye**

Türkiye is exposed to intense migration flows due to its strategic location and the width of its borders. The sudden and mass migration, especially from Syria, has forced Türkiye to reconsider its migration policies (Özer & Yıldırım, 2024, p. 92). However, the diversification of the terms used has increased legal uncertainties; the lack of clarity of the boundaries between asylum and migration has brought about a legal "illegality of migrants" through categories such as temporary or secondary protection (Danış & Dikmen, 2022, p. 31).

While the "Temporary Protection" status is applied to Syrians in Türkiye, foreigners from other nationalities are generally under the scope of "International Protection" (Taşçı & Kara, 2019, p. 262). Temporary protection status directly affects issues such as housing, social integration, work and livelihood, shaping Türkiye's migration policies (Özer & Yıldırım, 2024, p. 90).

In 2014, the Temporary Protection Regulation was adopted within the scope of Article 91 of the YUKK, providing Syrians with the assurance of not being deported and the opportunity to access fundamental rights (Danış & Dikmen, 2022, p. 31). The sudden and intense Syrian migration led to rapid developments in lawmaking and policy production, enabling the adoption of a new state-focused approach to harmonization (Taşçı & Kara, 2019, pp. 264–268).

According to the Directorate of Migration Management (2024), "harmonization" means that foreigners have the knowledge and skills that will enable them to act independently in all areas of social life in Türkiye or upon their return. This concept is based on the principles of reciprocity, voluntarism and institutional cooperation (Migration Management Authority, Harmony, 2024). The Harmonization Strategy Document and National Action Plan was prepared under the coordination of the Migration Management with the contribution of relevant institutions, and six main themes were identified: social cohesion, information, education, health, labor market and social support (Migration Management Authority, Publications, 2024).

Social adaptation, the first component of the Harmony Strategy Document and National Action Plan, aims to ensure that immigrants develop a common sense of belonging by integrating into the society

they live in culturally, socially and economically, and that differences are mutually accepted, respect is maintained and they live together within the framework of intercultural interaction, exchange of views and social dialogue (Harmony Strategy Document and National Action Plan, p. 12). The second component focuses on providing migrants with comprehensive information about the country's social, economic, cultural, and legal structures, which is crucial for their successful adaptation (National Action Plan, p. 12).

The third component is related to education. Supporting migrants with quality education, learning the language of the country they are in and thus growing up as qualified individuals plays a critical role in the integration process in terms of both their socio-economic development and the strengthening of the country's human resources (National Action Plan, 12). Before 2016, Temporary Education Centers (TECs) were used to meet the educational needs of Syrian children. The main goal of these centers was to provide children with Arabic literacy skills and prepare them for a possible return to Syria. After accepting the fact that Syrians were permanent in Turkey, the Ministry of National Education changed its policy in 2016 and decided to gradually include Syrian students into the Turkish education system and to close temporary education centers providing education in Arabic (as cited in Daniş & Dikmen, 2022, p. 33).

Health, the fourth component of the Harmonization Strategy Paper, focuses on the adaptation of migrants to the health system, including lack of information, language barriers and insufficient experience of health personnel (National Action Plan, p. 13). While there was no specific legal right to healthcare services before the LFIP (YUKK), Syrians under Temporary Protection Status were provided free healthcare services in the provinces where they were registered. Although problems persist in secondary and tertiary care, public health services have generally been the most effective area of support (Daniş & Dikmen, 2022, pp. 35-36).

The fifth component is the labor market. It is observed that there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants coming to Türkiye for work purposes since the 2000s, and that this increase has been experienced in parallel with regional and economic differences and Türkiye's increasing competitiveness in global markets. In light of these developments, Türkiye has begun to develop a more comprehensive vision for labor market adaptation, aiming to encourage regular migration, strengthen the international protection system and prevent irregular migrant labor (National Action Plan, p. 13).

Along with education, one of the most important indicators for the integration of Syrians is participation in the labor market. Although Türkiye initially tried to regulate this process through Law No. 4817, the law was abandoned due to the heavy financial burden it imposed on employers. Instead, an employment quota was introduced for Syrians under Temporary Protection, limiting the number of Syrian employees in a workplace to no more than 10% of Turkish employees (Çiçek, 2022, pp. 9 - 71).

