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Temporary Protection between Sovereignty and Human Rights: Irregular Migration, Social Stability, and Safe Return in Türkiye

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Abstract

This article examines how the tension between the state's right to sovereignty and the human rights of protected populations shapes integration under conditions of mass, temporary-protection-based migration. Over the past decade, Türkiye has become one of the principal countries granting temporary protection to millions of people, and what was initially treated as a short-term measure has gradually hardened into a condition bordering on permanence. Drawing on a qualitatively driven, mixed-methods field study carried out over roughly seven years in Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli, the article analyses the experiences of both protected individuals and the host society through in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and sustained observation. Its central claim is that sovereignty and human rights are not opposing forces but principles that meet on common ground—the ground of legitimacy. The findings identify legal uncertainty as the single most decisive obstacle to integration and reveal a feedback loop in which legal certainty, fair treatment, and a sense of security generate legitimacy; legitimacy fosters trust; trust enables integration; and integration, in turn, underpins social stability. Trust is examined at the institutional, societal, and interpersonal levels, and stability through indicators of public order, social cohesion, and perceived justice. On this basis, the article proposes a Legitimacy-Based Model of Temporary Protection and Sustainable Return. The model ties the durability of a protection regime not to its length but to legal certainty, to a two-sided legitimacy earned simultaneously in the eyes of the host society and the protected individual, and to a predictable horizon of return that is safe, voluntary, dignified, and lawful—conceived together with the reconstruction of countries of origin and broad international cooperation. Rather than denying or inflaming the host society's concerns about stability, the approach sustains protection while preparing for eventual return. The findings are translated into an integrated reform package spanning legal, ethical, institutional, social, and international layers, with institutional memory, resilience, and ethical leadership as its load-bearing conditions. The study thus shows that social stability and individual dignity are not opposites but two faces of a single solution, and offers a framework that reconceives integration not solely in terms of "staying" but along the axis of a legitimate and sustainable return.

Keywords: *temporary protection; sovereignty; human rights; irregular migration; social stability; safe return; legitimacy*

1. INTRODUCTION

A form of protection is designed to be temporary. Its very name says so: temporary protection. Those who set out, too, usually believe they will remain away only for a short while. Yet when the country to which they would return does not become safe, this supposedly temporary condition becomes ordinary over the years. Türkiye has experienced precisely this over the past decade.

Protection, initially taken to be a matter of a few years, has over time turned into the very framework of millions of people's daily lives. Children have been born here and started school; families have rented homes and set up businesses. In other words, what was "temporary" has quietly drawn close to becoming "permanent." The question this article asks lies hidden within this silent transformation.

This transformation is not merely a problem of migration management. It contains within it two fundamental principles that are often thought to be at odds with each other. On one side stands the state's authority to protect its own borders, resources, and internal order; this is called, in short, sovereignty. On the other stands the obligation to safeguard the basic rights and dignity of the person taken under protection; this is called human rights. At first glance, it seems that as one comes to the fore, the other recedes. The starting point of this article is precisely to question that appearance: are sovereignty and human rights truly each other's enemies, or can they, under certain conditions, stand side by side?

There is a particular value in asking this question today. In the field of migration governance, the balances have been shifting rapidly in recent years. Many countries are tightening border control, and debates over the future of people under protection are growing harsher. In the same period, partial calm has emerged in some countries of origin, and the prospect of return has come onto the agenda once more. The region in which Türkiye finds itself is one of the places where these changes are felt most acutely. All of this turns the future of temporary protection from an abstract academic topic into a concrete matter on today's decision-making table. The tension between sovereignty and human rights is therefore not a debate that can be postponed.

Because of its geographical position, Türkiye has long been both a destination and a transit point along migration routes. Over the past decade, owing to war and instability in neighbouring regions, it has become one of the foremost countries of refuge for large populations. These populations, arriving in a short span of time, have visibly altered the demographic balance in some provinces. The burden on public services such as education, health, and housing has increased. This burden has given rise, within the host society, to concerns about social cohesion and internal stability. The study does not belittle these concerns. It regards them as a natural reflection of the state's responsibility to protect its own order and social peace. But at the same time, it does not sacrifice the rights and dignity of the person under protection. The issue is to do justice to both of these concerns at once.

The concept of sovereignty appears simple at first glance: the state's authority to have the final word on its own territory. The classical understanding deems this authority absolute and indivisible; its roots reach back to Bodin and the Westphalian order. Yet in today's world sovereignty no longer retains that old absoluteness. International law, human-rights conventions, and cross-border ties limit the state's room for manoeuvre. As Sassen (1998) shows, globalization does not abolish sovereignty; rather, it reshapes it and partly shares it with other actors. Some authors argue that sovereignty is no longer gathered in a single centre but dispersed among rules and institutions (Krasner, 1999; Ruggie, 1993). Others draw attention to the way that, in states of exception, the state creates an indeterminate threshold zone where the individual is left outside the ordinary protection of the law; the legal position of the person under protection often stands precisely on such a threshold (Agamben, 1998). This article treats sovereignty in this contemporary sense: as an authority that must be protected but that does not, on its own, determine everything.

On the other side of the coin stands human rights. The basic principle here is clear: a human being, whatever their status, deserves a minimum of protection and respect. The firmest limit of these rights is that a person in danger cannot be forcibly returned; in international law this is called the principle of non-refoulement (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2021). Even while controlling its border, the state cannot cross this limit. Human rights, therefore, are not an obstacle erected against sovereignty; they are rather a framework that determines how it is to be exercised. The tension arises from just this: the state wishes to protect its order, yet it must do so without trampling on the individual's rights.

To understand this tension, the study uses the three principal perspectives of international relations as auxiliary lenses. These should be thought of not as three rival theories but as three lights illuminating different corners of the same picture. The state-centred view explains why sovereignty and internal order matter so much; this lens illuminates the host society's concern for stability (Waltz, 1979). The rights-centred view shows why the protection of the individual is indispensable; it is this lens that insists even return must be voluntary and dignified (Keohane & Nye, 2001). The identity-centred view, in turn, explains how the two societies perceive each other and how trust and prejudice are formed (Wendt, 1999). None of them, on its own, can give the whole picture. The bond that holds the three together is a single concept: legitimacy.

This is precisely the concept the study places at its centre. A migration policy does not endure merely because it is lawful. It must, at the same time, be seen as justified in the eyes of both the host society and the person under protection. This state of being seen as justified is called legitimacy. Behind the concept lies a deep-rooted intellectual tradition. Weber distinguishes three separate sources of authority: that resting on tradition, that resting on personal charisma, and that resting on law. With this distinction, he shows that a form of power endures not merely by being strong but by being accepted (Weber, 1978). Legitimacy, in other words, is the work of consent, not of coercion.

Authors who came after Weber deepen this idea. Beetham lists three conditions for a form of power to be deemed legitimate: that the rules conform to law, that these rules accord with the values the society shares, and that the governed give their consent (Beetham, 2013). Tyler, for his part, draws attention to another point. People comply with rules most often not because they fear punishment but because they find the process fair; when the treatment is fair, the

outcome is accepted even if it is undesired (Tyler, 2006). Habermas, too, emphasizes that legitimacy is established through the open and reciprocal justification of decisions (Habermas, 1975). This study uses legitimacy in precisely this multi-layered sense: legality, shared values, fair process, and open justification.

Legitimacy poses a distinct difficulty in migration policy. For the same policy must be seen as justified by two separate constituencies. The host society wishes to feel that its own order and resources are protected. The person under protection, in turn, wishes to see that their rights and dignity are respected. If a policy satisfies only one side, it loses its legitimacy on the other. Moreover, legitimacy has two sources: the fairness of the process and the liveability of the outcome. When both are not secured together, even the most well-intentioned arrangement erodes over time. This article reads the tension between sovereignty and human rights on precisely this two-sided ground of legitimacy.

Alongside legitimacy, the study draws frequently on several further concepts, each with a particular grounding. The first is dignity. Dignity lies at the core of the idea of human rights. It expresses the idea that a human being, regardless of any other attribute, deserves a minimum of respect simply by virtue of being human; contemporary thought debating the rights of non-citizens also rests on this idea (Benhabib, 2004). In this study, dignity is not an ornamental word; it has a concrete counterpart in the daily life of the person under protection: being informed about one's own future, not being subjected to arbitrary treatment, and being able to make one's own decisions. When this assurance is damaged, even the most generous assistance falls short.

The second concept is social stability. This study does not use it as an all-encompassing grand term; it gives it a narrower and more visible meaning: the continuation of public order, the predictability of everyday life, and the avoidance of any turn toward open tension in relations between groups. The classical sociological tradition, which points to the importance of the bonds that keep societies together, and the social-capital approach form the background of this view (Durkheim, 1933; Parsons, 1951; Putnam, 2000). Stability here does not mean immobility; it means that change can be managed without turning into conflict.

The third concept is trust, and it lies at the foundation of stability. Trust should not be thought of as a single thing; it has three distinct layers: the trust people place in the state and institutions, the trust they place in society at large, and the trust people place in one another. As Putnam (2007) shows, when different groups begin to live together, trust may weaken in the short term. But this is not an inevitable collapse. Clear rules, fair practices, and time can build a new ground of trust. Trust is a resource that can be accumulated but also spent; once worn down, it takes a long time to regain.

The fourth concept is the sense of justice. This differs from justice as found in the law books; it is people's intuition as to whether the treatment they receive is deserved. When a person feels that the rules are applied equally to everyone and that their voice is heard, they can endure the outcome even if it is against them. But when they sense arbitrariness and inequality, even the most reasonable rule is met with resistance. This bond, to which Tyler points, links the idea of legitimacy at the centre of the study to everyday life (Tyler, 2006).

In the early years of this process in Türkiye, the most frequently used word was "guest." Guesthood offered a warm framework embraced by both the state and society; the new arrivals were approached in a language of courtesy and solidarity. This language has a historical and political background; it is woven from the society's own values (Kirişci, 2014; Korkut, 2016). Yet the concept of guesthood must be handled with care from an academic standpoint. Guesthood, by its very nature, implies a temporary and non-reciprocal relationship. What comes to the fore here is not the rights of the guest but the goodwill of the host. Goodwill is valuable; but it is not as secure as a right, for it can be withdrawn at any moment.

As the duration lengthens, this framework begins to prove inadequate for both sides. For the person under protection, guesthood makes their future contingent on another's goodwill; it offers no lasting assurance. For the host society, the prolonging of a situation supposed to be temporary may cause the initial generosity to give way to fatigue. For this reason, the study regards the concept of guesthood not as a tool of description but as the sign of a tension that must be resolved. The real question is this: can the language of guesthood be replaced by a more robust framework that attends to both rights and order?

At this point another danger must be mentioned: the presentation of migration as a security threat. The founding strand of securitization theory examines how an issue is, through speech and discourse, carried outside ordinary politics and turned into a "security problem" (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Bigo (2002) and Huysmans (2006) have shown in detail how this process works in Europe's migration debates. When a group is continually invoked as a security problem, the everyday relationship formed with that group is also damaged; social exclusion becomes easier. This study takes the security concern seriously, as a genuine concern. But it also sees that the exaggeration of the language of security can magnify the very problem it seeks to solve. Security and rights should be thought of together rather than as mutually exclusive.

All of this tension is lived out in Türkiye within a concrete legal framework, and this framework deserves a brief explanation for the international reader. When signing the 1951 Geneva Convention, Türkiye placed a geographical limitation; that is, it grants full refugee status only to those coming from Europe. For this reason, those arriving from regions outside Europe are granted temporary protection or conditional refugee status (Kirişci, 2014). The Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which entered into force in 2013, constitutes the legal basis of this structure. Temporary protection, as its name says, is not a promise of permanent settlement. It provides assurance to the person under protection; but it also draws, from the outset, the limits of that assurance. By keeping the individual's legal status in an indeterminate zone, this structure directly affects the integration process.

Türkiye is not alone in this trial; a brief comparison with other countries facing similar situations makes the shared aspects of the problem visible. Germany has sought to meet a mass migration wave through long-term settlement and gradual citizenship. Jordan and Lebanon, for their part, have hosted populations very large in proportion to their own, mostly with an emphasis on temporariness and reliant on international aid. Colombia has tried a different path by granting large-scale regular status to a large population arriving from its neighbour (Betts & Collier, 2017; OECD, 2022). These examples show that there is no single correct path. Each country strikes a different balance according to its own resources, neighbourly relations, and social structure. The Turkish case, too, gains meaning within this broad picture.

The approaches that are alternatives to the path the study will later point toward must also be acknowledged from the outset and fairly. According to one view, the most lasting solution is for the persons under protection to settle fully into society in the long run, and even to be admitted to citizenship; this view holds that permanent integration is healthier for both the individual and society (Soysal, 1994; Joppke, 2007). Another view foregrounds a multicultural model of coexistence in which differences are preserved (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013). These approaches have their strengths and hold for many countries. The study does not belittle them; it asks, however, whether these models suffice on their own in a mass, temporary-protection-based migration.

Some researchers, in turn, remind us that the coexistence of different cultures may, in the long run, give rise to new tensions and that this must be managed carefully (Koopmans, 2010; Putnam, 2007). This study does not declare any view right or wrong in advance. Instead, it asks which path, under Türkiye's particular conditions, is both justified and sustainable. It does not give the answer in advance; following what the field says, it builds the answer step by step, in a way the reader too can see.

After all this framing, the study's real question comes into focus. Are the state's right to sovereignty and the individual's right to protection truly the two pans of a single scale—that is, must one lose as the other gains weight? Or can the two, under certain conditions, grow stronger together? This is a genuine question to which the article does not impose an answer in advance. Seven years of field experience across three large cities show that the answer to this question does not fit into a single sentence.

Accordingly, the study's main research question is this: How does the tension between the state's right to sovereignty and the individual's right to protection shape the integration process of persons under protection? This main question is supported by five subsidiary questions. How does legal status affect integration? What obstacles are encountered in access to basic services? How does the perception of security shape participation in social life? Under what conditions does social cohesion strengthen or weaken? What opportunities and difficulties come to the fore in economic participation? These five questions have been chosen so as not to compress integration into a single dimension—so as to see it together with its legal, social, security, and economic aspects.

The study approaches these questions with a few basic expectations. The first is that legal uncertainty is the heaviest obstacle before integration; for the individual whose status becomes clear, access to services and participation in economic life become easier. The second is that increased access to basic services positively affects participation in social life. The third is that, as the perception of security rises, the individual's participation in social and economic life also increases. These expectations are not taken to be true in advance; they have been framed to be tested against the data coming from the field and are open to revision when necessary.

So that these questions and expectations do not stand scattered, the study proposes an original framework that places the concepts in a particular order. This framework may be called the "Legitimacy-Based Framework of Integration and Sustainable Return." Its workings are as follows: a policy seen as legitimate can, over time, generate trust; as trust increases, the individual participates more easily in social and economic life—that is, integration strengthens; as integration strengthens, inter-group tension diminishes and social stability consolidates. One assumption must be stated clearly here: legitimacy does not generate trust, nor trust integration, of its own accord and automatically. Each link of this chain works only when certain conditions are met; and each link can break. The framework, therefore, is not a definite mechanism but a map that allows all the findings to be read along the same axis. The study's original contribution arises, in large part, from setting out and naming this map explicitly (see Figure 1).

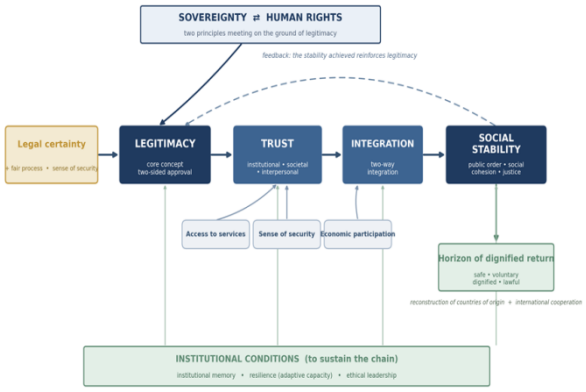

Figure 1. The Legitimacy-Based Model of Temporary Protection and Sustainable Return

Source: Created by the author.

This map aims to fill a particular gap in the field. The migration and integration literature most often reads integration as a one-way road: the newcomer stays and gradually settles (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014; Berry, 1997). This reading is largely correct for permanent migration. But it falls short in a mass, temporary-protection-based migration. In the specific case of Türkiye, the number of studies that examine the integration of persons under protection in a multidimensional way—through the sovereignty–

human-rights tension and the ground of legitimacy, and moreover on the basis of long-term field experience—is limited. What this research attempts for the first time is to think of integration not only through "staying" but also through a legitimate and sustainable "horizon of return."

This idea of a "horizon of return," at which the study will later arrive, is not an idle wish; it rests on an accumulated literature on return (Long, 2013; Black & Koser, 1999; Hammond, 2004; Chimni, 2004). This literature shows two things together. On the one hand, safe and voluntary return can be a legitimate part of lasting solutions. On the other, it reveals that returns made before conditions have matured most often fail; that people set out again within a short time. For this reason, the study treats return not as a slogan but as a process with conditions, stages, and limits. It also takes into account, from the outset, the possibility of a failed return; for a return made by force or prematurely magnifies the very problem it seeks to solve.

The study's expected contribution may be gathered at three levels. At the theoretical level, it proposes an integrated framework that brings the sovereignty–human-rights tension together on the ground of legitimacy and places the concepts in an order; it thereby carries scattered debates onto a single axis. At the empirical level, by bringing seven years of interview, conversation, and observation experience across three large cities to this framework, it gives a concrete field counterpart to a debate that often remains abstract. At the policy level, it treats the protection of social stability and the protection of the individual's dignity not as opposing but as mutually complementary aims. The Turkish case thereby ceases to be merely a sui generis instance and becomes an example from which lessons can be drawn for countries undergoing similar mass, temporary-protection experiences.

The path to which these three levels point also offers a candidate answer to the question posed at the outset. Sovereignty and human rights, when the policy is seen as legitimate in the eyes of both sides, can cease to conflict and instead meet. The most sustainable form of this meeting is the gradual return of individuals to their own countries—safe, voluntary, dignified, and lawful—as the countries of origin attain stability. Such a return neither disregards the host society's concerns nor tramples on the dignity of the person under protection. But this is not a path Türkiye can walk on its own; it is possible only through strong international cooperation in which the burden is shared fairly. The study thus attempts to resolve the initial paradox on precisely this ground: to tie a supposedly temporary protection not to a permanent victimhood but to a legitimate and dignified solution.

2. Literature Review

This section is organized so as to relate the tension between sovereignty and human rights that forms the theoretical backbone of the study, and the concept of legitimacy that holds this tension together, to the relevant literature. The integration of displaced individuals is a multidimensional phenomenon that lies not within a single discipline but at the intersection of migration studies, international-relations theory, refugee law, security studies, and political sociology. The existing literature has, for the most part, addressed this phenomenon either from the perspective of sovereignty or from the perspective of human rights; studies bringing the two perspectives together on a single analytical axis have remained relatively limited. The review below aims to offer a reading that unites these two perspectives on the ground of legitimacy, and thereby to make visible the theoretical gap on which the study's original contribution will rest.

The review is organized so as to follow a conceptual hierarchy. First the literature on the study's two poles—sovereignty and human rights—is addressed; then the concept of legitimacy that binds these two poles together is discussed. After legitimacy, the literature on securitization, trust, and social stability—which shapes the relationship between the host society and the person under protection—is examined; subsequently, the guesthood discourse specific to the Turkish context and comparative temporary-protection regimes are assessed. The section, after presenting the literature on return and durable solutions on which the study's proposed solution rests and the discussion addressing the institutional conditions of that solution, concludes with a subsection that fairly represents opposing approaches and, finally, with a sharpened statement of the research gap.

2.1. Sovereignty: From the Classical Understanding to Limited and Disaggregated Sovereignty

The concept of sovereignty is the founding principle of the modern state order. Bodin's (1576) definition of sovereignty as the state's indivisible and inalienable supreme authority, together with the Westphalian order's (1648) transformation of it into the norm of non-interference in states' internal affairs, constitutes the classical core of the concept. Yet this classical definition, on its own, proves inadequate to explain the governance problems created by mass and cross-border migration movements. The contemporary literature on sovereignty rereads the concept not as an absolute and unitary authority but as a practice that fragments in application, flexes according to circumstances, and is limited by international norms. This study, too, uses sovereignty not as a classical historical summary but as an analytical tool that explains how it actually operates in migration management.

Krasner (1999) shows that sovereignty is not a single whole but consists of dimensions that can be disaggregated from one another: international legal recognition, Westphalian non-interference in internal affairs, authority in the sense of border control, and the organization of domestic authority operate by different logics. According to Krasner, states most often cannot realize these dimensions simultaneously; sovereignty therefore manifests as "organized hypocrisy." In the migration context this understanding is illuminating: while exercising its authority of border control, a state may at the same time be obliged to assume international protection obligations, and these two dimensions may be in constant tension. Türkiye's temporary-protection regime offers a concrete example of precisely this disaggregated nature of sovereignty.

Sassen (1996) argues that, with globalization, the state's control capacity is eroded—that economic, legal, and humanitarian flows render nation-state borders partly permeable. In her view, sovereignty does not disappear entirely; it is reshaped within transnational processes and partly "denationalized." Ruggie (1993), for his part, emphasizes that the principle of territoriality at the foundation of modern sovereignty is a historically constructed and therefore transformable category. When these two approaches are read together, the gap between the state's desire for control in the face of migration and its actual capacity is better understood. The state is still the regulatory power; but it now exercises this power not on its own, but within a web of international norms and regional cooperation.

The thinker who treats the relationship of sovereignty with the individual at the border most sharply is Agamben (1998). Agamben argues that sovereign power displays itself most openly within the "state of exception"—that on this threshold, where the law's ordinary protection is suspended, the individual can be reduced to "bare life." The person whose legal status remains indeterminate—neither a full citizen nor a recognized refugee—is positioned on this threshold. This conceptualization explains why legal uncertainty is not merely an administrative delay but also a deep source of vulnerability. The finding that comes to the fore in the study's field data—that "status uncertainty is the heaviest obstacle before integration"—can be directly related to this theoretical framework of Agamben. The classical narrative of sovereignty is thus deepened by the contemporary literature's understanding of a limited, disaggregated sovereignty that operates at the threshold.

2.2. Human Rights, Dignity, and the Obligation to Protect

At the opposite pole of sovereignty stands the human-rights regime, which limits the state's authority. The process that began with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights defined the individual not merely as the subject of the state but as a subject possessing rights independent of the state. Soysal (1994) argues that migrants' rights are increasingly recognized on the basis of "postnational membership," detached from nation-state citizenship—that the source of the individual's rights becomes not citizenship but the status of being human. Benhabib (2004), for her part, broadens this development with the concept of "the rights of others" and argues that the recognition of the migrant as a subject of rights is the test of democratic legitimacy. These two approaches theoretically ground the study's human-rights pole.

The concept of dignity, to which the study frequently appeals, is in this literature not a loose moral emphasis but the founding ground of human-rights thought. The very first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains the principle that all human beings are born equal in dignity; dignity is positioned as the justification of rights. For this reason, the normative criterion that safe return must be "dignified" is not an arbitrary preference but a direct extension of the human-rights literature. Tying the concept of dignity to this theoretical origin also prevents the erosion that arises from repeating the concept throughout the text; in each use, dignity refers to the equal moral status that is the foundation of rights.

The refugee-law literature describes the field in which the tension between sovereignty and human rights becomes institutionalized. The regime established by the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol, while imposing an obligation of protection on states, also draws the limits of that obligation. Hathaway (2005) emphasizes that states' authority to determine their migration policies is bound by international protection norms; Goodwin-Gill and McAdam (2021), for their part, emphasize that the hardest core of these norms is constituted by the principle of non-refoulement. Non-refoulement guarantees that the person under protection cannot be forcibly sent to a place where their life and freedom would be in danger, and it constitutes the insurmountable limit of the return framework this study advocates. The human-rights pole is thereby placed not in an abstract discourse of values but in a legal framework that actually limits the state's sovereign authority.

2.3. Legitimacy: The Study's Binding Concept

The concept that brings sovereignty and human rights together on a single axis is legitimacy. The study's central claim is that a migration policy can endure only to the extent that it is seen as justified in the eyes of both the host society and the person under protection. For this claim to rest on a solid theoretical ground, legitimacy must be taken out of being an intuitive slogan and turned into an analytical category. The literature on legitimacy offers a rich source that makes this transformation possible.

The classical point of departure is Weber (1978). Weber divides legitimate authority into three ideal types—traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational—and grounds the authority of the modern state essentially on a legal-rational basis. This typology explains why authority is accepted; but it has been criticized for tying legitimacy largely to the belief of the governed. Beetham (2013), at precisely this point, proposes a multi-layered model that goes beyond Weber: a form of power is legitimate only if (i) it conforms to the rules in force, (ii) these rules can be justified by shared beliefs, and (iii) it is confirmed by the consent of the governed. Beetham's three-dimensional framework—legal validity, normative justifiability, and demonstrated consent—makes the study's legitimacy criterion directly operational: because legal uncertainty weakens the first dimension, it radically erodes a policy's legitimacy.

That legitimacy has not only an input but also an output dimension becomes clear with Habermas's (1975) analysis of the "legitimation crisis." Habermas shows that modern states derive their legitimacy not only from legal procedures but also from their capacity to meet citizens' basic expectations; when this capacity weakens, a legitimacy deficit arises. In the migration context, this understanding explains why the host society's concerns about public services and stability turn into a problem of legitimacy. Tyler (2006), for his part, completes the picture by examining legitimacy at the level of the individual: the basic reason people comply with rules is not fear of punishment but their finding the authority and its procedures fair. Tyler's procedural-justice

approach explains why the behaviour of persons under protection and of the host society in the integration process is so tightly bound to perceived justice. The concept of the sense of justice, to which the study frequently appeals, also finds its theoretical origin here: the sense of justice is an assessment of whether not only the outcome but also the process is fair, and it directly feeds the perception of legitimacy.

When these four theorists are read together, legitimacy becomes the study's load-bearing category. Weber illuminates the grounds of acceptance of authority, Beetham the measurable dimensions of legitimacy, Habermas the state's performance-based legitimacy, and Tyler the procedural justice perceived by the individual. Legitimacy thereby describes the ground on which sovereignty and human rights do not clash but meet: a policy is legitimate when it can justify, at one and the same time, both the state's authority to maintain order and the rights of the person under protection. In the study's conceptual hierarchy, legitimacy also lies at the source of the concepts of trust, integration, and stability that derive from it.

2.4. Securitization and Migration

The relationship between migration and security has been one of the most productive axes of security studies over the past thirty years. The fundamental framework that theorizes this relationship is the securitization approach developed by the Copenhagen School. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) argue that security is not an objective condition but the product of a speech act: an issue becomes "securitized" when it is framed as an existential threat by an authorized actor and this framing is accepted by the relevant community. Wæver (1995) shows, with the concept of "desecuritization," that this process can be reversed—that is, that issues can be returned to ordinary politics. For migration, this framework is important: whether or not migration is framed as a threat is not an objective datum but a political choice, and its social consequences depend on that choice.

Bigo (2002) completes securitization by carrying it into everyday governance practices. In his view, the perception of the migrant as a threat is produced not only by high-level discourses but also by routine bureaucratic practices such as border control, registration, and surveillance; these practices give rise to a "management of unease." Huysmans (2006), for his part, draws attention to the cost of securitization in democratic societies: when migration is narrated in the language of security, the distance between the person under protection and the host society deepens and exclusion becomes ordinary. This literature overlaps directly with the study's field findings: narrating the migration issue solely as a threat erodes trust between the two sides and makes integration more difficult.

The use of the securitization literature here is analytical, not merely descriptive. The study does not reject the host society's concerns about order and stability as a groundless fear; it accepts that these concerns are a reflection of the state's legitimate responsibility. But it also shows how framing the same concern in a securitizing language undermines integration. Security is thereby positioned as a variable that is neither wholly denied nor absolutized—as a dimension that must be balanced along the axis of legitimacy.

2.5. Trust, Social Capital, and Social Stability

The concept of social stability, which plays a determining role in the study, carries the risk of drifting away from analytical clarity when it is not placed on a clear theoretical framework. This framework is found in sociology's classical theories of solidarity and order. Durkheim (1933) shows that in modern societies order is established through shared values and functional interdependence—that in the condition of anomie, where these bonds weaken, social stability breaks down. Parsons (1951), for his part, ties the stability of the social system to the integration of members around common norms. This classical framework explains why rapid and mass migration gives rise to concern about stability: large populations arriving in a short time strain existing patterns of solidarity and norms.

In the contemporary literature, the concept of social capital carries this debate. Putnam (2000) distinguishes social capital into bonding and bridging forms; he shows that where in-group bonds are strong and inter-group bonds are weak, social integration becomes more difficult. Putnam (2007) argues that diversity may, in the short term, temporarily lower trust, but that in the long term bridges can be rebuilt through institutional interventions. This understanding explains why the relationship between the host society and the person under protection can be repaired not spontaneously but only through bridging spaces of interaction.

The concept of trust must be disaggregated in order to increase the study's explanatory power. The literature distinguishes three levels: interpersonal trust, generalized social trust, and institutional trust. Hardin (2002) defines trust as an encapsulated expectation that the other party will attend to one's interests, and emphasizes that trust is not of a single type. Rothstein and Stolle (2008), for their part, show that generalized social trust depends largely on the impartial and fair functioning of institutions—that is, that institutional trust feeds social trust. This distinction is critical for the study: the trust the person under protection places in institutions (for example, the clarity of their status and fair access to services) and the trust the host society places in the state together determine social trust and therefore integration. Legal uncertainty, by damaging institutional trust, breaks the first link of this chain. An assumption that must not be left implicit here is this: legal certainty does not generate trust of its own accord and automatically. Legal certainty is a necessary but not, on its own, sufficient condition for trust to be built; the transformation of institutional trust into social trust depends on the fair and consistent functioning of institutions (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008). For this reason, each link in the study's conceptual chain is conditional and must be read not as a linear, automatic causality but as a mechanism that operates when the conditions are met.

Within this framework, social stability is defined in the study by its measurable dimensions: the continuity of public order, perceived justice in access to public services, the level of inter-group tension, and trust in institutions. When stability is treated through these

indicators, it ceases to be a blurry mixture of security, social cohesion, and political stability; it becomes a composite, each component of which can be tracked separately. The study's conceptual hierarchy thereby becomes clear: legitimacy feeds trust, trust feeds integration, and integration feeds social stability.

2.6. The Guesthood Discourse: Between Temporary Protection and Permanence

One of the most powerful frameworks shaping the social position of persons under protection in Türkiye is the discourse of guesthood. This discourse is not an observation-based impression; it is the subject of a broad academic literature. Korkut (2016) analyses Türkiye's policy toward Syrian asylum seekers through the concepts of "selective humanitarianism" and discursive governance; he shows that the guest framework carries, at one and the same time, both a solidaristic embrace and an emphasis on temporariness that refuses permanence. Erdoğan (2018), drawing on comprehensive field research, reveals that the guesthood narrative facilitates social acceptance but turns into tension as the duration lengthens.

Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel (2017) emphasize that guest status is not a legal category—that it holds individuals in a domain of permanent uncertainty, differentiated inclusion, and negotiable rights. Kaya (2017), for his part, shows that the emphasis on cultural affinity and religious brotherhood strengthens acceptance, but that this affinity is not always experienced reciprocally by the host society. The internal tension carried by the guesthood discourse can be illuminated conceptually by Derrida's (2000) distinction between conditional and unconditional hospitality: the guest is received to the extent that they are subject to the host's rules and timetable; this shows that hospitality is always conditional.

The importance of this discourse comes from its being directly connected to the study's central concepts. The guesthood framework coincides with the legal logic of temporary protection: the concept of guest implies not permanent settlement but a hosting that will one day end. Yet when this framework is not supported by legal assurance, it turns into a permanent uncertainty and erodes both acceptance and trust. Relating the guesthood discourse to the academic literature takes the study's findings on this subject out of being an observational interpretation and grounds them theoretically.

2.7. Temporary-Protection Regimes: A Comparative View

The study's subject is directly the temporary-protection regime; the Turkish experience must therefore be situated within a comparative framework. In Türkiye, temporary protection is regulated by the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection (2013) and the Temporary Protection Regulation of 2014. Because of the geographical limitation Türkiye maintains in the 1951 Convention, granting temporary protection rather than full refugee status to those arriving from outside Europe designs protection not as a destination but as a transitional arrangement. İçduygu (2015) and Kirişci (2014) emphasize that this regime has, in fact, turned a situation initially deemed temporary into a long-term reality.

The comparative literature shows that this tension between temporariness and permanence is not specific to Türkiye. The European Union's Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EC) went unimplemented for years but was activated for the first time in 2022 in the face of the mass migration arriving from Ukraine; this situation reveals how tightly temporary-protection instruments are bound to political conditions. The cases of Jordan and Lebanon followed a logic similar to Türkiye's, with non-camp settlement and a guest framework; but, owing to the limited nature of legal assurance, they left persons under protection in long-term vulnerability. El-Abed (2014) shows that the guesthood discourse in Jordan, just as in Türkiye, served a function that institutionalized temporariness.

The case of Colombia, for its part, offers a different model. Colombia, with the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelan Migrants of 2021 (Decreto 216), granted a ten-year protection and regular status to roughly 1.8 million people, placing persons under protection in a predictable legal framework rather than in uncertainty. Germany's long-applied practice of temporary suspension (Duldung), for its part, is a counter-example showing how legal uncertainty can turn into a semi-permanent grey zone. These comparisons confirm the study's basic finding on an international scale: the sustainability of temporary protection depends not so much on the duration of protection as on its legal certainty and predictability. The Turkish experience thus becomes not merely a local case but an example that contributes to the debate on global migration governance.

2.8. The Literature on Return and Durable Solutions

The study's most original proposal—safe, voluntary, and dignified return—must be defended not as a normative preference but on the theoretical ground offered by the return literature. This literature describes return not as a simple border crossing but as a multidimensional and often fragile process. Long (2013) shows that return brings to light the fundamental tension between liberalism and nationalism—that the person under protection has not only the right to return but also the right not to return, and that sustainable return is possible only through the reconstruction of citizenship. Hammond (2004), in the Ethiopian case, reveals that return is not an arrival but a process of "rebuilding home"—that is, that return is completed not by physical movement but by the establishment of liveable conditions.

Black and Gent (2006) analyse the conditions of sustainable return in post-conflict contexts and show that the success of return depends on security, livelihoods, and institutional capacity in the country of origin. The studies compiled by Black and Koser (1999) reveal that "the end of the refugee cycle" most often does not come about—that returns made in haste or before conditions have matured can give rise to new migration waves. Chimni (2004), for his part, brings a more critical warning: under the discourse of durable solutions, return can sometimes turn into a policy choice that weakens protection. Chimni's warning disciplines the study's proposal: return becomes legitimate only when it is limited by the principle of non-refoulement, tied to conditions of voluntariness

and security, and supported by the reconstruction of the country of origin.

When this literature is assessed together, the study's return proposal turns from a policy preference into an academic model. Return is not a termination that conflicts with protection; it is the second stage of the same humanitarian policy as protection. The explicit discussion of examples of failed return in the literature, too, ensures that the proposal ceases to be a one-sided advocacy and becomes a framework that knows its own conditions and limits. Return is thereby positioned as a durable solution whose legal basis and empirical conditions are both clearly demonstrated.

2.9. Institutional Memory, Resilience, and Ethical Leadership

The success of temporary-protection and return policies depends not only on correct design but also on the institutional capacity that can carry that design. Yet the literature on institutional memory and institutional resilience is used relatively sparingly in migration studies. Joppke (2007), going beyond national models, shows how greatly integration policies depend on institutional continuity; the OECD (2018) reveals that coordination between local and central units and inter-institutional data sharing are a determining condition of integration. Institutional memory preserves the consistency of policy by preventing the lessons learned from being lost with changes of government.

Institutional resilience is a critical capacity because migration waves often arrive in unforeseeable ways. A resilient system does not break under sudden load; it flexes and recovers itself. Where this capacity remains weak, even the best-designed rules fail to function in practice. Ethical leadership, in turn, guarantees that the decisions taken remain honest in the eyes of both the host society and the person under protection, and is thereby directly related to the axis of legitimacy. These three concepts constitute the conditions of applicability of the study's central thesis; they are not an ornament of the theoretical framework but its natural extensions.

2.10. Opposing Approaches: Permanent Integration, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism

Academic impartiality requires that the approaches rival to the framework the study advocates be represented strongly. The dominant alternative perspective is the permanent-integration approach. Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2014) treat integration as a multidimensional process of economic, social, cultural, and political participation and generally presuppose permanent settlement. Bloemraad (2006), in a comparison of Canada and the United States, shows that legal status and the path to citizenship accelerate integration. Berry (1997), for his part, defines integration as a balance in which the individual both preserves their culture of origin and participates in the host society. The common assumption of these approaches is that the most sustainable solution is permanent inclusion.

Citizenship-based solutions carry this line into legal assurance. Soysal's (1994) thesis of postnational membership and Benhabib's (2004) emphasis on democratic inclusion advocate that the person under protection become, in the long run, a full subject of rights. Along the axis of multiculturalism, Banting and Kymlicka (2013) argue that the recognition of diversity need not conflict with the welfare state—that well-designed policies can attend to both recognition and redistribution together. Koopmans (2010), for his part, brings balance to the debate by showing that there is a trade-off between these two values—that an excessive emphasis on difference may, in some contexts, make integration more difficult.

This study does not reject the approaches in question; it limits their scope. Permanent-integration and citizenship-based models have strong explanatory power in migrations that are relatively small in scale and occur with the intention of permanent settlement. But in a mass, legally temporary-protection-based migration arriving in a short time, the assumptions of these models are partly eroded. The study's thesis takes permanent integration out of being a universal norm and positions it as one option, adding alongside it the option of a "legitimate and sustainable horizon of return." Presenting the rival approaches strongly first and then showing their limits turns the framework the study advocates from a one-sided preference into a justified position.

2.11. The Research Gap, the Original Model, and the Study's Contribution

The review above makes it possible to define the gap in the literature sharply. The migration and integration literature mostly examines sovereignty and human rights on separate axes; the number of studies that systematically use legitimacy theory as the binding category uniting these two axes is limited. Similarly, the integration literature reads the solution largely through permanent settlement and does not sufficiently theorize the particular logic of mass migration based on temporary protection. The return literature, for its part, most often treats protection and return as opposite poles; a framework that theorizes the two as two successive stages of a single humanitarian policy is lacking. In the midst of these current governance debates—with the European Union's activation of the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time in 2022 and the development of new protection models by countries such as Colombia—the theoretical reframing of the issue has gained particular importance.