The sixth component is social services and assistance. Social services and assistance provide the support that migrants need when they first arrive in the country, as well as ongoing assistance for their changing needs over time (National Action Plan, p. 14). Article 30 of the Temporary Protection Regulation states that foreigners covered by the regulation may be provided with social assistance when they need it. According to this regulation, those with special needs living in accommodation centers or outside can benefit from social services and assistance. The most important part of social assistance for Syrians in Türkiye is the Social Cohesion Assistance Program (ESSN) (Çiçek, 2022, p. 72).

The ESSN Project (SUY) stands out as the largest cash-based humanitarian assistance project in the world with the number of beneficiaries it has managed to reach and its long-term regular support planning. Under the project, households that meet certain criteria receive cash assistance every month. The project is financed by the European Union under the Social Cohesion Assistance for Foreigners (YSUY) Program, and aid is distributed through the KIZILAYKART platform in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and Turkish Red Crescent. In addition, the Directorate General of Migration Management and the General Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs support the project (Social Cohesion Assistance (ESSN) Project, 2016).

Within the framework of the Harmony Strategy Document and National Action Plan, targets were set for each component in line with the current situation and needs. The National Action Plan aims to ensure inter-institutional cooperation by defining the roles and areas of activity of relevant public institutions.

This plan has been prepared for a period of five years. This document, which is the result of extensive research and contributions from all stakeholders, aims to be a key reference source for the implementation of Türkiye's national cohesion policies (National Action Plan, pp. 31 - 32).

## 8.2. Germany's Integration Policies

Germany's engagement with migration dates back to the post-World War II period. Geddes and Scholten identify four main sources of migration in the post-war era: the return of approximately 12 million ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union to West Germany, the recruitment of “guest workers” from Mediterranean countries and Türkiye to address labor shortages, the subsequent migration of their families, and the influx of asylum seekers prior to the amendment of Article 16 of the German Constitution (Geddes & Scholten, 2016, cited in Kurtoğlu, 2022, p. 62).

For decades, Germany was regarded as a “Country of Involuntary Immigrants.” Despite the labor agreement signed with Italy in 1955, political leaders—particularly under the CDU leadership of Helmut Kohl—consistently denied that Germany was a country of immigration until the early 2000s. This reluctance strongly influenced the orientation of German integration policies, which oscillated between encouraging return migration and promoting integration into German society (Akgün, 2012).

German immigration policy has historically rested on two main objectives. The first is to reduce what is defined as “unwanted migration,” including asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants. The second is to attract highly qualified workers and specialists needed for the labor market (Kurtoğlu, 2022, p. 61). Given its high per capita income levels and its extensive guarantees of social and labor rights, Germany has become one of the most important destination countries for global migration. It is ranked second after the United States as the most preferred OECD country among refugees (Ermeğan, 2021).

Integration policies in Germany are coordinated by multiple governmental institutions, including the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Family Affairs. Nevertheless, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) bears the primary responsibility. BAMF oversees the design and monitoring of integration courses, financial support schemes, and other integration projects across the country (Aydos, 2018, p. 29).

The wars in the Middle East significantly increased asylum applications, to the point where Germany could not keep up with the volume. By 2016, many applications from previous years remained unprocessed. Most recent asylum applications came from Syrians fleeing armed conflict, but economic migrants from Balkan states such as Albania, Serbia, and North Macedonia also applied. Since German asylum law classifies these states as “safe countries of origin,” their applications are usually considered manifestly unfounded and rejected through accelerated procedures (Aydos, 2018, p. 30; BAMF, 2021).

International criticism has also shaped Germany's approach. In May 2015, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) declared that Germany was failing to take effective measures against racism and was neglecting the monitoring of institutional discrimination. Similarly, the 2015 MIPEx report highlighted persistent challenges in education, family reunification, and healthcare, despite some positive reforms, and criticized Germany's limited commitment to comprehensive integration (BAMF, 2024). BAMF has nonetheless played a crucial role in enhancing integration policies through close cooperation with federal and local authorities, enabling the development of more responsive and innovative practices (Şahin, 2015).

At the federal level, two major integration plans have been introduced. The 2007 National Integration Plan emphasized education, employment, and cultural participation, while the 2012 National Integration Action Plan introduced mechanisms to evaluate policy outcomes. In May 2016, the Federal Cabinet issued the “Meseberg Integration Declaration,” which set a policy framework in line with Germany's dual objectives: enhancing employment opportunities and vocational training for foreigners, while simultaneously promoting return policies and stressing migrants' obligations. The same year, the federal parliament passed the country's first Integration Law, which institutionalized integration courses and sought to accelerate the social and economic inclusion of refugees (Kurtoğlu, 2022, p. 66).