What this study does for the first time is precisely this: to place the tension between sovereignty and human rights on the ground of legitimacy and to propose an integrated framework that unites this tension with a sustainable horizon of return. The study formulates this framework not as a loose bundle of concepts but as a named, original model: the Legitimacy-Based Model of Temporary Protection and Sustainable Return. The model positions sovereignty and human rights not as two mutually exclusive poles but as two principles meeting on the ground of legitimacy; it models trust, integration, and social stability deriving from legitimacy as a chain deriving one from another; and it unites protection and return as two successive stages of the same humanitarian policy. The model's basic proposition is that the sustainability of a temporary-protection policy depends not so much on the duration of protection as on its legal certainty, its legitimacy, and a predictable horizon of return.

This original model makes the study's contribution visible at four distinct levels. The theoretical contribution is the development of a named framework that resolves the sovereignty–human-rights tension along the axis of legitimacy and unites protection with return; the study thereby does not merely synthesize existing theories but proposes a hierarchical model among concepts. The methodological contribution is the setting out of a research design that shows how a long-term, multi-city qualitative field accumulation spanning seven years—interviews, conversations, and systematic observation—can be matched with abstract theoretical categories such as sovereignty, legitimacy, and return. The empirical contribution is that, through the comparison of Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli, it turns cities into not merely the site of research but variables that explain differences in integration. The policy contribution, in turn, is that, proceeding from the finding that legal certainty is the precondition of integration, it offers a reform framework justified along the axis of legitimacy. This four-layered contribution turns the study from a case analysis of Türkiye into a text carrying a model transferable to the general debate on migration governance, with high citation potential.

3. Theoretical Framework

The previous section reviewed the literature on which the study rests and set out the two poles—sovereignty and human rights—together with the concept of legitimacy that binds them to each other. The task of this section is different. Here the literature is not retold. Instead, this surveyed accumulation is transformed into the study's own analytical framework. An order is established among the concepts, the implicit assumptions on which this order rests are brought to light, the mechanisms by which the concepts feed one another are shown, and the field counterpart of each concept is laid out one by one. Theory thereby ceases to be knowledge on the shelf and becomes a tool that serves to read the data.

This framework does not fit within the bounds of a single discipline; irregular migration and temporary protection stand at the intersection of four fields at once. International politics allows us to understand the state's concern for sovereignty and its search for order. International law draws the limit of this concern and the framework of protection. Sociology explains what tension a mass arrival creates in the social fabric—how solidarity, norms, and order weaken and are rebuilt. Social psychology, in turn, makes visible the mark this process leaves on the individual and the group—trust, fear, belonging, and vulnerability. The study does not pit these four views against one another; it uses each as a lens that answers its own question. The sociological and social-psychological views, in particular, carry the issues of social vulnerability and trust—which remain in the background in most migration studies—to the centre of the analysis.

The backbone of the framework is a single tension: the state's right to sovereignty and the individual's right to protection. The study does not see the two as the pans of a single scale; nor does it suffice to leave sovereignty in its classical definition. Krasner (1999) shows that sovereignty is not a single-piece power; international recognition, non-interference in internal affairs, border control, and the organization of domestic authority operate by different logics, and states most often cannot realize them simultaneously. Krasner names this situation "organized hypocrisy." In the migration context this understanding is illuminating: while exercising its authority of border control, a state is at the same time obliged to assume the obligation of international protection, and the two dimensions are in constant tension. Sassen (1996) argues that with globalization the state's control capacity is eroded—that sovereignty does not disappear but is reshaped within transnational processes. Ruggie (1993), for his part, reminds us that the principle of territoriality at the foundation of sovereignty is a historically constructed and therefore transformable category. Together, these three readings make visible the gap between the state's desire for control and its actual capacity.

The relationship of sovereignty with the individual is analysed most sharply by Agamben (1998). In his view, sovereign power displays itself most openly within the "state of exception"; on this threshold, where the law's ordinary protection is suspended, the individual can be reduced to "bare life." The person whose status remains indeterminate—neither a full citizen nor a recognized refugee—lives on precisely this threshold. This conceptualization explains why legal uncertainty is not merely an administrative delay but a deep source of vulnerability. The field's strongest finding—that legal uncertainty is the heaviest obstacle before integration—is read directly through this understanding of the threshold. A person living in uncertainty feels insecure even in the simplest transaction; they hesitate to find work, to reach health care, and to enrol their child in school. Sovereignty here is not a historical summary but an analytical tool that explains why uncertainty is so wearing.

At the opposite pole of sovereignty stands human rights, which limits the state's authority. This pole is not an abstract discourse of values but a concrete legal framework. Soysal (1994) shows that migrants' rights are increasingly recognized on the basis of "postnational membership," detached from citizenship—that the source of rights becomes not citizenship but the status of being human. Benhabib (2004) broadens this with the concept of "the rights of others" and deems the recognition of the migrant as a subject of rights the test of democratic legitimacy. The hardest core of this pole is drawn by refugee law: Hathaway (2005) emphasizes that the state's authority to determine migration policy is bound by protection norms, and Goodwin-Gill and McAdam (2021) emphasize that at the essence of these norms stands the principle of non-refoulement. The concept of dignity, frequently invoked in the study, is also connected here. Dignity is not a loose moral emphasis but the founding ground of rights; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights places it, in its very first article, as the justification of rights. For this reason, the criterion that return be dignified is not an arbitrary preference but a direct extension of this theoretical origin. In the field, too, people were sensitive less to the amount of assistance than to the manner of its giving; a small hand extended with respect left a more lasting mark than great support given with condescension (Silove, 1999).

The concept that carries these two poles onto a single ground is legitimacy, and the study constructs it as a measurable category. Weber (1978) divides legitimate authority into three ideal types—traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational—grounds the authority of the modern state essentially on a legal-rational basis, and says that this authority endures only to the extent that it is accepted. Beetham (2013) gives a three-layered model that goes beyond Weber: a form of power is legitimate if it conforms to the rule in force, if these rules can be justified by shared beliefs, and if it is confirmed by consent. Because legal uncertainty weakens the first layer, it radically erodes legitimacy. Habermas (1975) adds the output dimension to this: the state derives its legitimacy not only from procedure but also from the capacity to meet basic expectations; when this capacity weakens, a legitimacy deficit arises. It is in this way that one understands why the host society's concern for public services and stability turns into a problem of legitimacy. Tyler (2006), for his part, completes legitimacy at the level of the individual: people comply with rules not out of fear of punishment but because they find the authority and its manner of functioning fair. The concept of the sense of justice, frequently invoked in the study, finds its origin here; it is a judgment as to whether not only the outcome but also the process is fair.

In this study, the original aspect of legitimacy is that it is two-sided. A migration policy cannot endure with the approval of one side; it must be seen as justified, at one and the same time, in the eyes of both the host society and the person under protection. The host society wishes to see that the burden it bears is fairly distributed and that its order is protected. The person under protection, in turn, wishes to see that their dignity is untouched and that their basic assurances are recognized. When these two approvals are secured simultaneously, the policy is strengthened; when one is missing, the tension grows. The most fragile moments in the field were those in which one of these two approvals was damaged. When one side's gain appeared to be the other's loss, trust dissolved rapidly. Legitimacy is therefore not a scale but a common ground that can justify both sides at once.

Legitimacy does not work on its own; it is the first link of a chain. The study's analytical skeleton is this sequence: legitimacy feeds trust, trust feeds integration, and integration feeds social stability. This ordering is not arbitrary. No one trusts wholeheartedly an order that is not seen as legitimate; where there is no trust, people do not approach one another or institutions, and so integration is not established; where integration is weak, social stability breaks down anew at every tremor. The direction of the chain is not one-sided either; the stability achieved turns back and reinforces legitimacy, and the cycle feeds itself. But the starting point is always legitimacy. This hierarchy, rather than piling up many large concepts side by side, establishes an order among them and lightens the study's conceptual load.

The second link of the chain, trust, must be unpacked, because trust is not a single thing; it works on three levels. Institutional trust is the trust a person places in the state, the court, and the official; institutions that function fairly and predictably feed this trust (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008). Social trust is the trust a person places in people they do not know and in society at large; Putnam (2000) deems this the core of social capital. Interpersonal trust, in turn, is the trust placed in the neighbour, the workmate, and the close circle. These three levels move together. When institutional trust is shaken, social trust is also damaged, and the person increasingly comes to trust only their own narrow circle (Putnam, 2007). In the field we saw this clearly: a person who felt secure in their relationship with the state also formed easier relationships with their neighbour; distrust of institutions, by contrast, led to withdrawal and to a narrowing of the circle of trust. A narrowing of trust means a narrowing of integration.

The third link of the chain is integration, and it too has its own theoretical foundation. Integration in this study is not a one-sided dissolution. As Berry (1997) shows, integration has four possible forms: when the individual both preserves their own culture and participates in the host society, integration occurs; when they abandon their own culture and dissolve, assimilation; when they close off without participating in society, separation; when they lose both, marginalization. The integration the study advocates is, of these, integration: a reciprocal, two-way, and voluntary participation. For this reason, integration is not a one-sided duty expected of the person under protection but a relationship that the two sides build together. As this reciprocal participation, fed by trust, grows stronger, society experiences living together not as a threat but as an ordinary condition. Where integration remains weak, the problem is most often not the individual's unwillingness but that trust and legitimacy have been damaged from the outset.

The last link of the chain, social stability, is not left hanging; it is defined by three concrete indicators—public order, social cohesion, and the sense of justice. The theoretical origin of this definition lies in classical sociology. Durkheim (1933) shows that in modern society order is established through shared values and interdependence—that in the condition of anomie, where these bonds weaken, stability breaks down. Parsons (1951) ties stability to the integration of members around common norms. This framework explains why a rapid and mass arrival gives rise to concern about stability: large populations arriving in a short time strain existing patterns of solidarity and norms. From here arises one of the study's basic questions: why does society become fragile? The answer lies in the simultaneous weakening of the three indicators. When concern for public order, perceived injustice in services, and inter-group tension come together, society becomes fragile, able to turn even a small spark into great tension. Collective fragility is precisely this simultaneous loosening of the three axes.

This fragility is not only social but at the same time psychosocial. Prolonged uncertainty and hardship leave a deep mark on the individual; this mark is most often not material loss but the erosion of dignity and of the sense of trust (Silove, 1999). When this wearing-down at the individual level comes together, it turns into a collective fragility: a community made up of individuals who have lost their trust also loses the capacity to act together and to show solidarity. But against fragility stands resilience. Resilience is a society's capacity to recover itself after a tremor and to rebuild the

normative order. From here arises the study's second basic question: how is a broken normative order rebuilt? The answer returns once again to the beginning of the chain. Order is repaired only when rules seen as legitimate again produce trust. As trust is repaired, people again approach one another and institutions; as they approach, integration, and as integration is consolidated, stability returns. That is, the repair of the normative order is the same chain working in the direction opposite to that of the breaking.

Through this chain runs a strong economic vein, and the study shows this vein explicitly. A rights violation or a perception of injustice appears at first to be merely an emotional reaction; yet it has a concrete economic consequence. The individual whose legal status is uncertain is most often forced to work in informal, low-paid, and insecure jobs. Insecure work both keeps that individual in poverty and magnifies, in the host society, the perception that the rules are not applied equally to everyone. This perception erodes institutional trust; eroded trust turns into social distrust; and social distrust weakens integration and stability. The chain can thus also work in reverse: economic insecurity can collapse the perception of legitimacy and trust from the bottom up. For this reason, the study sees legal uncertainty not merely as a problem of rights but also as a mechanism that directly affects economic and social stability. Causality here is established not by a single arrow but by a cycle that feeds itself.

The host society's concern for order and security is taken seriously within this framework; but how this concern is framed is decisive. The Copenhagen School shows that security is not an objective condition but the product of a speech act: an issue becomes securitized when it is presented as an existential threat by an authorized actor and is accepted by society (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Wæver (1995) explains, with the concept of desecuritization, that this process can also be reversed—that issues can be returned to ordinary politics. Bigo (2002) shows that securitization is produced not only by high-level discourse but also by routine practices such as border control, registration, and surveillance; and Huysmans (2006) reveals that narrating migration in the language of security deepens the distance between the person under protection and the host society and makes exclusion ordinary. The study invokes this literature not to present it but to use it: narrating the migration issue solely as a threat is a mechanism that erodes trust between the two sides and makes integration more difficult. Security is therefore a dimension that is neither wholly denied nor absolutized; it is a variable that must be balanced along the axis of legitimacy.

After this axis, the chain, and the mechanisms have been established, the three principal views of international relations come into play as auxiliary lenses. The state-centred view illuminates why order and sovereignty matter so much; it illuminates the host society's concern for the demographic balance, the burden on public services, and internal stability. The rights-centred view shows why the protection of the individual is indispensable and why return must be voluntary and dignified. The identity-centred view, in turn, explains how the two societies see each other and how trust and prejudice are formed (Berry, 1997; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). All three illuminate different corners of the same picture; but none suffices on its own. The common measure that determines which lens comes to the fore in which situation is, again, legitimacy. For this reason, the study does not construct a catalogue of theories; it takes a single axis and harnesses the three views to the service of that axis.

In the Turkish context, there is one further powerful framework that shapes this chain: the discourse of guesthood. This discourse is not an observation-based impression but the subject of a broad literature. The guest framework carries, at one and the same time, both a solidaristic embrace and an emphasis on temporariness that refuses permanence (Korkut, 2016). Erdoğan (2018) shows that this narrative initially facilitates social acceptance but turns into tension as the duration lengthens; as the supposedly temporary becomes permanent, guesthood ceases to be a framework that feeds trust and turns into a burden that magnifies uncertainty. Derrida's (2000) concept of conditional hospitality explains this tension: the guest is received to the extent that they are subject to the host's rules and timetable; hospitality is always conditional. For the study, this framework is critical, because guesthood coincides with the legal logic of temporary protection; but when it is not supported by legal assurance, it turns into a permanent uncertainty and erodes both acceptance and trust. The predictable horizon of return that the model proposes is precisely an effort to place this temporariness–permanence tension on a legitimate ground.

Return, which lies on the horizon of the framework, is also not a normative wish but rests on a theoretical ground. The return literature describes return not as a simple border crossing but as a multidimensional and often fragile process. Long (2013) shows that the person under protection has not only the right to return but also the right not to return, and that sustainable return is possible only through the reconstruction of citizenship. Hammond (2004) reveals that return is not an arrival but a process of rebuilding home—that is, that it is completed not by physical movement but by the establishment of liveable conditions. The works of Black and Koser, and of Chimni, in turn, remind us how forced returns, or returns whose conditions have not matured, fail and produce new victimhoods. This literature places two firm limits on the study's horizon of return: return must be voluntary and must never violate the principle of non-refoulement. Protection and return thereby cease to be opposite poles; they become two successive stages of a single humanitarian policy.

This framework rests on several implicit assumptions, and the study sets them out explicitly. First, legal certainty does not, on its own and of its own accord, produce trust; trust arises only when certainty is accompanied by fair and predictable treatment. Second, the host society's concern for security is not a groundless fear but a reflection of the state's legitimate responsibility; yet framing the same concern in a securitizing language undermines integration. Third, the horizon of return is not a threat of deportation; it is a gradual and voluntary process dependent on conditions in the countries of origin and limited by the principle of non-refoulement. Fourth, legitimacy is assumed to be two-sided; it is accepted that

no solution resting on the approval of one side can be lasting. Fifth, the relationship among the concepts is assumed to be not one-directional but cyclical; stability, too, turns back and feeds legitimacy. When these assumptions are set out explicitly, all the links of the conceptual chain and the arrows binding them to one another become visible.

So that the framework does not remain in the air, it must be shown explicitly which theory each concept feeds on and which field data it meets. The concept of sovereignty and status is read with Krasner and Agamben and is met in the field with the data of legal uncertainty. Legitimacy is read with Weber, Beetham, Habermas, and Tyler and is met with the demand for fair and predictable treatment. Securitization is read with the Copenhagen School and Bigo; where the language of threat rises, the distance between the two sides is observed to grow. Trust is read with Putnam and with Rothstein and Stolle; where trust in institutions falls, trust in the neighbour is seen to fall too. Social stability is read with Durkheim and Parsons and is met with the indicators of public order, social cohesion, and the sense of justice. The horizon of return, in turn, is read with Long and Hammond and is met with the expectation of a gradual, voluntary, and dignified return. This mapping is shown collectively in the figure below.

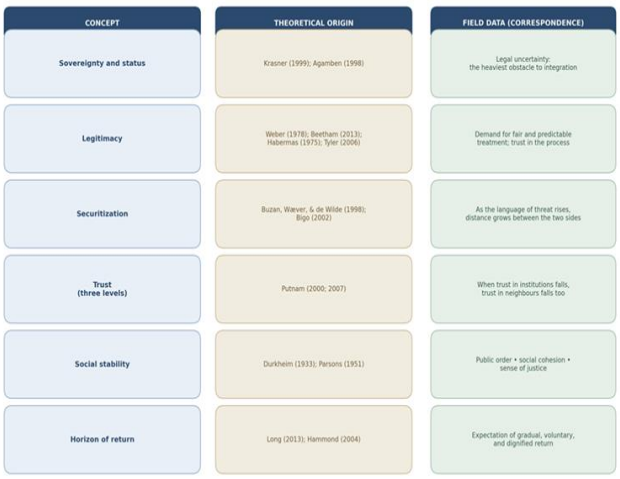

Figure 2. Concept–Theory–Data Mapping

Source: Created by the author.

This mapping is the analytical skeleton of the framework set out by name in Section 2: the Legitimacy-Based Model of Temporary Protection and Sustainable Return (Figure 1). The model's basic proposition is this: the sustainability of a temporary-protection policy depends not so much on the duration of protection as on its legal certainty, its two-sided legitimacy, and a predictable horizon of return. The model positions sovereignty and human rights not as two mutually exclusive poles but as two principles meeting on the ground of legitimacy; it constructs trust, integration, and stability deriving from legitimacy as a chain deriving one from another; and it unites protection with return as two stages of the same humanitarian policy. This is the study's original contribution: not merely to bring existing theories side by side, but to establish among them a named, testable hierarchy.

The value of this framework comes not from ignoring rival approaches but from answering a different question than they do. Three strong alternatives stand out in the integration literature. The permanent-integration approach takes as its basis the settling of the newcomers over time and their permanent participation in society. Citizenship-based solutions route the securing of rights through a rapid and inclusive membership (Soysal, 1994). The multiculturalist approach, in turn, proposes the recognition of difference and its institutional support (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Koopmans, 2010). These three approaches are apt and valuable in many contexts. Yet all three are written largely on the assumption of permanent migration. In a mass, temporary-protection-based migration, while the possibility of the country of origin one day attaining stability is on the table, reading the solution solely through permanent settlement falls short. This study does not reject the rival frameworks; it completes them, along the axis of a legitimate and sustainable horizon of return, in a situation they do not cover—namely, the particular logic of temporary protection.

It is also important to see that the framework is not a reading specific to Türkiye. The chain extending from legitimacy to stability, and the logic uniting protection with return, offer a map that can be read for similar experiences as well. The European Union's activation, for the first time in 2022, of the Temporary Protection Directive that it had left unimplemented for years, in the face of the mass migration arriving from Ukraine, shows how greatly these instruments depend on political conditions. Jordan and Lebanon followed a path similar to Türkiye's, with non-camp settlement and a guest framework; but the limited nature of legal assurance left persons under protection in long-term vulnerability (El-Abed, 2014). Colombia's protection model, developed in recent years for Venezuelans, is, for its part, a search for a different answer to the same questions. These examples suggest that the bond among legal certainty, legitimacy, and predictable return may hold not only for Türkiye but for temporary-protection governance in general. This is precisely what makes the framework meaningful today: at a time when temporary protection is being debated anew worldwide, the theoretical reframing of the issue carries particular importance.

In this framework, theory and data carry equal weight. Theory explains the data; the data, in turn, test the theory and, where necessary, limit it. The clearest example of this is that integration is not of a single type. The participants were divided roughly into three tendencies: about one-third had managed to hold on to the order, nearly half had neither fully held on nor broken away, and about one-fifth remained largely deprived of legal and economic assurance. These three tendencies show where the chain breaks. In the high-integration group, the links of legitimacy, trust, and integration were sound; in the weakest-integration group, by contrast, the chain had broken at the very first link—that is, at the layer of legitimacy, owing to legal uncertainty. The model thereby serves as a map that allows us to read which link bears the load or breaks in which situation, and each theoretical link has a data trace.

For this chain to stand in practice depends on three institutional conditions, and these are not an ornament of the framework but its natural extensions. Institutional memory prevents the lessons learned from being lost with changes of administration; it ties experience not to individual persons but to the institution. Resilience enables the system to bend without breaking, and to recover itself, in the face of sudden migration waves; this requires reserve capacity, a flexible budget, and rapid decision-making. Ethical leadership, in turn, guarantees that the decisions taken remain honest in the eyes of both sides and thereby directly feeds legitimacy. When these three remain weak, even the best-designed rules fail to function in practice (Joppke, 2007; OECD, 2018). A significant part of the inter-city differences in integration observed in the field arose precisely from these institutional conditions not being equally distributed at the local level (Katz & Nowak, 2018).

When all of this comes together, the study's theoretical architecture is gathered into a single weave: sovereignty and human rights meet on the ground of legitimacy; legitimacy feeds a chain consisting of trust, integration, and stability; this chain works through economic and psychosocial mechanisms, stands by means of institutional conditions, and opens onto a sustainable horizon of return. This architecture makes the study's contribution visible at four levels. At the theoretical level, it offers a named model that unites, along the axis of legitimacy, sovereignty and human rights—examined on two separate axes—and binds protection to return. At the sociological and social-psychological level, it proposes a mechanism that explains the transition between social fragility and resilience. At the empirical level, it matches abstract concepts with a seven-year, multi-city field accumulation. At the policy level, it constructs a legitimacy-based framework that deems legal certainty the precondition of integration. These four levels together turn the study from a case study of Türkiye into a text carrying a transferable model.

This framework produces testable expectations. If the model is correct, then where legal certainty and fair treatment are strong, trust, integration, and stability are also expected to be relatively strong; where uncertainty is deep, the chain is expected to break at the first link. The following section will first explain with which data and how these expectations are tested—that is, the method of the research. Then the findings will be laid out along the links of this model—legitimacy, trust, integration, and stability, in sequence. Theory and data will thereby be readable not as separate worlds but as two faces of the same picture.

4. Research Methodology

This section sets out clearly what question the study asks, by what method it approaches that question, and how the data are produced and made sense of. The main question established in the Introduction is the compass here too: How does the tension between the state's right to sovereignty and the individual's right to protection shape the integration process of persons under protection? This question concerns not a momentary photograph but a process that changes over time. People's legal situation, sense of trust, and the bonds they form with work and with their neighbours change over the years. To understand such a process, a numerical cross-section does not suffice; one must follow people's own experience, in their own words and over a long span of time. The study was therefore built on a qualitative design and placed the five subsidiary questions from the Introduction (legal status, access to basic services, perception of security, social cohesion, and economic participation) at the backbone of the method.

To make concrete how this design works, it is necessary to set out explicitly with which data and through which step of analysis each of the questions in the Introduction is answered. The question of how legal status affects integration was followed mainly through the status narratives and the experiences of official processes in the in-depth interviews. The obstacles in access to basic services were read together with both the tendencies shown by the broad survey and the concrete examples in the interviews and conversations. How the perception of security shapes participation in social life was the subject most illuminated in long-term observation, because this becomes visible in people's everyday behaviour. Under what conditions social cohesion strengthens or weakens became clear through the comparison of the three cities. The opportunities and difficulties in economic participation, in turn, deepened especially through the labour observations in Kocaeli and the narratives concerning working life. Each subsidiary question was thereby tied not to a single data source but to several sources tested against one another.

The expectations set out in the Introduction are also the testing criterion of the method. The study expects that legal uncertainty is the heaviest obstacle before integration; that as access to services increases, social participation strengthens; that as the perception of security rises, participation in social and economic life increases. These expectations were not taken to be true in advance. Each was compared with the narratives and observations coming from the field; when the data did not support the expectation, it was the interpretation, not the expectation, that was changed. The strength of the qualitative design lies precisely here: the basis was not to confirm the expectation at any cost but to reshape it according to what the field said.

The research design is a longitudinal and multi-sited field study. It is longitudinal because the data were collected not in a single period but over a span extending across seven years. It is multi-sited because the field is not a single city but three metropolises—Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli. The backbone of the design is fed by two approaches. The first is the phenomenological view: the aim is to grasp, through individuals' own narratives, how they live through and make sense of the integration process. The second is the ethnographic view: the researcher was present in the field for a long time, witnessed people's everyday life closely, and recorded this witnessing in systematic field notes. The combination of these two views rests on an interpretive conception of knowledge. That is, the study accepts that social reality is constituted within the meanings people attribute to it, and it produces knowledge by deciphering these meanings.

There is also a theoretical justification for this choice of design. The study's theoretical framework reads the tension between sovereignty and human rights on the ground of legitimacy. Legitimacy, in turn, is not a magnitude measured by number but a judgment about whether people find a policy justified. The way to understand such a judgment passes through listening to people's own reasons. Likewise, the concepts at the centre of the framework—such as trust, dignity, and the sense of justice—become visible only within experience. A coefficient does not tell why a person trusts the state or why they have lost their trust; but that person's narrative does. An interpretive and long-term design is, for precisely this reason, in harmony with the framework. The method was chosen so as to be able to produce the kind of knowledge the theory needs; what determines the design is not the fashion of a method but the nature of the question asked.

This design coincides directly with the study's aim. Understanding how legal uncertainty erodes trust, and how trust is reflected in economic and social life, becomes possible not by calculating a cause-and-effect coefficient but by following the links of the process one by one in people's experience. The broad field accumulation at the study's disposal makes this possible. At the start of the process, a broad field survey reaching a total of seven hundred and fifty people across the three cities was carried out. This survey served as a map for seeing tendencies and determining the topics to be deepened. But the survey was not used to construct a numerical model. Statistical tools such as correlation, regression, and factor analysis were deliberately set aside. The tendencies emerging from the survey were conveyed not as a heap of numbers but in measured and plain expressions such as "roughly one-quarter of the participants said they had difficulty exercising their rights." The meaning of the data was thereby preserved, while its form was turned into an interpretive language.

The choice of the three cities is not random; each was chosen because it makes visible a different face of the integration process. Here the cities were treated not merely as the place where the research was conducted but as factors that explain why the process varies from city to city. Behind this approach lies the view that a city's socio-economic structure directly shapes integration (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011). Comparative-context theory in the same vein also shows that different cities in the same country produce different conditions of participation and belonging (Crul & Schneider, 2010). The study adopts this insight and constructs the three cities as three comparable contexts.

Ankara, being the capital, is at the centre of state policy and bureaucratic operation. Here the determination of legal status, relations with public institutions, and official processes come to the fore; in this respect, the city offers a convenient setting for seeing the effect of integration policy conducted by the hand of the state. Istanbul, for its part, is where economic opportunities and the migrant population are most concentrated. In the large city, job opportunities expand, but population density and diversity make social cohesion more complex; that opportunity increases while integration becomes more difficult in large cities is a known pattern (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Kocaeli, with its industry- and manufacturing-oriented structure, stands out for examining how individuals participate in the labour market, because being able to enter working life is one of the most decisive thresholds of economic integration (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2005). Reading the three cities side by side makes visible how the weight of legal, economic, and social factors on integration changes according to place. The source of the inter-city difference thereby becomes visible: the approach of local government, the structure of the labour market, and the level of social acceptance vary from city to city.

To make the explanatory power of the three cities more visible, it is useful to compare them systematically along four criteria: economic structure, the approach of local government, the labour market, and the level of social acceptance. These four criteria are the key to understanding why integration becomes easier in one city and more difficult in another. The table below summarizes the three cities along this axis.

Table 1. Three cities compared in terms of the integration context.

Criterion	Ankara	Istanbul	Kocaeli
Economic structure	Public-sector and service-oriented; bureaucratic centre	Broad and diverse; trade and services dominant	Industry- and manufacturing-oriented; a factory economy
Approach of local government	Where central policy is directly reflected	Large scale; intensity and pressure in service provision	An orientation linked to labour and industry
Labour market	Limited but institutional job opportunities	Broad but competitive; mostly informal	Manufacturing jobs; where economic integration is most visible
Level of social acceptance	Cautious; weighted toward formal relations	Owing to density, both closeness and tension	Acceptance built through work, increasing with employment

The table shows that the inter-city difference is not chance. In Ankara, the course of integration depends largely on the formal relationship established with the state; when status becomes clear, life becomes easier, and when uncertainty persists, every door becomes harder. In Istanbul, opportunity is abundant, but the crowd and competition strain both economic foothold and neighbourly relations. In Kocaeli, the door to integration most

often passes through the factory; the individual who finds work, to the extent that they gain an economic foothold, also gains in social acceptance. That the outcome changes even in the same country and under the same legal framework shows that the city's structure is, in itself, a factor. For this reason, the study treated cities not as a fixed background but as a part of the explanation.

How the participants were reached is as important as the quality of the data. Although the three cities were deliberately chosen because of the contextual differences they carry, within each city access to participants was secured by a random procedure: without a predetermined list of names or a target profile, whoever was encountered at that moment in the natural settings of everyday life—in a café, a workplace, a neighbourhood gathering, or the places where a public service is provided—was the person spoken with. The sample was thereby left not to an expectation set up in advance by the researcher but to the field's own flow. Since displaced individuals are a hard-to-reach group not fully visible in official records, this random approach based on natural encounter was the most realistic way to broaden participation without forcing it and without narrowing the range of representation. Even so, leaving access to natural settings was balanced by a deliberate concern for diversity that would prevent a single profile from predominating; the narratives of people of different ages, genders, education levels, occupations, legal situations, and origins were kept together.

Who was included in the study was tied to certain criteria; but these criteria were built on an inclusive rather than an exclusive logic. For a person's view to be sought, it was deemed sufficient that they actually lived in one of the three selected cities under temporary protection or a similar status and were willing to take part in the research. While conducting the interviews, sexism, classism, and distinctions based on education level were consciously avoided; the view of everyone who could express themselves clearly and make consistent and intelligible assessments was taken into account equally, whatever their social position. This was the only selective criterion: that the person could convey their own experience in an intelligible and internally consistent way. The thirty people spoken with in depth also became distinct from within this broad base when the narratives began to repeat and new interviews no longer added anything new—that is, when theoretical saturation was reached; the number thirty was not a target set in advance but a result of this saturation.

At this point it is necessary to separate clearly what work the numbers do. The broad base of seven hundred and fifty people is the map layer set up to see tendencies. The conversations conducted with five hundred people carry the broader web of relationships established in the field and everyday experience. The in-depth interviews conducted with thirty people, in turn, are the actual core of the analysis, because the most detailed, most personal narratives emerge from here. These three layers do not substitute for one another; they complete and confirm one another.

Knowing from which people the findings come solidifies the ground of interpretation. The table below summarizes the main lines of the participant community. The values given are approximate proportions reflecting the composition of the field; they offer not a claim to numerical precision but a measured framework describing the community's general appearance.

Table 2. Basic demographic profile of the participant community (approximate values)

Variable	Categories	Approximate distribution
City	Ankara / Istanbul / Kocaeli	Distributed with near-equal weights across the three cities so that comparison would be possible
Gender	Female / Male	Male roughly 57%, female roughly 43%; in the labour-weighted field, male participation was somewhat higher
Age	18–30 / 31–45 / 46 and over	The weight gathered in the young and middle-aged cohort (roughly 18–45)
Education	Primary and below / Secondary / Higher	A broad range; secondary and lower education levels predominated
Employment status	Registered work / Informal work / Unemployed or domestic	The majority of those working were in low-paid and informal jobs
Legal status	Temporary protection / Conditional refugee / Indeterminate	Predominantly temporary protection; the status of a portion was indeterminate
Country of origin	Predominantly Syria; also Afghanistan, Iraq, and other conflict regions	Participants of Syrian origin formed the majority

These variables each have an importance of their own. Age affects to what extent a person can participate in working life and education. Gender shapes both labour experience and the possibility of going out into the public sphere; across the field, roughly 57% of the participants were male and 43% female, and this proportion reflects that contact established with men in labour-weighted areas was somewhat more frequent. The level of education becomes determinant in access to services and rights.

Country of origin and legal situation, in turn, directly concern the person's uncertainty about the future and the horizon of return. In migration research, the weight that demographic diversity carries in understanding different integration experiences is well known (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). For this reason, the participant community was kept open not to a single mould but to different combinations of these variables; the findings thereby carried the voice not of a narrow segment but of a broad range of experience.

This profile also contains a caution in the reading of the findings. That the majority of the participants are of working age and that most are in informal jobs explains why the observations concerning economic integration came out so pronounced. Likewise, the presence of a segment whose legal situation is indeterminate makes it understandable why the themes of trust and uncertainty came to the fore. That is, the composition of the community shows on what ground the subsequent findings rest.

The data were collected through four mutually feeding channels. The academic counterpart of each of these must be set out explicitly, because the strength of the method depends on its being clear what these sources are.

The first source is a short field survey reaching roughly seven hundred and fifty people. This survey was conducted not as a separate form-filling procedure but within unstructured interviews: in order not to disrupt the natural flow and not to make the participant uneasy, the researcher, instead of audio recording, immediately noted in the notebook beside them the answers given to the short questions asked. Depending on the nature of the encounter, two forms of recording were adopted. Interviews conducted with a single person and lasting a short time were, because of their question-and-answer density, evaluated as survey responses. By contrast, conversations that stretched out in an unstructured way in crowded settings where three or more people were present were recorded, rather than being reduced to individual answers, as holistic assessment notes. The breadth provided by short encounters and the context provided by group conversations thereby turned, in the same notebook, into two complementary layers. This broad base served as a map making visible the general tendencies in the field, rather than the depth of individual cases.

The second source is the in-depth interviews conducted with thirty people. These interviews were carried out in an unstructured manner; there was no rigid, pre-prepared questionnaire. Apart from a few open-ended threads, the participant largely determined the direction of the conversation and freely constructed their own narrative. The interviews proceeded, around headings such as legal situation, access to public services, perception of security, neighbourliness, and work, with short questions that did not steer the person. The value such interviews carry in understanding individuals' experience in depth is an established acceptance in migration studies (Bloemraad, 2006). Where the participant's consent was obtained, the narratives were noted in the notebook and kept; where recording was not appropriate, detailed notes were taken immediately after the interview.

The loose framework the interviews followed was inspired by the five axes in the Introduction; but these axes were not a rigid questionnaire, only threads that opened the conversation. In each interview, first the person's story of coming to Türkiye and their current legal situation were discussed; then the experience of access to public services, the sense of security, neighbourliness and social relations, and finally work and livelihood were addressed as far as the natural flow of the conversation allowed. The questions were not closed-ended; they were short prompts that did not steer the person and opened them to recounting their own experience. When a topic came to the fore unexpectedly, the thread was set aside and that topic was deepened. Thus, while each interview shared a few common threads, it could freely carry the person's own emphasis.

The third source is the conversations conducted with five hundred people. These conversations are informal exchanges taking place within everyday life, in natural settings. In their academic counterpart, these are the informal interviews that are a part of fieldwork. Established in a café, a workplace, a neighbourhood gathering, these conversations capture what people recount spontaneously; they remove the distance created by a formal interview. The conversations were recorded not by audio but by turning the short notes taken immediately after the conversation into detailed field notes afterward. The data were thereby not lost; at the same time, the participant's ease was preserved. In the analysis phase, these notes were passed through the same thematic filter as the interviews. The conversations are therefore not idle chatter but a data layer systematically collected and analysed.

The fourth source is observation extending across seven years. Observation was carried out in the natural setting and mostly from a participant position; that is, the researcher was within the settings observed, witnessing the life there not from afar but up close. Neighbourhoods, the places where public service is provided, workplaces, and community gatherings were monitored regularly and very intensively. The field notes kept were two-layered: on the one hand, what was seen was described; on the other, the researcher's thoughts about what this observation meant were recorded separately. That the observation continued at this intensity over seven years provided something a one-off look could not give: seeing change over time. How the situation of the same people transformed, which concerns became permanent or softened, could be followed over this period. This intensive and continuous witnessing, going beyond momentary impressions, made it possible for patterns to be confirmed again and again.

The observation notes were kept in a certain order. After returning from the field, first what was seen that day was written as plainly as possible: who, where, did what, said what. Then the researcher's interpretation of what this seen thing might mean was recorded in a separate section. Third, notes concerning the method were kept: which question worked, in which setting people spoke more easily, where a mistake was made. This three-layered record kept the observation both rich and traceable. These notes, accumulated over the years, were placed on the same table as the interviews and conversations in the analysis phase.

This rich material gathered was analysed through thematic analysis. The path followed is the widely adopted six-phase process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the first phase, all the interview texts and field notes were read repeatedly; the aim was to become thoroughly familiar with the material. In the second phase, initial codes were given to the meaningful parts of the text. In the third phase, these codes were brought together and possible themes were sought. In the fourth phase, the themes were reviewed against the whole of the data; those that did not hold were eliminated, and those close to one another were combined. In the fifth phase, each theme was clearly defined and named. In the sixth phase, the themes were brought together into a whole so as to construct the findings section.

The consistency of the coding was secured not by a numerical agreement coefficient but by qualitative means. The codes were reread at different times, inconsistencies were corrected, and how the same theme appeared in different sources was compared. It was thereby ensured that the themes emerged from the data themselves and were not forced into preconstructed moulds.

To see all the themes together: at the end of the analysis, five main themes and, beneath them, a series of subthemes emerged. Under the theme of legal situation came the unease created by uncertainty, the expectation of a change of status, and the blockages in official processes. In the theme of basic services, the language barrier, bureaucratic difficulty, and being unable to learn of a service came to the fore. In the theme of security, physical safety and insecurity about the future were distinguished from each other. In the theme of social cohesion, neighbourliness, language, and prejudice; and in the theme of economic participation, informal work, low wages, and difficulty finding work became the prominent subthemes. This map gave the scattered narratives an orderly structure and provided the skeleton of the findings section. At the same time, in which data source each theme appeared more strongly was also marked; the bond between theory and data thereby became traceable one by one in the findings section.

The study's credibility was secured not by technical coefficients but by a few concrete practices. The first of these is the comparison of sources with one another. A finding was deemed more robust if it appeared not in a single interview only but together in interviews, conversations, and observation. That placing different data sources side by side and testing them against one another strengthens the analysis is the basic justification of multi-source designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The second practice is staying in the field for a long time; the seven-year span made it possible to see not transient impressions but established patterns. The third practice is repeatedly taking the obtained data and the opinions emerging from them back to the participants and confirming, "Have I understood you correctly?"; this iterative confirmation ensured that the interpretations rested not on a single moment but on a consistency tested over time. Fourth, the interviews and notes were reviewed again to check whether the interpretations remained faithful to the text. A fifth assurance is that the data obtained from the field and the initial interpretations were frequently deliberated with numerous academics, public administrators, and elected local representatives; these expert consultations allowed the researcher to test their own inferences with an outside eye and for the findings to become clear in their mind.