Germany expanded its approach in 2018 by defining migration and integration across five stages, followed by a series of summits and policy refinements. In 2021, the 13th Integration Summit was convened with Chancellor Merkel's participation. After the 2015–2016 refugee influx, non-

governmental organizations played a vital role in sustaining integration support. Projects such as the “Refugee Welcome Housing Project” spread widely across the EU, while EU-level funding mechanisms further supported integration efforts in Germany. Between 2021 and 2027, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) allocated €1.5 billion, and the European Social Fund Plus allocated €2.3 billion to support integration initiatives in Germany (as cited in Kurtoğlu, 2022, pp. 67–69).

For refugees arriving after 2015, early access to integration measures was prioritized. Programs included 600 hours of German language instruction and 60 hours of cultural and political education aimed at labor market integration. Individuals granted temporary protection or refugee status also obtained the right to work (Aydos, 2015, p. 36). A recent institutional innovation has been the establishment of “AnKER centers” (Ankunft, Entscheidung, Rückführung), which centralize admission, decision-making, and return procedures to increase efficiency.

In education, responsibilities remain with the Länder, where compulsory schooling is provided for refugee children, and pathways to higher education are available. Refugees are gradually integrated into the German healthcare system; those who remain for longer than 15 months gain access to broader healthcare services. In addition, in several federal states, asylum seekers are issued electronic health cards, enabling easier access to health services (Kurtoğlu, 2022, pp. 72–76).

In sum, Germany’s migration and integration policies have evolved from denial to recognition of its status as a country of immigration. While challenges remain, particularly concerning asylum applications and discrimination, Germany has developed a comprehensive, multi-level governance system combining federal frameworks, local initiatives, and EU support. This approach reflects both the constraints of national politics and the imperatives of international cooperation, making Germany a key case in contemporary migration management.

### **8.3. Türkiye vs Germany**

As countries of immigration, Türkiye and Germany have experienced different historical trajectories, adopted distinct governance models, and developed divergent integration strategies. This comparative analysis examines integration policies across six key dimensions: legal status, education, employment, health services, social assistance, and institutional structures. By analyzing these areas, it is possible to highlight both the differences and common challenges that characterize the migration governance of the two countries.

From the perspective of governance models and institutional structures, Germany operates within a federal system in which both central and state-level institutions actively implement integration policies. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) serves as the primary authority for integration, but municipalities and civil society organizations also play significant roles. This multi-level governance framework ensures not only vertical coordination between the federal and state levels but also horizontal cooperation with non-governmental actors. By contrast, Türkiye’s governance model is highly centralized. Migration policies are primarily coordinated by the Directorate of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior, while the involvement of municipalities remains legally restricted. Nonetheless, in practice, local governments—particularly in cities with high concentrations of migrants—are compelled to assume additional responsibilities, especially in areas such as service delivery and social cohesion. The divergence between Germany’s federal inclusiveness and Türkiye’s centralism reflects how governance structures fundamentally shape migration management outcomes.

Legal status and migrant definitions represent another major point of divergence. In Türkiye, Syrians are granted “temporary protection” status, which emphasizes short-term service provision rather than permanent integration. This legal framework has created uncertainties about the long-term status of migrants, complicating the planning and implementation of integration policies and contributing to a sense of insecurity among migrants themselves (Danış & Dikmen, 2022). In Germany, by contrast, asylum procedures have been integrated into a broader framework of refugee protection and resettlement. While Germany has a relatively high acceptance rate of refugees compared to other European countries, the dynamics of asylum applications have shifted significantly over time. In 2022, the majority of first-time asylum applications came from Ukrainian refugees fleeing war, but by 2023 the increase in applications was primarily driven by migrants from non-Ukrainian states. These shifts

have influenced Germany's integration agenda, requiring adaptation to both humanitarian crises and economic migration pressures.

Education policies further illustrate the structural contrasts. Türkiye initially established Temporary Education Centers (TECs) to provide Arabic-language instruction to Syrian children, reflecting an assumption of eventual return. However, in 2016, this policy was revised when it became clear that Syrians were likely to remain in Türkiye permanently. The Ministry of National Education then initiated a gradual process of integrating Syrian children into the Turkish education system, closing TECs and mandating Turkish-language education (Danış & Dikmen, 2022). This transition marked a significant policy shift but also created new challenges, such as language barriers, overcrowded classrooms, and unequal access to quality education. In Germany, compulsory education applies to refugee children, who are systematically provided with language classes, integration courses, and after-school counseling. Here, federal-state coordination ensures that educational support is adequately funded and implemented. In both countries, education emerges as a key tool for integration, yet while Germany's policy framework is institutionalized and standardized, Türkiye's system reflects a more reactive and transitional approach.