It is possible to match these practices with the four criteria sought in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). Credibility means that the findings genuinely reflect what is in the field; the comparison of sources and participant confirmation provided this. Transferability is that the results can shed light on similar settings; the detailed description of the three cities made this possible. Dependability is that the analysis is traceable and repeatable; the notes and records kept left this trace. Confirmability, in turn, is that the interpretation emerges from the data rather than from the researcher's whim; the rereading of the codes and keeping the observation separate from the interpretation secured this. Scientific rigour was thereby preserved without resorting to a technical coefficient.

At this point a limit must be underlined. The study argues that legal uncertainty reduces trust, and that when trust falls, economic and social life weakens. But this bond was constructed not as a statistical measurement of cause and effect but as a mechanism that the narratives and observations in the field point to together. That is, the study does not say "an increase of such-and-such a proportion leads to such-and-such"; instead, it shows how these links are connected to one another in people's own experience. The mechanism was built step by step through individual narratives pointing in the same direction and through the same pattern recurring in different people. This distinction between correlation and causality was deliberately preserved; the inferences were grounded in several sources pointing in the same direction.

Working with the same community for seven years inevitably makes the researcher's position in the field an element of the data. For this reason, the researcher's role is a matter that must be thought about explicitly. The trust built up over a long time enabled doors to open and people to speak more sincerely; this is one of the study's greatest gains. But the same closeness also brings a risk: the researcher may grow too close to the people they know and adopt their view without criticism. To balance this risk, the researcher recorded their own assumptions and feelings in separate notes; they tried to keep observation separate from interpretation. Which word belonged to the participant and which to the researcher's own inference was carefully separated. The researcher's presence in the field was thereby not concealed; on the contrary, it was made visible as a part that explains how the data were produced.

Because the study was conducted with a vulnerable group, the ethical dimension was determining from start to finish. Displaced individuals often carry a difficult, sometimes traumatic, past; in working with such a group, the most basic principle is to do no harm to the person. In the interviews and conversations, questions that would strain the participant or reopen old wounds were avoided; sensitive subjects were entered into only when the participant themselves brought them up, and only to the extent they

wished. Not having trauma relived was the first rule observed, because in research conducted with forcibly displaced individuals this sensitivity is a requirement that directly concerns mental health (Silove, 1999).

In addition, all the ethical principles established in the field were observed. The aim of the study was explained to the participants in advance, and their participation rested on their voluntary consent; it was clearly stated that they could withdraw at any moment. Identity information was not recorded, what was recounted was anonymized in a way that could not be traced back to the person, and the data collected were kept solely for research purposes, in a protected environment. Cultural differences were respected; the questions were framed so as not to injure the participant's values. The study, by its nature—resting on oral interviews and observations in the natural settings of everyday life, on the basis of voluntariness, anonymity, and non-intervention—does not require formal ethics-committee approval. Nevertheless, all the ethical principles established in research with vulnerable groups (Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007) were adhered to from start to finish, and at no stage of the research process was any ethical violation experienced.

A long-term field study also has ethical responsibilities of its own. A relationship lasting for years may give rise in the participant to the expectation that the researcher is a source of aid. Managing this expectation is the researcher's duty: the limits of the study were explained clearly, and no unrealistic hope was given. It was observed that what was learned about a person's life would not be used against them, that the relationship would remain based on trust, and that the participant would preserve their own consent at every stage. Working with a vulnerable group for a long time demands far more care than a one-off interview, because here the researcher does not merely collect data but witnesses people's lives over a long time.

Finally, this method stands at the intersection not of a single discipline but of several. Legal status and rights concern international law; relations with the state and the concern for order concern international politics; trust and belonging concern sociology and social psychology. The fieldwork required using these views not separately but simultaneously. Another gain of the long-term design becomes visible here: being able to follow the change in people's situation over the years also made it possible to observe how temporary protection might, over time, evolve toward a horizon of return. The method was constructed so as to be suitable for reading not only the present but also the direction of this process.

When all these choices come together, the study's methodological contribution also becomes distinct. Combining observation extending across seven years, in-depth interviews, and everyday conversations within a single interpretive framework; doing this by comparing three cities and reading from the axis of legitimacy; and, moreover, conveying human experience in a plain language without reducing it to number—this is not a combination frequently encountered in the field. Following integration not as a static outcome but as a process built up and capable of breaking down over time, this design also proposes a path for researchers who will study similar subjects.

No research is independent of its limits; stating this study's limits explicitly does not reduce its reliability but, on the contrary, increases it. The first limit is geographical: the findings emerged from three metropolises and therefore do not directly cover the experience of rural areas or small provinces. The second limit is temporal: although the seven-year span provided a strong depth, the particular conditions of this period may have shaped the findings. The third limit concerns the nature of the data; the narratives rest largely on individuals' own statements, and a statement can be affected by the setting one is in. Fourth, the aim of a qualitative study is not to make a numerical generalization; the conclusion drawn here is not statistically extended to every group. Instead, the study aims to offer an understanding that can be transferred to contexts under similar conditions. Finally, the researcher's long-term presence is both a source of depth and a factor in interpretation; this situation was handled transparently, as mentioned above. Setting out these limits explicitly also leaves a path for subsequent studies: testing the same question anew in different cities, with groups of different origins, and in different periods will further solidify the understanding here.

5. Findings

This section sets out the findings gathered from the field concerning the integration process of individuals living under temporary protection in Türkiye. The five questions asked in the Introduction are answered here one by one with the data gathered. These questions concerned, in order, legal status, access to basic services, perception of security, social cohesion, and economic participation. The findings, too, are presented along these same five axes, but not as disconnected fragments—rather as a whole in which each explains the other, because the field has shown that these dimensions operate not separately but intertwined. While the five questions are addressed, the findings are deepened in legal, institutional, security, social, economic, and psychosocial layers, because the phenomenon of irregular migration is never one-dimensional.

Before reading the findings, it is necessary to recall briefly how these data were produced. The detailed discussion of method is in the fourth section; but because the findings cannot be properly assessed without knowing the ground from which they emerged, the essence of the production process is gathered here too. The data come from four sources: a survey conducted with roughly seven hundred and fifty people, in-depth interviews carried out with thirty people, more everyday conversations established with five hundred people, and observations extending across seven years. That these four sources confirm the same results by different paths adds strength to the findings.

A purposive selection was made to reach the participants. The three cities where individuals under temporary protection in Türkiye live in concentration—namely Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli—were consciously chosen in order to see how the

integration process changes according to place. The participants in these three cities were reached in their neighbourhood environments, on a voluntary basis and most often through the mediation of people who knew one another—that is, through a network of acquaintances expanding step by step. This method is almost the only way to build trust with a closed and cautious group, because these individuals do not easily open up to someone they do not know. The selection is not random; but a deliberate diversity was sought so as not to be confined to a single neighbourhood or a single group.

The nature of the conversations conducted with five hundred people must also be stated clearly. These are not formal, structured interviews; they are informal but guided conversations established within everyday life—in a tea house, a workplace, or a home visit. The in-depth interviews with thirty people are distinct from this: they were carried out, with a pre-prepared guide, in a longer and more focused manner. During the conversations no audio recording was kept; instead, detailed notes were entered into the field diary immediately after the conversation. Both the participant's ease and the essence of what was said were thereby preserved. The conversation data were used not as evidence on their own but as a source supporting the survey and interview findings, adding colour and context to them.

The seven-year observation is the strongest aspect of this study but also the one most in need of explanation. The observation proceeded in two forms. On the one hand, the researcher, by participating from time to time in these individuals' everyday life, monitored from the inside their relations with institutions, neighbours, and work circles; this is participant observation. On the other hand, there are natural observations made in settings such as the neighbourhood, the market, the school gate, and official institutions, without intervening in the flow. In both cases, what was seen was regularly written into field notes, and these notes were archived with date and place indicated. The observation's extending over years made it possible to see something that could not be captured in a single interview—namely, change: how a person who was cautious at first gradually opened up, or, conversely, how they withdrew.

To draw a consistent picture from such varied data, the method of thematic analysis was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process proceeded in several phases: first, all the notes and interview transcripts were read repeatedly to become acquainted with the data; then recurring expressions and situations were coded; and afterward these codes were brought together to form themes. The five main themes that emerged coincide with the five questions in the Introduction: legal status, access to services, perception of security, social cohesion, and economic participation. Under each main theme, smaller subthemes appeared; for example, under the theme of legal status, the anxiety of uncertainty and reluctance to seek one's rights, and under the theme of access to services, the language barrier and bureaucratic difficulty. The consistency of the codes and themes was tested by returning to the same data multiple times and at intervals and by comparing the findings in different data sources with one another. Seeing the same result together in the survey, the interview, and observation—that is, three separate sources pointing in the same direction—secured the validity and reliability of the findings without resorting to technical coefficients.

It must be noted that working with the same community for seven years also required making the researcher's own position visible. Being on the inside for a long time is a great advantage; it earns trust, opens closed doors, and makes it possible to hear even the unsaid. But the same closeness also carries a risk: the researcher may grow too close to the group they observe and begin to see what happens through their eyes. In this study this risk was not ignored; an attempt was made to balance it by regularly committing the observations to writing, comparing the findings with different sources, and reflecting on the researcher's own prejudices. This kind of self-reflexivity is an inseparable part of long-term qualitative research.

Finally, it has not been forgotten that the research was conducted with a vulnerable group. The aim of the study was explained to all participants, their participation was based on the principle of voluntariness, and it was stated that they could withdraw at any moment. Identity information was not recorded, and what was recounted was anonymized in a way that could not be traced back to the person. In speaking with people who have experienced war, loss, and violence, questions that might wound them anew were carefully avoided. This ethical framework is not merely a requirement but also a precondition of the reliability of the data, because a person who feels safe tells the truth more easily.

In presenting the findings, foregrounding tendencies was preferred over hiding behind numbers. When a proportion is needed, it is given by an approximate expression rather than a precise figure, because what matters is not the digit after the decimal point but the orientation that emerges. This approach does not impoverish the data; on the contrary, it makes visible what human experience stands behind each finding.

The meaning of a finding cannot be thought apart from who the people are who voice it; it is therefore necessary to look at the profile of the sample. The participants are not a uniform group. In terms of age, the weight is on young and middle-aged individuals of working age; but children, youth, and the elderly are also within the picture. Female and male participants are present together, and on some subjects—especially access to services and participation in social life—the experiences of women and men diverge markedly. The level of education spreads across a broad range: from those with limited literacy to those who have attended university, different segments meet in the same sample.

The occupational profile is also diverse. A portion of the participants work in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs; a portion have carved out a place for themselves in crafts, trade, or the service sector; and a portion have not yet been able to hold on to a stable job. In terms of origin, the sample consists largely of individuals under temporary protection who come from the same conflict region. Two further common features stand out. The first is the duration of stay: most of the participants have by now left several

years behind in Türkiye, and some have started their children in school here. The second is that most live not alone but as a family. These two details show how a situation initially supposed to be temporary becomes permanent over time, and why integration concerns not a single individual but an entire household.

This demographic diversity is determinant in the interpretation of the findings, because the integration process does not proceed at the same pace and in the same form for everyone. The obstacles faced by a young person and an old one, by an educated person and one of weak literacy, by a woman and a man, are different. Migration research, too, has long emphasized that the integration experience varies according to these variables (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). The experience of children and the second generation, in particular, carries a distinct importance because it affects the entire future of the family (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Since it is also known that the socio-economic structure of cities directly affects integration, the sample was constructed so as to cover not only individuals but also the urban environments in which they live (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011).

Within the demographic diversity, the gender difference in particular showed itself throughout the findings. The integration experience of women and men is not the same. While men are strained more along the axis of work and income, women encounter different obstacles in access to services, going out, and participating in social life. It is often more difficult for a woman who does not know the language to manage on her own in a hospital or a school; domestic responsibilities, too, may limit her opportunity to learn the language and to establish ties with the outside world. By contrast, it was also seen that women who opened out to the school and the environment through their children gradually became strong bridges. For this reason, integration is not a single process independent of gender; it proceeds at different paces and through different doors for women and men (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014).

The first and most determining of the findings concerns legal status. While roughly one-third of the participants said they found their legal situation clear, nearly one in every five expressed that they experienced uncertainty; the remaining large segment positioned themselves between the two, at a medium level of certainty. This picture is striking even on its own: the great majority of people are not fully sure of their own legal situation. This finding directly confirms the first assumption, which holds that legal status is determinant in integration, and it coincides with the findings in the international literature (Bloemraad, 2006; Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014).

To understand why legal uncertainty weighs so heavily, one must see what status means. Status is not merely a paper or a stamp; it grants a person a place, a foresight, and a conception of a future. A person takes root only when they can more or less predict their tomorrow: they look for work, rent a home, enrol their child in school, establish neighbourly ties. The person whose status remains suspended, by contrast, is as if living constantly in a waiting room; they hesitate to invest, to form bonds, and to make plans in a place they think temporary. The constitutive role of rights-based membership in a person's holding on to society comes precisely from here (Soysal, 1994).

The field also showed that this uncertainty has an invisible cost. The person who is not sure of their status most often also hesitates to seek their rights; when they encounter an injustice, they avoid raising their voice, because they think that drawing attention would jeopardize their own position. This hesitancy, encountered again and again in the interviews and conversations, stood out as one of the most prominent subthemes during coding. Legal uncertainty, then, is not a legal problem in the narrow sense; it is a social problem that loosens, from the very outset, the ties that would bind the person to society.

The everyday counterpart of this hesitancy is concrete. In the interviews, the following pattern was often encountered: against an employer who underpaid or did not pay at all, the person chose to stay silent rather than complain, because they feared that applying to an official body would call their own situation into question. Likewise, there were those who, living in homes rented without a written contract, avoided seeking their rights when wronged. Such situations look small when recounted one by one; but when brought together, they form a strong pattern showing how uncertainty renders people passive. The strength of the findings comes from here too: not from a single story but from the same story repeated hundreds of times.

One of the most important aspects of the findings is that legal status is not a variable standing on its own but drags a chain behind it. Here it is necessary to distinguish correlation from causality: the data show not only that two situations are seen together but also how one opens and closes the way for the other. It was seen, through following the same people over the years, that a person whose status becomes clear first has easier access to services, then is able to move into a registered job, then feels more secure, and finally establishes ties with their surroundings. That is, the sequence is not random; status is the first link of the chain.

The first link of this chain is visible in access to services. While the great majority of those whose legal situation is clear can regularly benefit from health services, in those whose situation is uncertain this proportion falls to a little more than one-third. The same tendency holds for education and social assistance. Uncertainty in status, even when the right exists on paper, narrows access in practice.

The chain becomes even more pronounced in working life. While roughly three of every four people whose legal situation is clear have a legal work permit, in those whose situation is uncertain this proportion falls to as low as one-third; roughly three-quarters of those with uncertain status are forced to work in informal jobs. This is not merely a matter of employment, because the person working informally is left without insurance, job security, and social rights. This strong effect of legal status on economic participation is one of the basic factors determining the quality of migrant labour (Borjas, 1999; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2005).

The chain extends to security and social life as well. While more than half of the individuals whose legal situation is clear state that they feel secure, in those experiencing uncertainty this proportion approaches one-third. Similarly, while more than half of those with clear status say they have established positive relations with the local population, in those with uncertain status this proportion falls to one-third. The picture thereby becomes wholly clear: legal uncertainty closes not a single door but many doors in succession; and when status becomes clear, these doors open one after another.

The second question looked at access to basic services. The findings show that the integration of individuals who can easily reach health, education, and social assistance proceeds faster, while those who have difficulty in this access hold on to social and economic life later. This result largely confirms the second assumption, which says that improvement in access to services supports participation. The two obstacles the participants most often voiced are the language problem and the complexity of bureaucratic procedures.

The weight of language in this process is especially striking. A person who does not know Turkish sufficiently, even when the right exists on paper, has difficulty finding their way in a hospital, a school, or an official institution; a form, an appointment, or an application turns into a hard-to-surmount obstacle for them. For this reason, supporting language learning is not merely a cultural matter but directly the key to access to services (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2005). The field shows that the person whose language opens up can manage their own affairs, and that this lightens the burden of both the individual and the institutions.

Within access to services, education has a distinct place, because education shapes not only the present but also the future. The interviews showed that the families of children who regularly attend school adapt to society faster. The child becomes the family's door opening onto the outside world; they learn the language first, they come to know the environment first. This bond established by the second generation through school is perhaps the most lasting bridge of integration (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Crul & Schneider, 2010). The limiting of access to education, by contrast, means the weakening of this bridge before it is even built.

Beneath all these experiences was a feeling the participants very often voiced: the desire to be treated with dignity. People's complaint is often not merely material deprivation but how they are treated. Being shoved in a queue, being scolded in an institution, or being constantly reminded as a "guest" could leave a deeper mark than a material loss. Although the word "guest" seems at first like a warm acceptance, it can over time turn into an expression that reminds the person they are temporary and secondary. This "guest" discourse, which long marked the migration debate in Türkiye, carries within it for precisely this reason the tension between acceptance and temporariness (Kirişci, 2014; Korkut, 2016). By contrast, the person who feels treated like a rights-holder binds to the institution and society far more easily. Dignity is therefore not an abstract value but a concrete factor directly affecting integration.

The findings showed that the nature of the institution facing the individual also directly affects integration. Two people with the same right can experience very different outcomes depending on the capacity of the institution they go to, the attitude of the official there, and how predictably matters proceed. An institution that is experienced, keeps its records in order, and preserves its past experience makes the matter easier for both itself and the applicant. By contrast, an institution that starts from scratch at every change and loses its memory produces the same problems again and again. This determining role of institutional capacity and continuity reveals that migration management depends not only on the individual's effort but also on the resilience of the structure facing them (OECD, 2018).

The third question was directed at the perception of security. The findings show that roughly one-fifth of the participants do not feel secure, while the remaining segment carries a full or medium level of a sense of security. More importantly, there is a strong and consistent bond between the perception of security and participation in social life. The individual who feels secure mixes more with society, works more, forms more ties; the individual carrying security anxiety, by contrast, withdraws. More than half of those with a low perception of security stated that they did not participate in social activities, and roughly half stated that they felt excluded. This picture confirms the third assumption, which holds that the sense of security supports participation.

Yet security is not a one-sided matter. Just as the person under protection must feel secure, the host society too must see that order is preserved; when neither side feels secure, the distance between them grows. At precisely this point it is seen that security is not only a concrete condition but at the same time a matter of perception and narrative. People's fear is often fed not directly by an event but by the way events are narrated. When the migration issue is presented constantly within a language of threat, this language magnifies anxiety and pushes the two sides apart (Bigo, 2002). How fragile and context-sensitive society's view of migration is, is also seen in studies on public attitudes (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

The fourth and fifth questions of the Introduction were directed at social and economic integration. The field showed that separating these two dimensions from each other is misleading, because the two constantly feed each other. The individual who establishes ties with the local population feels more secure; the individual who feels secure looks for work and produces; the more they produce, the more they mix with society. The reverse is also true: the individual who feels unemployed, insecure, and excluded regresses both economically and socially.

On the economic side, the picture is as follows: while roughly one-quarter of the participants said they encountered serious obstacles in finding work, nearly half stated that they could participate only partly; those who could hold on fully to the labour market remained below one-quarter. The majority of those working are in low-paid and informal jobs. Roughly half expressed that their job security was weak, one-quarter that they faced discrimination in

hiring, and roughly one-third that their earnings did not suffice for their livelihood. This picture reveals that migrant labour is mostly squeezed into an insecure and invisible domain (Borjas, 1999; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2005).

It is also clearly understood from the findings that economic integration does not consist solely of finding work; what is truly determinant is that the person's labour be visible and secure. No matter how much labour an informally working person expends, they cannot build any assurance for the future; when they fall ill, grow old, or lose their job, they have no ground to lean on. In the data, it is seen that individuals with a work permit and working in registered jobs are markedly more secure both economically and socially. Insecurity stands out as a factor that keeps the person in constant anxiety and makes it difficult for them to form lasting ties with society.

On the social side, the most frequently voiced obstacle is again language; the language barrier, when combined with cultural distance and economic difficulties, slows the individual's establishing relations with their surroundings. Nevertheless, the field showed that the healthiest form of integration is the person's participating in the new society while preserving their own identity—not abandoning their identity altogether or not mixing with society at all. That a balanced form of participation, far from these two extremes, eases integration is also emphasized in intercultural-adaptation research (Berry, 1997).

The findings also clearly show a chain on which this study has insistently dwelt. When the individual feels that they cannot exercise their rights, that the promise given to them is not kept, or that they have suffered an injustice, first their trust in the institution and the order is shaken. This distrust quickly spreads to economic life; the person is pushed into informality, insecurity, and uncertainty. Economic instability, in turn, magnifies social distrust; both the person under protection and the host society begin to look at the future more uneasily. The perception of rights violation, economic fragility, and social distrust thereby turn into a cycle that feeds itself. The data show that the weakest link of this cycle is the point at which rights are not secured and the promise given is not kept.

To understand this cycle, the trust encountered in the field must be seen not as a single whole but as three distinct layers. The first is the institutional trust the individual places in the state and institutions; the clarity of status, applications meeting a response, and the keeping of promises feed this trust. The second is the interpersonal trust people place in their neighbours, workmates, and the people they come into everyday contact with; this trust is built more in face-to-face relations, in the neighbourhood and the workplace. The third is the social trust that spreads to society at large and contains the common expectation that everyone will abide by the rules. The field showed that these three layers are connected but not identical: when institutional trust is shaken, interpersonal and social trust too begin to erode over time.

Beneath these layers of trust lies a psychosocial ground that is often invisible. The great majority of displaced individuals carry the traces of the war, loss, and violence they have left behind. This individual trauma affects not only the person's mental health but also their capacity to trust others and institutions (Silove, 1999). A person who has experienced a deep rupture approaches their surroundings more cautiously, sometimes more closed off. The interviews and long-term observation showed that this caution dissolves over time in a secure environment but deepens further under insecure conditions. Thus, fragility at the individual level finds a counterpart at the social level too.

What keeps a society standing is not only laws but precisely this trust; and it is useful to think of trust as a resource. Just like money or infrastructure, trust too can be accumulated and spent; in a society where people trust one another, matters proceed with less friction (Putnam, 2000). When large populations arriving in a short time press upon shared resources and services, this trust is quickly strained. That diversity can, in the first phase, temporarily strain trust has also been seen in observations of different societies (Putnam, 2007). The field findings of this study point in the same direction; but the data show that this strain can turn not into an inevitable rupture but also into recovery according to conditions.

In the transition from individual fragility to social fragility, the basic question is this: why does a society become fragile? The findings show that a society's becoming fragile is not a sudden collapse but the slow erosion of trust. When the resource pressure touched on in the previous section is badly managed, the host society cannot keep up with the pace of change, and the two sides begin to see each other as rivals; the erosion accelerates precisely at this point. But the field also showed that fragility is not a fate but the product of conditions: in places where rights are secured, the burden is fairly shared, and language is used in a soothing way, society can get over the first shock and recover. This capacity for recovery is called resilience; and resilience emerges not spontaneously but when the right conditions are established.

From here one passes to the second question: how is a broken normative order rebuilt? The findings show that this is possible not through punishment or ignoring but through the repair of trust. Trust is rebuilt by keeping the promise given, by the rules working the same for everyone, and by both sides feeling themselves a part of this order. Repairing trust once broken is harder than building it from the start; for this reason, the data show the importance of acting early, without allowing the order to erode. The field showed that small but consistent steps produce far more trust than large but unkept promises. People trust steady behaviour whose counterpart they see in everyday life far more than brilliant words.

At this point it is necessary to state clearly what the concept of social stability, frequently used throughout the study, covers. In this research, social stability was followed not as an abstract slogan but through three concrete indicators: the preservation of public order in everyday life, the relatively friction-free continuation of the relationship between the host society and the persons under protection, and the survival of trust in institutions. The findings revealed that all three of these indicators are affected by the same source—namely, whether or not rights are secured. While

weakening is seen in all three indicators in situations where rights remain suspended, all three strengthen together in situations where status and assurances become clear.

All these findings did not emerge in the same way in the three cities; on the contrary, they varied markedly from city to city. For this reason, Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli must be seen not merely as the places where the research was conducted but as factors that explain the findings. The economic structure of the city, the approach of local government, the nature of the labour market, and the level of social acceptance directly shape the integration process. How cities rescale the integration of migrants is also a central subject of studies in the field (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011).

In Ankara, the axis that comes to the fore is legal and institutional processes. As the capital, Ankara is a place where state policies are shaped and bureaucratic procedures are concentrated; here individuals' experience revolves more around the determination of status, official applications, and the relationship established with the state. This causes the troubles created by legal uncertainty to be more visible in Ankara; but it also creates an environment in which institutional channels are relatively more accessible.

In Istanbul, the picture is transformed. The city's size and economic vitality open a broader field for finding work; but the same density makes social cohesion more complex. In the large city opportunities are many, but human relations are more scattered and neighbourhood ties looser. For this reason, while in Istanbul individuals can move more quickly in economic terms, the sense of social acceptance and belonging can develop more slowly. This tension between the opportunity the large cities offer and the complication of integration has been frequently observed in the migration literature (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Kocaeli, for its part, with its industry- and manufacturing-oriented structure, offers a different picture. Here the axis of integration is largely the labour market. Industry's demand for labour increases migrants' likelihood of finding work and, in some cases, makes registered employment more possible. In Kocaeli, work is not merely a source of livelihood but at the same time the principal door to participation in society. This determining role of employment in the integration process is also prominent in studies on the labour market (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2005).

This differentiation of the three cities is not chance; it arises from each city's own economic fabric, tradition of governance, and social climate. That individuals living within the same legal framework experience different integration experiences merely because the city they live in changes shows how determining the local context is. That integration must be understood not through a single mould at the national level but through contexts that vary city by city is also the basic thesis of comparative-integration approaches (Crul & Schneider, 2010). For this reason, the weight of local governments and urban policies in integration must not be underestimated (Katz & Nowak, 2018).

A relatively new dimension of the findings is the role of digital technology. Individuals who can access the internet and digital services carry out public affairs more easily, reach work and education opportunities more quickly, and preserve their bond with distant relatives (Castells, 2001). But the field showed that this tool alone is not enough either: a person whose status is uncertain or who is anxious about their security cannot fully use even the most advanced digital means. Technology turns into a real facilitator only when the legal and social ground is sound.

Alongside digital ties, the transnational ties that individuals maintain with the country of origin also appear among the findings. A significant portion of the participants are in regular communication with the relatives and acquaintances left behind; they receive news, send support, and follow developments there closely. These ties both keep the individual's sense of belonging alive and form a mental and social bridge for a return that might be in question later. How this continuous bond that migrants establish between two countries shapes integration and the future is a principal subject of transnational-migration studies (Levitt, 2001).

In the shadow of all these findings, there was a marked duality in the participants' view of the future. On the one hand, most people had spent years here, established an order, and begun to take root; that is, the situation initially supposed to be temporary had in fact begun to turn permanent. On the other hand, the same people maintained their ties with the country of origin, followed developments there, and kept return in mind as a possibility if conditions improved. This duality is not a contradiction but a reality arising from the very nature of temporary protection. People, while leaving open a door to a future in which a safe and dignified return is possible, want to live humanely in the place they are until that day comes. The findings show that these two tendencies do not exclude each other; on the contrary, when a clear conception of the future is offered, both function more healthily.

When we bring all these findings together, not scattered observations but a consistent pattern emerges. The most basic pattern this study has identified is this: the dimensions determining integration are arranged in a hierarchy. At the head of the chain stands legal status, because once uncertainty arises, it weakens access to services, security, economic participation, and the social bond together. Security and economic participation are the intermediate links located in the middle of this chain; they are fed by status and feed social cohesion. Social trust and social acceptance, in turn, are both the condition and the result of this process. For this reason, the findings should be read not as a list all of equal weight but as an order in which each triggers the other. The first assumption—the determining character of legal status; the second assumption—that access to services supports participation; and the third assumption—that the sense of security feeds participation—were thereby confirmed together; and the findings of social and economic integration, corresponding to the fourth and fifth questions, also became distinct as the result of this chain.

This pattern also proposes a certain ordering among the concepts. The findings show that legitimacy stands at the top, as the

constitutive principle: an arrangement's being seen as justified in the eyes of both sides gives rise to trust. Trust eases social and economic integration. As integration advances, social stability consolidates. That is, there is a chain extending from legitimacy to stability: legitimacy feeds trust, trust feeds integration, and integration feeds stability. When any link of this chain breaks, the subsequent links also weaken. This ordering gathers the study's seemingly scattered findings around a single logic.

It is possible to think of these relationships within a single framework. At the base of the framework lies the ground of legitimacy; upon this ground, legal status stands as the first and determining step. From status branch out access to services, security, and economic participation; these feed the three layers of trust—institutional, interpersonal, and social; trust turns into social cohesion, and social cohesion into social stability. This whole structure is like a map showing how the tension between sovereignty and human rights can be resolved on the ground of legitimacy. These relationships are summarized as a visual model in Figure 1.

It must be shown that this pattern genuinely rests on the data, because the inferences here are not merely an interpretation. In the interviews, it was observed again and again that individuals whose legal situation became clear established relations with their surroundings more easily and turned to work and school more willingly. By contrast, in situations where uncertainty persisted, it was seen both that the individual withdrew and that the unease of the local population around them increased. That individuals who had assurance and worked in registered jobs looked more positively both at their own future and at the order in which they lived could be followed throughout the seven-year observation. The inferences concerning social stability and legitimacy are built upon precisely these concrete observations.

In constructing this chain, it is also necessary to state explicitly an assumption that often remains silent: it is thought that legal certainty will produce trust of its own accord. This study, rather than assuming this bond, followed it in the field. The clarification of status alone is not enough; that clarity must also be reflected in practice—that is, the person must be able to genuinely exercise their right. A status that is clear on paper but does not work in practice does not produce the expected trust. Therefore, each link of the chain sets the next in motion not of its own accord but only when certain conditions are met. This clarity makes visible the logic behind the study's claims.

The real importance of this pattern lies in its being connected to the tension the study has followed from the outset—namely, the tension between sovereignty and human rights. The findings show concretely that these two principles are not each other's enemies. The individual who has legal assurance, feels secure, and has their labour made visible binds more to the order in which they live; and this does not damage social stability but, on the contrary, strengthens it. Conversely, the insecurity of the individual whose rights remain suspended makes both themselves and the host society fragile. That is, the field says that the protection of the individual and the stability of society are not opposites but two faces of the same ground.

This ground is the concept of legitimacy that the study places at its centre. The findings show that a policy works only when it is seen as justified in the eyes of both the person under protection and the host society. An order that provides services but sustains uncertainty, that protects but cannot offer a conception of a future, loses the trust of both sides over time. Therefore, the findings this section sets out are not merely descriptive data; they are findings that directly feed the study's theoretical axis and ground it with evidence coming from the field.

Finally, it may be asked whether these findings are specific to Türkiye alone or have a broader validity. The Turkish case of course has its particular aspects: the country's geographical position, its legal framework, and the size of the population it has received are noteworthy in themselves. But the basic logic the findings reveal—the pattern whereby legal certainty opens integration, trust carries integration, and legitimacy keeps the whole process standing—can also be a guide for other contexts experiencing mass, temporary-protection-based migration. Thus, the experience of a single country can turn into transferable lessons for societies in a similar situation.

A detailed comparison of these findings with the national and international literature, their theoretical and practical implications, and the study's original contribution are addressed in the following discussion section. There the findings will be briefly recalled, then confronted with the literature so as to make distinct their contributions to both theory and practice.

6. Discussion

This section re-examines, in the light of the findings, the question the research has followed from the outset. The question was simple: How does the tension between the state's authority to protect its border and order and the person under protection's demand to exercise their rights shape the integration process? The interviews, conversations, and observations extending across seven years made it possible to follow this tension closely. The aim here is not to recount the findings anew. The aim is to place them side by side with studies in the field, to show what coincides and what diverges, and then to name explicitly the theoretical conclusion emerging from this picture.

The clearest conclusion to emerge from the field was that legal uncertainty is the heaviest obstacle before integration. A person whose status remained uncertain was strained not in a single domain but in every corner of life. Entering a registered job, going to a health centre, safely enrolling one's child in school, renting a home, even walking comfortably in the street—all depended on the clarity of status. Uncertainty weighed down not one door but all the doors at once. When status became clear, by contrast, these doors opened one by one. Roughly one of every four people interviewed recounted that, because of the uncertainty of their situation, they could not fully exercise their basic rights.

Here one must be careful. The data at hand show us a coexistence: the life of those whose status is clear is easier. One must not be hasty in turning this coexistence into a cause-and-effect chain. Nevertheless, what we heard again and again in the interviews helps to understand how uncertainty operates. Legal uncertainty first erodes trust; when a person cannot see their tomorrow, they cannot fully hold on to today either. The decline of trust eases being pushed into informal, insecure, and low-paid jobs. Economic insecurity, in turn, unsettles both the individual and the local population around them. Uncertainty thereby ceases to be a narrow legal problem and turns into an economic and social one. This chain is not definitive proof but a strong pattern that the interviews point to, and it remains open to testing through more narrowly designed studies in the future.

This picture looks in the same direction as a significant part of the studies in the field. Bloemraad (2006), in the Canadian case, shows that legal status directly eases social and economic integration. Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) reveal that status uncertainty weakens integration and makes long-term coexistence more difficult. Soysal (1994), for her part, argues that rights can be recognized not only through citizenship but also within a broader human-rights framework. All three studies arrive at the same point by different paths: the clarity of status is a silent but powerful condition of integration. The observations over the years confirmed this line in the Turkish context.

On the other hand, the picture is not single-coloured. Banting and Kymlicka (2013) point out that, in some countries, the rights and assistance opened to migrants may strain the sense of solidarity in the host society. This warning is important, because the expansion of rights does not always produce acceptance of its own accord. The picture in the field seems to support this too. The recognition of rights alone is not enough; these rights must appear justified to both the local population and the person under protection. It is at precisely this point that the concept of legitimacy comes into play. We will return to it in detail shortly.

At this point it is necessary to touch on a discourse specific to Türkiye. Persons under protection are often referred to in public opinion as guests. This discourse is at first glance warm and embracing; it speaks in the language of hospitality and solidarity. Yet guesthood is not a legal category but a moral framework (Kirişci, 2014; Korkut, 2016). The guest has not a right but the host's tolerance; guesthood is by definition temporary, and its duration depends largely on the host's will. The interviews showed that this discourse works in two directions. On the one hand, it produces compassion and acceptance at the first encounter; on the other, as the years pass, it turns into the question of why the guest has still not left, creating tension. More importantly, the language of guesthood concealed legal uncertainty. When a person is regarded as a guest, the clarification of their status seemed a matter that could be postponed. Yet the findings said precisely the opposite; what was really needed was not a warm discourse but a clear status. The guesthood narrative can be meaningful only when combined with a legitimate and predictable legal framework.

Right beside legal uncertainty stood the problem of access to public services. Freeman (1995) says that public services are one of the most powerful instruments accelerating integration. The observations in the field coincide with this view; the holding on to life of people who could easily reach health and education was markedly easier. But here the real problem was not the absence of the service but the difficulty of reaching it. Complex applications, prolonged processes, files lost between institutions, and the language barrier rendered even an existing service inaccessible. The burden on municipalities was heavy, and their resources were often insufficient. The OECD (2018) draws attention to the determining role of local governments in the integration process and to the importance of inter-institutional cooperation. In the field, it was seen that what wearied people most was precisely this lack of coordination.

The field of health was one of the places that most clearly showed how legal uncertainty is reflected in everyday life. People whose status was clear could largely benefit from health services, while those experiencing uncertainty most often turned back from the same door. Freeman (1995) says that access to services is one of the basic instruments accelerating integration; the field data confirmed this but added a condition. The existence of a health service was not enough; one had to be able to reach that service securely and without obstacles. Not being able to communicate with health personnel, not being able to read medical documents, and not being able to meet the cost of medicine caused even the most basic right to become unusable. It was seen that people with regular access to health participated more actively in work and society. This showed that health is not merely an individual matter but a silent condition of integration.

The perception of security turned out to be more determining than expected. People who did not feel secure went out less to the street, to work, to the neighbour, to the association; in short, they withdrew from society. Bigo (2002) recounts how presenting migration as a threat pushes the migrant to the margins of society. The observations in the field clearly showed this withdrawal. Yet limiting the security debate to the perception of threat alone falls short. How an issue is turned into a security matter—that is, the process of securitization—is a field in its own right (Wæver, 1995; Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). When a group is referred to in public opinion in the language of threat, that group becomes the object of precaution before having done anything. Once this language settles in, it is hard to take back, and it thins out mutual trust in everyday life. The interviews showed that security anxiety strains not only the individual but also the relationship between the two societies.

The consequences of securitization do not remain at the level of discourse; they seep into everyday life. When a group is constantly referred to in the language of threat, the local population becomes cautious and the person under protection defensive. Both sides begin to regard each other with suspicion from the outset. This mutual suspicion turns small everyday tensions into events loaded with great meaning; individual incidents are made the grounds for an entire group being deemed dangerous. We clearly saw the same

mechanism in the field. In places where security anxiety was high, people feared not only an external threat but also exclusion. Securitization thereby often magnified the very problem it promised to solve, because the contribution to society of an excluded person decreases, and this makes them a more visible problem. What truly increased security was not the language of threat but an inclusive framework that takes people into the order.

At the heart of social cohesion was trust. Putnam (2000; 2007) says that social ties and mutual trust are an invisible capital that keeps a community standing. The field supported this idea too; people who established neighbourly relations, participated in activities, and had contact with the local population felt belonging more easily. But trust must not be thought of as a single block. The interviews made it necessary to distinguish three separate kinds of trust. The first is trust in institutions; it is the belief a person places in the state, the municipality, the police, and the court. The second is broad social trust; it is the intuition that one can share the same order with people one does not know. The third is interpersonal trust; it is the one-to-one relationship established with the neighbour, the workmate, and the tradesperson. The interviews showed that these three feed one another. When trust in institutions weakened, broad social trust also eroded, and when that eroded, even interpersonal relations became cautious. Trust is a resource that takes years to accumulate but can be spent in an instant.

Upon this ground of trust, integration strategies took shape. Berry (1997) says that migrants move among four paths: assimilation, integration, separation, and exclusion. The observations in the field showed that the great majority of people, while preserving their own culture, also tried to hold on to the language and life of the host society—that is, they chose a two-way integration. Belonging here without abandoning one's own identity was the most frequently encountered attitude. Language was the key to this process. The one who had language opened doors; the one whose language was lacking remained in need of help even in the simplest task.