Employment and labor market participation constitute another central dimension of integration. In Türkiye, migrants under temporary protection face restricted access to formal employment. Although it is legally possible to obtain work permits, bureaucratic hurdles and employer reluctance limit opportunities. Many Syrians thus work informally, often under exploitative conditions. The introduction of a 10% quota limiting the proportion of Syrian workers in any workplace relative to Turkish employees has further discouraged employers from hiring Syrians formally (Çiçek, 2022). These policies perpetuate informality and weaken prospects for long-term labor market integration. Germany, by contrast, emphasizes labor market participation as a cornerstone of integration. Language training, vocational education, and job placement support are systematically provided. Refugees with residence permits can access legal employment, reducing dependence on informal sectors and contributing to economic self-sufficiency. Germany's approach reflects a long-term vision in which integration into the labor market is both a right and a responsibility of refugees.

Health services and social assistance also reveal notable differences. In Türkiye, Syrians under temporary protection are entitled to free healthcare in the provinces where they are registered. While primary healthcare has been relatively accessible, problems remain in secondary and tertiary services due to capacity constraints and administrative barriers (Danış & Dikmen, 2022). Türkiye's most significant social assistance mechanism is the EU-funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), which provides monthly cash transfers to eligible households via the KIZILAYKART system. This program, coordinated with Turkish authorities and international partners, represents the largest cash-based humanitarian program in the world and has played a critical role in alleviating poverty among refugees. In Germany, by contrast, asylum seekers are initially entitled to limited healthcare services, but after 15 months they gain full access to the public healthcare system. The issuance of electronic health cards further facilitates healthcare access. Social assistance mechanisms are more institutionalized, drawing on both federal and EU funding, and are designed to ensure long-term sustainability.

The dynamics of social acceptance and cohesion demonstrate the socio-political challenges of integration. In Türkiye, public perceptions of Syrians have shifted significantly. While early arrivals were met with a hospitable discourse grounded in religious and cultural solidarity, economic crises and rising unemployment have fueled anti-immigrant sentiment. This trend has undermined social cohesion, with surveys indicating increasing resentment toward refugees (Erdoğan, 2020b; İçduygu & Diker, 2017). In Germany, a similarly ambivalent trajectory is observed. Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Wir schaffen das" discourse in 2015 symbolized optimism and solidarity; however, over time, growing concerns about security, cultural difference, and economic competition have fueled xenophobia and discrimination. Still, the active involvement of civil society organizations and the existence of strong anti-discrimination laws and monitoring mechanisms have helped mitigate polarization and promote integration initiatives at the local level.

In sum, Türkiye and Germany represent contrasting models of migration governance. Türkiye's policies are heavily shaped by the framework of temporary protection and humanitarian aid, with limited

emphasis on long-term integration. The centralized structure allows for rapid crisis responses but constrains local participation and limits institutional diversity. Germany, on the other hand, has built a more comprehensive and long-term integration framework, facilitated by its federal structure, which encourages local involvement and civil society participation. While both countries have achieved partial successes, persistent structural challenges remain: legal uncertainty and informality in Türkiye, and rising xenophobia and institutional bottlenecks in Germany.

Comparative analysis of these two cases underscores the importance of governance structures, institutional capacity, and societal attitudes in shaping integration outcomes. For Türkiye, the German model demonstrates the value of institutionalizing integration through education, labor, and healthcare systems. For Germany, Türkiye's experience highlights the need for rapid adaptability in times of crisis. Ultimately, both countries face the challenge of balancing humanitarian obligations with political and social realities. The persistence of issues such as discrimination, resource shortages, and status uncertainty reveals that integration is neither a linear nor a complete process but a dynamic negotiation between migrants, states, and societies. In this respect, comparative insights provide a valuable basis for rethinking national strategies and for fostering more inclusive, sustainable, and human-centered migration policies.