Integration is a matter not only of today but also of tomorrow. Crul and Schneider (2010) show that integration depends on conditions that vary from city to city and from institution to institution; Portes and Rumbaut (2001), for their part, emphasize that the real determining threshold is in the second generation—that is, in the children. The picture in the field coincided with this line. Young individuals, especially those attending school, learned the language faster and established ties with their local peers more easily. The school was the place where the two societies met most naturally. This also shows that education is not merely an instrument of integration but the very threshold determining the difference between generations. The step taken or not taken today shows its effect in the next generation.

Economic life was the place where all these processes were tested. Borjas (1999) and Dustmann and Fabbri (2005) show that the migrant's place in the labour market directly affects integration. The observations in the field said the same thing; the life of one who had a regular and registered job recovered, while everything of one working informally remained suspended. Informality was widespread and was often not a choice but a necessity. There was a chain that became visible here. When a person felt that their right was violated and that they did not receive the return on their labour, they first became economically fragile, then lost their trust in their surroundings and the order. This distrust did not remain with that individual alone but spread to everyone they came into contact with. An economic problem thereby quietly turned into a social one.

Beneath this economic chain often lay a sense of justice. What really wore the person down was not poverty itself so much as the belief that they did not receive what they deserved. Someone who does not see the return on their labour, who thinks the rules are not applied equally to them, is injured not only materially but also inwardly. This injury erodes, over time, belief in the order. The interviews showed that in places where the sense of justice was damaged, trust also dissolved rapidly. Conversely, the person who felt treated fairly continued to remain bound to the order despite difficulties. The invisible fuel of integration, then, is, alongside concrete opportunities, the belief that the rules work equally for everyone.

Beneath all this there was often an invisible psychological layer. Silove (1999) recounts how forced migration can leave deep marks such as trauma, anxiety, and depression. We frequently encountered these marks in the field; the person carrying the weight of the past began even today's integration effort already weary. From here one can pass to a broader question: why does a society become fragile? Fragility is more than the sum of the burdens of individuals one by one. When trust declines, the future becomes uncertain, and the sense of justice is damaged, the common support of society thins out. The reverse is also possible. When people can exercise their rights, feel secure, and receive the return on their labour, both the individual and the order around them regain strength. The sense of common rules that everyone will abide by is repaired only when these conditions are met.

Here it is necessary to define explicitly the frequently used concept of social stability; otherwise the concept, while telling everything, comes to show nothing. In this study, social stability has been understood as the coexistence of four concrete dimensions. The first is public order: everyday life being able to proceed without anxiety over crime and violence. The second is social cohesion: relations among different groups resting on cooperation rather than tension. The third is institutional continuity: services and rules functioning predictably. The fourth is the sense of justice: people believing that they are subject to the rules equally. These four dimensions feed one another; when one weakens, the others are also shaken. At the foundation of stability lies the sense of common rules and solidarity that sociology has pointed to since Durkheim (Durkheim, 1933; Parsons, 1951). Putnam's (2000) concept of social capital recounts the same ground in a different language; a society gains stability when the trust and bond among its members are strong. The observations in the field showed that irregular migration can strain these four dimensions at once, but

that, when managed correctly, the same dimensions can strengthen together.

The examination of the three cities together showed that integration does not work the same way everywhere. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011) say that a city's economic and social structure directly shapes the integration process. Katz and Nowak (2018), for their part, emphasize that local governments and the city's own particular dynamic are determining. The picture in the field made these views concrete at the Turkish scale. In Ankara, the weight of public institutions and the civil-service culture added a certain order and distance to relations. Istanbul's large and scattered labour market produced both opportunity and invisibility; the person both found work and got lost within the crowd. In the industrial city of Kocaeli, job opportunities were relatively more plentiful, but this situation also increased visibility and therefore tension. That is, the cities were not merely the places where the research was conducted but the very factors explaining the outcome.

The distribution within the city also quietly shaped integration. A significant portion of people who could not reach housing support were gathered in low-income and dense areas. This concentration had two faces. On the one hand, people in a similar situation supported one another and built networks of solidarity. On the other, the same density reduced contact with the local population and fixed the distance between the two societies. The integration of people who could easily reach public transport and move comfortably to different parts of the city was markedly easier. Katz and Nowak (2018) and Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011) show that the city's physical layout and mobility directly affect access to opportunities. As seen in the field, space is not merely a background but an active factor that accelerates or slows integration.

Alongside these local dynamics, integration was now fed from beyond borders as well. Sassen (1998) shows that globalization has turned migration into a phenomenon the nation-state cannot manage on its own. Castells (2001) recounts how digital networks connect people from a distance. Levitt (2001), for her part, reveals that migrants can hold on to the new society without severing their ties with the country they came from. We frequently encountered this double attachment in the field. With the applications on their phones, people both held on to life here and established ties with those they had left behind. This bond works in two directions; sometimes it eases integration, sometimes it prolongs holding on to the past. What matters is to read this transnational bond not as an obstacle but as a resource that, when managed correctly, also strengthens the horizon of return.

Digital tools were a new but rapidly growing part of this picture. People who had internet and digital skills reached job postings, courses, public services, and distance education more easily. Castells (2001) notes that digital means can support integration and employment. Yet the field data also contained a warning. Those who lacked digital skills and access—precisely the segment most in need of support—were left outside this new door too. Thus, while digitalization created opportunity on the one hand, it could deepen existing inequality on the other. This dual effect showed that the digital tool is not a solution of its own accord but works only when supported correctly.

The headings up to this point may look scattered, but they all connect to the same weave. Every concept that came to the fore in the theoretical discussion had a counterpart in the field. The concept of legal status was concretized in access to registered work and services; the concept of security in the courage to go out to the street and society; the concept of social capital in neighbourly and associational ties; and the concept of economic integration in regular work and sufficient income. That is, theory and data were not separate worlds; each theoretical variable found a tangible trace in the interviews and observations. These counterparts stand separately when looked at one by one; when looked at together, a common axis binding them all to one another appears.

That common axis is knotted in a single concept: legitimacy. Throughout the research it was seen again and again that a migration policy, however well designed, endured only to the extent that it was seen as justified. Here legitimacy must be treated not in its everyday sense but as a theoretical category (Weber, 1978; Beetham, 2013; Habermas, 1975; Tyler, 2006). Legitimacy has two sources. The first is the process: whether decisions are taken fairly, predictably, and equally. The second is the outcome: whether the policy concretely works. When a policy provides both of these at once, it is strong; when one is missing, it falls weak.

Legitimacy also has two distinct addressees, and this is one of the most critical observations of the research. A migration policy must appear justified at one and the same time to both the host society and the person under protection. An order that pleases only the local population excludes the person it protects and inwardly decays. An order that attends only to the person under protection, on the other hand, loses the support of the host society and becomes politically unsustainable. We continually encountered this double test in the field. When a practice created a sense of injustice on one of the two sides, no matter how proper it was on paper, it could not hold on in life. The ground on which the tension between sovereignty and human rights is to be resolved, then, is not an abstract contest of principles but this concrete test of legitimacy.

The person-under-protection leg of legitimacy rests, more deeply, on the concept of human dignity. Dignity here is not an emotional ornament but the point of departure of human-rights thought; it is the foundation that explains why rights are recognized for everyone, regardless of status (Benhabib, 2004). A person's dignity is directly related to how they are treated, to whether their voice is heard, and to whether they have a say over their own life. The interviews showed that people often cared less about material aid than about being treated as a subject. Being seen while waiting in a queue, being able to recount one's trouble, and being able to receive an answer were often more valuable than the aid given itself. For this reason, a legitimate policy does not merely meet a need; it also attends to the person's dignity. The individual whose dignity is attended to binds to the order more easily; the one whose dignity is not attended to quietly moves away.

When legitimacy is placed at the centre, the debate on sovereignty too departs from its classical mould. Reading sovereignty only as the absolute and indivisible authority drawn by Bodin and the Westphalian order falls short today. Sassen (1998) shows that globalization has taken sovereignty out of being single-piece and divided it into different layers, and that the state has been obliged to share some of its powers with cross-border processes. Migration is precisely the field where this sharing becomes visible, because even if a state tries to manage its border on its own, it must take into account the influence of neighbouring countries, international law, and the global economy. The contemporary debate on sovereignty requires thinking together about how the state's authority both endures and is limited (Krasner, 1999; Agamben, 1998). This research's understanding of sovereignty is a reading that does not weaken the state but redefines it together with the assurance of rights.

At this point another theoretical conclusion appears. A policy built on the ground of legitimacy stands not by good intentions but by sound institutions. One of the matters most complained of in the field was the weakness of institutions' memory; the process rewinding to the beginning at every change cost both time and trust. Migration management was strong to the extent that it could preserve the lessons learned and the relationships established. Likewise, a system that could flex in the face of sudden migration waves and recover without breaking weathered the strain with far less damage. Institutional memory and resilience stood out, in this study, not as ornamental concepts but as concrete supports on which legitimacy is tested in everyday life.

The picture drawn up to this point brings to mind a legitimate objection. A significant portion of migration studies reads integration as a one-way road: the newcomer stays and settles over time. According to this reading, the real solution is to include the person under protection permanently in society and to open them a path toward citizenship. This view has its strong sides. It removes uncertainty, offers the person a long-term future, and deepens integration. Soysal (1994), along this line, advocates the recognition of rights on a ground that exceeds the boundary of citizenship. Joppke (2007), for his part, shows that inclusive integration policies strengthen social peace. This objection must be taken seriously, because permanence is, in many migration contexts, genuinely the healthiest solution.

Yet this reading falls short in a mass, temporary-protection-based migration. Models that presuppose permanent settlement have mostly emerged from small-scale and orderly migration experiences. When large populations arriving in a short time are in question, the host society's carrying capacity and concern for internal stability come into play. It is a mistake to dismiss this concern as a prejudice. The rapid change of the demographic balance, the straining of public services, and the tensing of social trust are real facts. Therefore, the matter is not to reject permanent integration but to see that it does not fit every context. Temporary protection has a logic of its own, and this logic must be read not through the assumption of permanence but through a conception of a legitimate and sustainable future.

The second and third objections come from the same framework. The citizenship-based solution offers the person under protection the strongest assurance; the multiculturalist approach advocates living together while preserving differences. Banting and Kymlicka (2013) and Koopmans (2010) set out the subtleties of this debate by examining the tension between multiculturalism and the welfare state. But the great majority of these studies were written in the context of permanent migration. Applying the same prescription as is to a population under temporary protection conflicts with both the legal framework and the reality of the field. This research does not disregard the objections in question; it carries them into its own context and weighs them anew. The real contribution appears here too.

These alternative models must be weighed fairly, because each has both a strong and a weak side. The strength of permanent integration is that it ends uncertainty and gives the person a long-term future; its weakness is that, in a mass and temporary migration, it strains the host society's carrying capacity. The strength of the citizenship-based solution is that it offers the most solid legal assurance; its weakness is that it does not accord with the logic of temporary protection and with rapid mass flow. The strength of the multiculturalist approach is that it enlarges respect for difference and pluralism; its weakness is that, when a common ground is not established, it may strain social trust. The framework this study advocates is not flawless either; its greatest weakness is that its success depends largely on conditions in the country of origin—that is, on a variable that cannot be controlled. For this reason, the aim here is not to declare the other models invalid but to show which is more realistic in the context of mass and temporary protection.

The original perspective the study adds to the field is this: protection and return are not each other's opposites but two successive stages of a single humanitarian policy. This framework may be called the legitimacy-based approach to temporary protection and dignified return. Here the sovereignty–human-rights tension is placed on the ground of legitimacy; then this ground is combined with a sustainable horizon of return. The three fundamental views of international relations, too, are not arranged side by side in this framework like a list of theories; each is used as a lens that illuminates one face of the phenomenon. The state-centred view explains why order and stability matter so much. The rights-centred view shows why the protection of the individual is indispensable. The identity-centred view, in turn, recounts how the two societies see each other and how trust and prejudice are formed (Berry, 1997; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). The bond that holds the three lenses together is, again, legitimacy.

This framework's contribution to the literature is concrete. The debate built on multiculturalism, citizenship, and permanent integration (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Koopmans, 2010) mostly proceeds on the assumption of staying. This study reconstructs the same debate along the axis of temporary protection and return. It thereby adds, to the literature that places permanent settlement at the centre, the particular logic of temporary protection. It proposes thinking about integration not only with the question of how long

one stayed and how much one settled but also with the question of how this duration is to be managed in a both justified and sustainable way and how it is to be combined with a dignified horizon of return.

It is useful to set out explicitly the conceptual architecture of this text, which uses many large concepts together. These concepts are not all of equal weight. At the centre stands a single concept: legitimacy. Just beneath it lies the relationship between sovereignty and human rights, the study's main axis of tension. Trust, social stability, dignity, integration, and return, in turn, are auxiliary concepts revolving around this axis; each explains one face of legitimacy. Seeing this hierarchy also shows why the text does not fall apart; all the headings ultimately connect to the same question—namely, in whose eyes does this policy appear justified?

There is also an assumption that must be stated explicitly. Throughout the study it was accepted that legal certainty would produce trust. This is a reasonable expectation, but it is not true of its own accord. A clear status, when its content is not fair, can produce not trust but disappointment too. That is, certainty alone is not enough; certainty must be filled with a fair content. Stating this assumption explicitly does not weaken the study's claim; on the contrary, it clarifies its limit. From here, the real innovation the study adds to the literature also sharpens. This research reads the sovereignty–human-rights tension through the two sources and two addressees of legitimacy and combines this, in the context of mass and temporary protection, with a dignified horizon of return. The individual parts exist in the literature; the bond that combines them in a single framework is this study's proposal.

The idea of return is easily misunderstood when it is not carefully grounded. For this reason it must be stated explicitly: what is meant here is not a sudden deportation decision. What is meant is a gradual process, dependent on conditions in the country of origin—voluntary, safe, dignified, and lawful (Long, 2013; Hammond, 2004; Black & Koser, 1999; Chimni, 2004). This literature has an important warning: return, when unprepared and forced, fails; people set out again in a short time. Successful return depends on the reconstruction of the country of origin. If there is no school, hospital, work, and security, return remains on paper. For this reason, a return policy is at the same time a development policy. Moreover, return is not a one-off event but a process that must be monitored. Sending back under pressure—that is, the violation of the principle of non-refoulement—is the hardest limit of this framework (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2021).

This horizon of return is not stepping outside the law but remaining faithful to the very logic of temporary protection. Because of the geographical limitation Türkiye maintains in the 1951 Convention, those arriving from certain regions are granted temporary protection rather than full refugee status (United Nations, 1951; Kirişci, 2003). Temporary protection, as its name suggests, is not a promise of permanent settlement. It is a bridge. It provides refuge as long as the danger persists, and when the danger passes, it opens the way to return. Therefore, to draw a horizon of return is not to punish the person under protection. This horizon both grants them the possibility of building a life anew in their own country and shows the host society that there is an end to this burden. The concern for stability and the dignity of the individual thereby become, in this framework, not opposites but two faces of the same solution.

It must also be stated explicitly that return is not an easy prescription. In history, most returns made unprepared and under pressure have failed, and people have been forced to migrate anew in a short time. This failure has three dimensions. In the political dimension, return made without a secure and inclusive order being established in the country of origin leaves people back within the conflict. In the economic dimension, if there is no work, housing, and basic service, the returning person cannot make a living and sets out again. In the psychological dimension, the person sent back by force loses both their trust and their hope for the future. For this reason, return is not a moment of decision but a long process that waits for conditions to mature and that monitors the aftermath as well. Whether those who return genuinely hold on must be followed up, and for those who cannot hold on, the way must remain open. The lesson from the failed examples is clear: safe and dignified return is not a declaration of intent but a matter of infrastructure built with patience.

From here one can pass to a broader question: is the Turkish case specific to Türkiye alone, or does it carry lessons for other countries too? There are also other examples that host large populations in a short time and keep these populations under temporary protection rather than permanent settlement. The experiences of countries that receive intense migration from neighbouring regions live through a similar tension in different forms; the concern to protect the border and the obligation to protect the human being come face to face everywhere. The framework of this study aims, rather than being a case analysis recounting only Türkiye, to name a logic that operates across mass and temporary-protection-based migrations in general. What is generalizable is not the numbers but this form of relationship constructed around the two sources and two addressees of legitimacy.

Placing this framework side by side with the experiences of other countries shows both the limits and the generalizable aspects of the Turkish case (Betts & Collier, 2017; OECD, 2022). Germany is an example in which protection initially deemed temporary could over time turn into permanent settlement; the real debate there is about how temporariness slides into permanence. Jordan and Lebanon, having hosted populations very large in proportion to their own, are the examples that live through the tension between camp and city most sharply; the issue there is how carrying capacity is to be preserved with limited resources. Colombia, for its part, responded to the mass migration arriving from its neighbour with large-scale status arrangements and is an example showing how reducing uncertainty increases trust. Each of these examples confirms the study's central observation from a different angle: temporary protection, when not combined with a clear status and a legitimate horizon of return, turns either into an indefinite uncertainty or into

an unsustainable burden. The universal value of the Turkish case lies in its making this common logic visible in all its clarity.

In reading these conclusions, one must also clearly see the limits of the research. The study was conducted in three large cities; the experience of rural areas and border provinces may be different. Although the observation extending across seven years provided a strong depth, the data largely reflect the cross-section of a particular period; integration, however, is a process that changes over time. The participants' legal situation was learned not through official documents but through their own statements; this leaves uncertainty at some points. Moreover, the study focused more on the experience of individuals and did not address the view of policymakers and service providers at the same depth. These limits do not invalidate the findings; they only show within which framework they ought to be read. A research that knows its limits can also construct its claims more solidly.

From all this discussion, a single idea stands out. The state's protecting its order and the individual's exercising their rights, though at first glance they appear to clash, can meet on the same ground of legitimacy. When the person under protection can exercise their rights, the social order is not damaged; on the contrary, the ground of trust and peace is strengthened. When the state can protect its order, the individual's rights too do not remain in a void but gain an institutional roof. What remains is the question of by which concrete steps this balance is to be established. This question is the subject of the study's conclusion and recommendations section. The legacy the discussion leaves behind, however, is clear: stability and dignity are not each other's rivals; when constructed correctly, they are won together.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has followed a single question from the outset. How does the tension between the state's right to sovereignty and the individual's right to protection shape the integration process? Although the question looks short, its answer is layered. The interviews, conversations, and observations extending across seven years in Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli showed that these two rights are not each other's enemies. Both meet on the same ground—namely, the ground of legitimacy. A migration policy endures to the extent that it is seen as justified in the eyes of both the host society and the person under protection. When these two approvals cannot be obtained at the same time, even the best-intentioned arrangement remains in a void.

It is necessary to gather here this idea that runs throughout the study. Sovereignty is the state's authority to protect its border and order. Human rights, in turn, are the minimum assurance possessed by everyone living within this order, whether a citizen or not. The two principles at first glance seem to clash. Yet the field also showed us that these can complement each other. When the person under protection can exercise their rights, the social order is not damaged; on the contrary, the ground of trust and peace is strengthened. When the state can protect its order, the individual's rights too do not remain in a void but gain an institutional roof.

For this reason, the study does not see sovereignty and human rights as the two pans of a scale. If they are seen as two pans, when one outweighs, the other always loses. Yet in real life the two most often rise together or collapse together. A person who has legal assurance, feels secure, and sets up their work is also more bound to the order in which they live. A state whose order is sound and whose rules are clear and fair can also protect the individual's rights more easily. The matter is by which principle we are to establish this togetherness. This study's answer is legitimacy.