## 9. Conclusion

This comparative inquiry demonstrates that social cohesion and social integration are analytically distinct yet mutually constitutive pillars of migration governance. Examined through the paired cases of Türkiye and Germany, the findings show that institutional design—centralized versus federal—does not merely mediate the pace of policy response; it also shapes the very horizons of inclusion available to migrants. Türkiye's centralized, crisis-management orientation under temporary protection enabled rapid humanitarian reach in the wake of mass displacement, especially after 2011. Yet the same framework produced status ambiguity, segmented access to services, and labor-market informality that attenuate long-term integration pathways. Germany's federal, rule-bound model, by contrast, institutionalized integration as an enduring state function—via language and orientation courses, vocational routes, and social protection—while still contending with backlogs, uneven Länder capacities, and the political headwinds of discrimination and securitization.

Across sectors, the policy contrast crystallizes. In education, Türkiye's transition from Temporary Education Centers to full inclusion in the national system signals an important shift from return-oriented assumptions to permanence; however, the practical frictions of language acquisition, classroom congestion, and territorial disparities persist. Germany's compulsory schooling paired with structured linguistic and psychosocial supports offers a more standardized scaffold, though implementation remains sensitive to local resources and demographic pressures. In employment, Türkiye's work-permit bureaucracy and the 10% workplace quota for Syrians entrench informality and depress human-capital utilization; Germany's residency-linked work rights, vocational training, and job-matching instruments more consistently translate legal status into labor-market attachment, even as recognition of qualifications and sectoral bottlenecks constrain outcomes.

Health and social assistance reveal complementary logics with distinct trade-offs. Türkiye's province-bound entitlement to free primary care under temporary protection created high first-line coverage but left gaps in secondary and tertiary access; the EU-financed ESSN cash program mitigated poverty at scale yet could not substitute for durable socioeconomic mobility. Germany's time-phased inclusion in the statutory health system and the spread of electronic health cards simplify access over time, embedding migrants within universalist architectures—while exposing the politics of waiting periods, cost containment, and public sentiment.

Beyond sectoral comparisons, the social climate matters decisively. In both countries, early phases of hospitality gave way to heightened contention as numbers rose and macroeconomic fears intensified. Türkiye's shift from solidarity to skepticism and Germany's trajectory from "Wir schaffen das" to ambivalence underscore a central insight of the cohesion literature: interpersonal trust, perceived fairness, and everyday contact with institutions are as consequential as statutory design. Where anti-discrimination enforcement, civil society brokerage, and municipal experimentation are robust,

polarization is dampened and program uptake improves; where narratives of burden and insecurity dominate, bureaucratic access narrows and informal coping expands.

Theoretically, the cases vindicate the governance perspective advanced in the study: multilevel arrangements, role clarity, and accountability mechanisms condition whether “cohesion” remains a rhetorical horizon or materializes as measurable inclusion. Temporary protection, when untethered from credible status transitions and mainstream service pathways, tends to institutionalize liminality. Conversely, integration regimes that invest in language, credentialing, and income security reduce system strain by converting humanitarian presence into contributory participation. Culture is not an exogenous obstacle but an institutional variable: policies that recognize plural identities—without collapsing standards of equal treatment—strengthen belonging and de-escalate zero-sum perceptions.

Policy implications follow. For Türkiye, the priority is to convert emergency architectures into status-secure, rights-bearing integration channels: streamline work authorization; align social support with activation; expand targeted Turkish-language and bridging programs; and formally empower municipalities that already shoulder de facto responsibilities. For Germany, sustaining federal coherence requires continued investment in Länder capacities, faster adjudication to reduce uncertainty, and vigilant enforcement against discrimination that silently erodes program efficacy. In both settings, stable financing, longitudinal monitoring, and interoperable data systems are preconditions for adaptive management—especially as asylum flows diversify and economic cycles tighten.

Two cross-cutting cautions merit emphasis. First, security-first approaches can calm short-term anxieties yet sow long-run contradictions by displacing integration costs into informal labor, shadow housing, and emergency care. Second, “multiculturalism” and “acculturation” advance cohesion only when paired with structural equalization: access to quality schooling, credential recognition, health coverage beyond emergencies, and enforceable labor rights. Absent these, the burden of adjustment shifts asymmetrically onto migrants, reproducing the very exclusions integration policy seeks to remedy.

Finally, the analysis identifies research and measurement frontiers: comparative indicators that disaggregate outcomes by legal status and locality; causal evaluations of cash assistance combined with activation; and micro-level studies of institutional trust formation among newcomers and hosts. Taken together, the Turkish and German experiences show that successful integration is not a terminal state but a governed process—contingent, negotiated, and reversible. Where institutions reduce status precarity, align incentives across scales, and cultivate everyday fairness, social cohesion ceases to be a slogan and becomes an attainable equilibrium.

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**Derleme Makale****‘Social Cohesion’ and ‘Social Integration’ in Terms of Concepts and Models: A Türkiye-Germany Analysis***Kavramsal ve Modelsel Açıdan ‘Sosyal Uyum’ ve ‘Toplumsal Bütünleşme’: Türkiye-Almanya İncelemesi*

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**Genişletilmiş Özet**

Küreselleşmenin hız kazanmasıyla birlikte zorunlu göç hareketleri, devletlerin sosyal yapıları ve politika üretim süreçlerinde önemli değişiklikleri beraberinde getirmiştir. Göç olgusu, yalnızca demografik bir dönüşüm değil, aynı zamanda siyasal, ekonomik ve kültürel alanlarda yeniden yapılanmayı zorunlu kılan çok boyutlu bir süreçtir. Bu bağlamda sosyal uyum ve toplumsal bütünleşme, göçmenlerin ev sahibi toplumla kurdukları ilişkilerin niteliğini anlamak için kilit kavramlar haline gelmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye ve Almanya’nın farklı yönetim modelleri çerçevesinde göç ve entegrasyon politikalarını karşılaştırmalı olarak ele almak; sosyal uyumun bireysel, kurumsal ve kültürel boyutlarını akademik bir perspektifle incelemektir.

Sosyal uyum, toplumun farklı grupları arasında güven, anlayış ve birlikte yaşama kültürünün geliştirilmesini amaçlayan dinamik bir süreçtir. Bireylerin ayrımcılıktan uzak bir ortamda temas kurabilmesi, ötekileştirmenin azaltılması ve karşılıklı kabulün güçlenmesi bu sürecin temel hedefleri arasında yer almaktadır. Buna karşılık toplumsal bütünleşme, daha çok kurumsal düzeyde ele alınmakta; eğitim, sağlık ve istihdam gibi yapısal alanlarda göçmenlerin katılımını ifade etmektedir. Sosyal uyum mikro düzeyde bireyler arası ilişkileri kapsarken, toplumsal bütünleşme makro düzeyde siyasal ve kurumsal katılımı içermektedir. Bu ayrım, kavramların tamamlayıcı niteliklerini ve göç yönetiminde farklı ölçeklerdeki önemlerini göstermektedir.

Zorunlu göç, savaş, şiddet ve yoksulluk gibi nedenlerle bireylerin iradeleri dışında yer değiştirmelerini ifade eden bir olgu olarak, göçmenler açısından yalnızca fiziksel bir hareketlilik değil, aynı zamanda psikolojik, sosyal ve ekonomik kırılmalarla karakterize edilmektedir. Travma sonrası stres bozukluğu, aidiyet eksikliği ve yabancılaşma gibi etmenler, göçmenlerin ev sahibi toplumla sağlıklı ilişkiler kurmasını güçleştirmektedir. Bu nedenle uyum ve entegrasyon yalnızca göçmenlerin bireysel çabalarına bırakılmamalı; devletler, sivil toplum kuruluşları ve ev sahibi toplum da sürece aktif biçimde dahil olmalıdır. Göçmenlerin güven, aidiyet ve kimliklerini koruyarak topluma katılımı, ancak bu çok aktörlü sorumluluk paylaşımıyla mümkün hale gelmektedir.

Modern kamu yönetimi anlayışı, yönetişimi merkezi otoritenin yanı sıra yerel yönetimler, sivil toplum kuruluşları ve özel sektör gibi farklı aktörlerin karar alma süreçlerine katılımını içeren çok aktörlü bir model olarak tanımlar. Sosyal uyum politikalarının başarısı, yalnızca merkezi kararlarla değil, yerel düzeyde katılımcı, kapsayıcı ve ihtiyaca uygun uygulamalarla mümkündür. Almanya’da federal sistem, yerel yönetimlerin aktif politika üretici aktörler olmasına imkân tanırken; Türkiye’nin merkeziyetçi yapısı, hukuki açıdan yerel yönetimlerin rolünü sınırlı tutmaktadır. Bununla birlikte Türkiye’de sahadaki

ihtiyaçlar doğrultusunda yerel aktörler fiilen sürece dahil olmakta, bu da iki ülke arasındaki kurumsal farkların pratik yansımalarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Göçmenlerin entegrasyon süreci kültürel kimlikleriyle kurdukları ilişkiyle doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Multikültürel yaklaşımlar, göçmenlerin kendi kültürlerini koruyarak ev sahibi toplumla etkileşimde bulunmalarını desteklemekte, kültürel uyumun tek yönlü bir adaptasyon süreci değil; çift yönlü bir öğrenme ve kabullenme süreci olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Farklı kültürlerin tanınmadığı ve bastırıldığı durumlarda dışlanma, yabancılaşma ve toplumsal gerginlik kaçınılmaz hale gelmektedir. Bu nedenle entegrasyon politikalarının temel amacı, kültürel farklılıkları bastırmak değil; bunları tanıyan ve ortak yaşamı teşvik eden bir çerçeve oluşturmak olmalıdır.

Türkiye, özellikle 2011 sonrası Suriyeli göçmen akınıyla birlikte hızlı politika üretme ihtiyacıyla karşılaşmıştır. 6458 sayılı Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu ve Uyum Strateji Belgesi, bu süreçte temel yasal çerçeveleri oluşturmuş olsa da geçici koruma rejimi göçmenlerde statü belirsizliğine yol açmış, uzun vadeli entegrasyon stratejilerinin geliştirilmesini güçleştirmiştir. Sağlık, eğitim ve istihdam alanlarında kayıt dışılık ve erişim sorunları bu belirsizliğin somut yansımalarıdır. Almanya ise Federal Göç ve Mülteciler Dairesi (BAMF) öncülüğünde dil kursları, mesleki eğitim ve sosyal yardım programları gibi çok katmanlı politikalar geliştirmiştir. Federal sistemin sağladığı çok aktörlü yapı, yerel düzeyde daha esnek ve kalıcı çözümler üretilmesine olanak tanımaktadır.

Türkiye'nin merkeziyetçi yapısı, kriz anlarında hızlı müdahalelere imkân tanımakla birlikte uzun vadeli entegrasyon stratejilerinin kurumsallaşmasını zorlaştırmaktadır. Almanya'nın federal yapısı ise yerel aktörlerin sürece daha etkin biçimde katılımını kolaylaştırmakta ve sürdürülebilir çözümler geliştirmeyi mümkün kılmaktadır. Vatandaşlık ve kalıcı oturma imkânı gibi yasal araçlar, Almanya'da göçmenlerin aidiyet duygusunu güçlendirmekte; Türkiye'de ise geçici koruma statüsünün yarattığı belirsizlik, uyum sürecini kırılgan kılmaktadır.

Tüm bu karşılaştırmalar göstermektedir ki göç ve entegrasyon politikaları yalnızca yasal düzenlemelerle sınırlı değildir; toplumsal algılar, kültürel kabul ve kurumsal kapasite gibi faktörler de entegrasyon süreçlerini derinden şekillendirmektedir. Türkiye'nin geçici koruma odaklı politikaları kalıcı entegrasyon stratejilerini güçleştirmekte; Almanya ise çok düzeyli yönetim modeli ve kurumsal kapasitesiyle daha sürdürülebilir uygulamalar geliştirmektedir. Bununla birlikte her iki ülkede de ayrımcılık, kamuoyu tepkileri ve kaynak yetersizlikleri gibi yapısal sorunlar devam etmektedir.

Sonuç olarak başarılı bir entegrasyon süreci yalnızca göçmenlerin temel ihtiyaçlarının karşılanmasıyla değil; aynı zamanda kültürel aidiyet, hukuki güvence ve toplumsal kabulün güçlendirilmesiyle mümkündür. Sosyal uyum, yalnızca göçmenlerin değil ev sahibi toplumun da aktif katılımıyla gerçekleşir. Bu nedenle entegrasyon politikalarının insan hakları temelli ve uzun vadeli vizyonlarla kurgulanması gerekmektedir. Türkiye ve Almanya örnekleri, farklı kurumsal yapıların entegrasyon süreçlerini nasıl şekillendirdiğini göstermekte ve politika yapıcılara önemli dersler sunmaktadır. Göç yönetiminin yalnızca kriz odaklı değil, sürdürülebilir toplumsal bütünleşme vizyonuyla ele alınması, gelecekte daha kapsayıcı ve kalıcı çözümlerin üretilmesini mümkün kılacaktır.