It is necessary to state explicitly how sovereignty is understood here, because the study's understanding of sovereignty goes beyond the classical Bodin–Westphalia line. Sovereignty is not an indivisible and absolute block but a bundle of disaggregable powers; a state's internalization of international-law norms is most often not a loss of sovereignty but an organized rearrangement of it (Krasner, 1999). Globalizing migration flows do not abolish sovereignty; they rescale it and distribute it to urban and transnational levels (Ruggie, 1993; Sassen, 1998). The relationship of sovereign power with the person under protection, in turn, appears most sharply in the logic of the exception: legal uncertainty leaves the person suspended between being a subject of rights and a mere object of administration (Agamben, 1998). For this reason, the solution is not to set sovereignty against rights but to take it out of the logic of the exception and carry it onto the ground of legitimacy; sovereignty strengthens itself not by restricting rights but by establishing a fair and predictable order.

The first of the questions we asked in the Introduction concerned legal status. The findings are clear: legal uncertainty is the heaviest obstacle before integration. The individual whose status remains uncertain has difficulty reaching public services, working in a registered job, feeling secure, and establishing ties with their surroundings. Uncertainty envelops not a single domain but the whole of life. When status becomes clear, the other doors open more easily. This result directly confirms the first assumption, which says that legal status is determinant, and it coincides with the findings of Bloemraad (2006) and Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2014).

It is necessary to unpack why legal uncertainty is so determining. Status is not a piece of paper. It grants the individual a place, a future, and a foresight. A person takes root only when they can more or less predict their tomorrow; they look for work, enrol their child in school, rent a home, establish neighbourly ties. The person whose status is suspended, by contrast, always lives in a waiting room. They do not invest, do not make plans, and hesitate to form bonds in a place they think temporary. For this reason, legal uncertainty is not merely a legal problem; it is a social problem that loosens, from the very outset, the ties that would bind the person to society.

Uncertainty also has an invisible cost. The person who is not sure of their status also hesitates to seek their rights. When they encounter an injustice, they fear raising their voice, because they think that drawing attention would harm them. Uncertainty thereby restricts the individual not only with external obstacles but also

with the limits they draw within themselves. The clarification of status reduces this fear and takes the person out of a passive waiting, making them the subject of their own life.

The second question concerned access to basic services. The integration of individuals who can easily reach health, education, and social assistance proceeds faster; while individuals who have difficulty in this access hold on to social and economic life later. This finding largely confirms the second assumption, which says that improvement in access to services supports participation. Yet access to services most often depends on legal status. The person whose status is uncertain, even when the right exists on paper, turns back at the door in practice. That is, the two dimensions are intertwined; it is hard to fix one without fixing the other.

Language too has a large share in access to services. Someone who does not know Turkish sufficiently, even if they have the right, has difficulty finding their way in a hospital, a school, or an official institution. A form, an appointment, an application turns into a hard-to-surmount obstacle for them. Supporting language learning is therefore not merely a cultural matter but also the key to access to services (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2005). The person whose language opens up can manage their own affairs; this takes them out of being a burden on both themselves and the institutions.

The third question looked at the perception of security. The individual who feels secure mixes more with society, works more, forms more ties. The individual carrying security anxiety, by contrast, withdraws. This too supports the third assumption. But security is not a one-sided matter. Just as the person under protection must feel secure, the host society too must see that order is preserved. When neither side feels secure, the distance grows.

How the perception of security is constructed also matters. People's fear is often fed not directly by an event but by narratives. When the migration issue is presented constantly within a language of threat, this language magnifies anxiety and pushes the two sides apart; security is constructed less by an objective threat situation than by an issue's being carried, discursively, to the level of an existential threat—that is, by securitization (Bigo, 2002; Buzan & Wæver, 1998). Yet when the same phenomenon is narrated in a balanced language that shows both problems and solutions, fear can give way to a healthier debate. Security, then, is a matter not only of the police or the border but at the same time of language and narrative.

The fourth and fifth questions were directed at social and economic integration. The field showed that these two dimensions feed each other. The individual who establishes ties with the local population feels more secure; the individual who feels secure looks for work and produces; the more they produce, the more they mix with society. The reverse is also true. The individual who feels unemployed, insecure, and excluded regresses both economically and socially. The prevalence of informal work and the weakness of job security aggravate this vicious circle (Borjas, 1999).

It must also be seen that economic integration does not consist solely of finding work. What matters is that the person's labour be visible and secure. The person working in an informal job, no matter how much they work, cannot build any assurance for the future. When they fall ill, grow old, or lose their job, they have no ground to lean on. This insecurity keeps them in constant anxiety and makes it difficult for them to form a lasting bond with society. The easing of work permits and the increase of registered employment are therefore both an economic and a social gain.

Between these two dimensions there is also a tool that has come to the fore in recent years: digital technology. The individual who can access the internet and digital services carries out public affairs more easily, reaches work and education opportunities more quickly, and preserves their bond with their own relatives (Castells, 2001). But this tool too is not enough on its own. A person whose status is uncertain or who is anxious about their security cannot fully use even the most advanced digital means. Technology turns into a real facilitator only when the legal and social ground is sound.

Most persons under protection also maintain their ties with the country they left behind. The telephone, money transfer, and social networks keep them connected to their families and to the news in the country of origin (Levitt, 2001). This bond is most often not a weakness but a strength. The person who maintains a living relationship with the country of origin can more easily consider return when conditions there improve. Therefore, these transnational ties are also a silent preparation for the horizon of return we will address later.

At this point it is necessary to name explicitly a chain on which the study has dwelt. When the individual feels that they cannot exercise their rights, that their promise is not kept, or that an injustice has been done to them, first their trust in the institution and the order is shaken. This distrust spreads to economic life; the person is pushed into informality, insecurity, and uncertainty. Economic instability, in turn, magnifies social distrust. Both the person under protection and the host society begin to regard each other more cautiously, with anxiety about the future.

Both ends of this chain are dangerous. If the person under protection constantly feels wronged, they may give up establishing ties altogether and withdraw into a closed circle. The host society, in turn, may begin to identify economic contraction and insecurity with migration. As the anxiety of the two sides feeds each other, a simple economic problem turns into a social tension. For this reason, thinking economic policies and social policies separately is misleading.

The way to break the chain passes, first of all, through securing rights and keeping the promise given. When people see that the rules are definite and lasting, they look at the future more calmly. The person who knows they will receive the return on their labour produces; the person who sees what they have produced as secure saves and makes plans. Trust thereby feeds the economy; and a stable economy feeds trust. The negative chain can be turned into a positive cycle through correct policies.

From here one passes to a deeper question: why does a society become fragile? What keeps a society standing is not only laws but the trust people place in one another and in institutions. When this trust erodes, ties loosen, solidarity weakens, and everyone withdraws to their own corner. When large populations arriving in a short time press upon shared resources and services, this trust wears down faster. People become uneasy when they cannot keep up with the pace and magnitude of change (Putnam, 2007).

It is useful to think of social trust as a resource. Just like money or infrastructure, trust too can be accumulated and spent. In a society where people trust one another and institutions, matters proceed with less friction; when everyone assumes the other is not ill-intentioned, cooperation becomes easier (Putnam, 2000). Migration quickly strains this common resource. For that reason, preserving and repairing trust is not a luxury but a basic requirement of the order.

In analysing this trust, one must not see it as a single attitude; the field showed that trust works on three levels. Institutional trust is the trust the individual places in the state and the service-providing institution; social trust is the mutual trust between the host society and the person under protection; interpersonal trust, in turn, is built in everyday relations such as the neighbourhood and the work circle. These three are connected: the individual whose trust in the institution is shaken most often also loses the trust they place in their surroundings. In the same way, the social stability at the centre of the study is not an abstract concept either; it loosens or strengthens together with three concrete indicators—public order, social cohesion, and the sense of justice. When these three axes weaken at the same time, society passes into a fragile state that can turn even a small friction into great tension. The classical sociological analysis that ties order to shared norms and interdependence, and that points to anomie when these bonds dissolve, is determining in explaining this pattern (Durkheim, 1933; Parsons, 1951).

Fragility works not only on society but on the individual too. People fleeing war, violence, or destruction carry invisible heavy burdens with them. These burdens affect mental health; anxiety, sleeplessness, and insecurity can become part of everyday life (Silove, 1999). A person whose wound has not been dressed, no matter how much opportunity is granted, has difficulty holding on to life. For this reason, integration policies must attend not only to material needs such as work and housing but also to the person's inner world.

The individual's wound and society's fragility affect each other. When people who carry pain within and cannot trust their future come together, a common unease accumulates. This unease can grow with small events. Conversely, people who feel secure and valued both dress their own wounds more easily and spread trust to their surroundings. That is, the individual's healing and society's resilience are two faces of the same process.

The second question, then, is this: how is a normative order rebuilt? The answer passes through the rules being both clear and fair and being applied to everyone in the same way. When people see that the rules are valid for themselves as well as for others, trust sprouts anew. When favouritism or arbitrariness is sensed, by contrast, trust collapses even faster. For this reason, integration is possible not only through the effort of the person under protection but through the state's consistent and predictable attitude. Social resilience grows of its own accord where the rules are reliable.

Integration also has a cultural and identity face. When people come to a new place, they bring their language, beliefs, and habits too. Integration is not the erasure of this identity. The healthiest way is for the person to be able to establish ties with the new society while preserving their own identity (Berry, 1997). A person forced to abandon their identity entirely resists; a person who closes off entirely into their identity becomes isolated. The balance between the two relieves both the individual and society.

This balance is also in harmony with the horizon of return. A person who preserves their own language, culture, and ties also keeps their relationship with the country of origin alive. This, in turn, eases return when conditions improve. By contrast, a person entirely severed from their identity can neither fully belong here nor return; they remain in between. Respect for cultural identity is therefore both a humane attitude and a long-term wisdom.

The place where integration is lived also determines the outcome. The burden was not distributed equally across the country; some provinces, districts, and neighbourhoods carried the weight far more (Crul & Schneider, 2010; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011). Even in the same city, while one neighbourhood received intense migration, another was affected by it almost not at all. For this reason, a one-size-fits-all policy does not work everywhere. More resources and attention must go to the places that carry the burden heavily; otherwise tension accumulates there.

Education is the most powerful lever of integration. A child who goes to school does not merely learn lessons; they learn the language, make friends, and enter the new society through a door. For this reason, the uninterrupted continuation of children's education is critical both for their future and for social peace. The same children become, later, an intergenerational bridge; they become individuals who know both worlds and are fluent in both languages (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Investment in education is the longest-term integration investment.

Access to health services too is both a humane and a practical necessity. An untreated illness affects not only the individual but also their surroundings; mental-health problems, in turn, turn into a silent obstacle before integration. Easing access to health, though in the short term it seems a cost, in the long term both makes the individual productive and protects the general health of society. Neglected health returns, later, as a far greater cost.

The concept that holds all these findings together is legitimacy. Legitimacy is not merely a policy's being legal but at the same time its being seen as justified. It has two sources. The first is how decisions are taken; when the process is open, inclusive, and fair, the policy is more easily accepted. The second is what result the decisions produce; a policy that genuinely improves people's lives

proves itself. When these two sources work together, legitimacy is strengthened; when one is missing, it weakens.

These two sources of legitimacy are also rooted theoretically. Weber analyses the legitimacy of authority through traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational types; the support of the modern state is this last one (Weber, 1978). Beetham does not reduce legitimacy to a single approval; he shows that it works on three layers—the validity of the rules, their accordance with shared beliefs, and the demonstration of consent (Beetham, 2013). Tyler, for his part, explains how legitimacy is experienced in everyday life: people obey an authority not because its decisions are in their favour but when they find the process fair; this procedural justice is the direct theoretical counterpart of the sense-of-justice indicator in this study (Tyler, 2006). In situations where the process is blocked and the promise is not kept, by contrast, legitimacy is experienced as a crisis (Habermas, 1975). The concept of legitimacy, which the study used intuitively, thereby turns into a solid theoretical category.

Another layer of legitimacy is the necessity of addressing two distinct audiences at the same time. A migration policy requires both the host society's saying "this order is fair" and the person under protection's saying "I was treated with my rights." The state's authority of border control and the individual's right to protection are reconciled only when these two approvals are obtained together. A policy that places authority entirely above right alienates the person under protection; a policy that places right entirely ahead of authority, in turn, unsettles the host society and loses its own base (Freeman, 1995).

Legitimacy also has a face related to time. Even if a policy is seen as justified at first, if it does not keep the promises it gives, it loses its trust over time. When a situation called "temporary" lasts for years, both the person under protection and the host society lose their belief in the word. For this reason, legitimacy is not something won once and left; it is a relationship that must be continually fed. Drawing a clear horizon and taking concrete steps toward that horizon keep legitimacy alive.

When legitimacy weakens, its symptoms are clearly seen. The rules begin to be breached, informality increases, the discourse hardens, and both sides blame each other. When legitimacy strengthens, the reverse occurs: people obey the rules voluntarily, cooperation becomes easier, tension decreases. Legitimacy, then, is not merely an abstract principle but a concrete force whose results are seen in everyday life. Every finding of this study connects, in the end, to this concept.

This framework also requires taking the host society's concerns seriously. The large populations arriving in a short time visibly changed the demographic balance in some provinces. The burden on public services increased; pressure was felt in areas such as schools, hospitals, and housing. Concerns about social cohesion and internal stability arose from this. These concerns are not a groundless prejudice. They are a natural reflection of the state's responsibility to protect its own order, resources, and social peace.

A study that ignores these concerns would be neither honest nor realistic. But seeing these concerns does not mean blaming the person under protection either. The burden arose not from the intentions of individuals but from the speed and magnitude of migration. The source of the problem is not individual people but an unplanned and unbalanced flow. Preserving this distinction is important, because seeing the problem in people produces hostility, while seeing the problem in the order produces solutions.

The correct attitude is neither to deny the concern nor to inflame it. Denial disregards the host society and angers it further. Inflaming, in turn, magnifies the fear and drives society toward division. The correct attitude is to solve the real problem behind the concern—namely, an unbearable burden of uncertain end—with a rational and planned policy. Showing people that the burden is temporary and has an end is what most allays the concern.

We can state the study's main thesis precisely here. The solution is not to set the host society against the person under protection. The sustainable solution is the one that serves both at once. Strengthening Türkiye's social stability anew and protecting the rights and dignity of the person under protection are not two opposing aims. They are two faces of the same coin. There is a single realistic way that combines these two faces: the step-by-step return of persons under protection to their own countries, to the extent that their countries of origin attain stability.

This thesis is beyond both extreme approaches. At one extreme is a rigid attitude that closes the doors entirely and abandons people to their fate; this is neither humane nor, in the long run, anything but a producer of greater problems. At the other extreme is an attitude that recognizes no limit or horizon and assumes that the burden can be carried forever; this is not realistic either and exhausts the host society's patience. The way this study proposes passes between the two: preparing for return while protection continues.

The quality of this return matters greatly. Return must be safe; a person must not be sent to a place where there is no safety of life. It must be voluntary; coercion turns return into a punishment and deprives it of legitimacy. It must be dignified; a human being is not transported like goods. And it must be lawful; its every stage must be bound to clear rules and international standards. When these qualities are not provided, return turns into an exile and runs counter to both law and conscience. The principle of non-refoulement is the hardest limit of this line (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2021).

Türkiye's legal framework already implies this horizon of return. The geographical limitation the country maintains in the 1951 Convention leads to those arriving from certain regions being granted temporary protection rather than full refugee status (Kirişci, 2003). Temporary protection, as its name says, is not a promise of permanent settlement. It is a bridge. It provides refuge as long as the danger persists; when the danger passes, it opens the way to return. Therefore, to draw a horizon of return is not to step outside the law but to remain faithful to the very logic of temporary protection.

This horizon must not be thought of as a deportation decision to be applied suddenly one day. It is a gradual and planned process dependent on conditions in the countries of origin. The durable-solution and voluntary-return approach foresees precisely this (Long, 2013; Black & Koser, 1999). First, safe zones and liveable conditions form in the country of origin; then the way is opened for those who wish to return; additional assurances are provided for the most vulnerable groups. The process does not punish the person under protection; it grants them the possibility of building a life anew in their own country.

The academic soundness of this proposal requires it to carry both the support and the warning of the return literature together. This literature treats return not as a simple geographical relocation but as a complex social process requiring taking root anew; return becomes lasting not when imposed but when negotiated and when minimum security and livelihood are provided in the country of origin (Long, 2013). Otherwise the result is most often a second displacement: those who return before conditions have matured, when they encounter problems of security, livelihood, and belonging, set out again (Hammond, 2004). The criticisms that coercive return erodes the protection regime and hollows out the principle of voluntariness from within also complete this picture (Chimni, 2004). These examples are not the opposite of the proposal but the proof of its set of conditions: what makes return dignified and sustainable is precisely the prior construction of security, livelihood, and legal assurance in the country of origin.

The success of return depends largely on the reconstruction of the country of origin. People return to a place where there is not only security but also the possibility of making a living. Return made while there is destroyed infrastructure, unemployment, and hopelessness does not become lasting; people set out again in a short time. For this reason, a return policy is at the same time a development and reconstruction policy. Without school, hospital, work, and security, return remains only on paper.

Return is not a one-off event but a process that must be monitored. Whether those who return genuinely hold on in the country of origin must be followed up. For those who cannot hold on, the way back must remain open, and no one must be sent back under pressure. This monitoring both keeps the process safe and preserves the policy's legitimacy. Every step whose success is seen increases trust in the next step.

The original perspective the study adds to the field appears at this point. The literature most often reads integration as a one-way road: the newcomer stays and gradually settles. This reading is correct in many contexts. But it falls short in a mass, temporary-protection-based migration. This research, placing the sovereignty–human-rights tension on the ground of legitimacy and combining it with a horizon of return and sustainability, offers a different framework. Here protection and return are not each other's opposites; they are two successive stages of a single humanitarian policy.

This original framework must be left not as a scattered intuition but as a named model. We name the model the study proposes the Legitimacy-Based Model of Temporary Protection and Sustainable Return. The model's basic proposition is this: the sustainability of a temporary-protection policy depends not on how long protection lasts but on its legal certainty, its two-sided legitimacy, and a predictable horizon of return. The model gathers into a single weave the parts unpacked one by one above: legal certainty and fair treatment start legitimacy; legitimacy feeds trust, trust feeds integration, and integration feeds social stability; the stability achieved turns back and reinforces legitimacy; the whole chain stands by means of institutional conditions and opens onto a dignified horizon of return. Figure 1 shows this weave at a single glance.

This model's contribution to the literature can be summarized at four levels.

At the theoretical level, it offers a named and testable model that unites, on the ground of legitimacy, sovereignty and human rights—examined on two separate axes—and binds protection to return.

At the methodological level, it matches abstract concepts with a seven-year, three-city, mixed-design field accumulation; by seeing the same phenomenon from multiple sources, it ensures that the findings confirm one another.

At the empirical level, it documents, with a multidimensional database, a domain the integration literature—mostly built on permanent migrants—has left empty: the integration of a population under temporary protection.

At the policy level, it constructs a framework that deems legal certainty not the result but the precondition of integration, and thereby reverses the order of policy design: first status security and fair treatment, then the expectation of integration.

One way to make this contribution visible is to map the basic findings directly onto theories and the links of the model. Table 3 shows which theory each finding speaks with and which link it tests in the model.

Table 3. Mapping of the basic findings onto theories and the links of the model.

Key finding	Related theory	Link tested in the model / contribution
Legal uncertainty as the dominant factor breaking integration	Postnational membership (Soysal, 1994); legitimacy (Weber, 1978; Beetham, 2013)	First link of the chain: legal certainty → legitimacy
Perception of security limits social cohesion	Securitization (Bigo, 2002; Buzan & Wæver, 1998)	External pressure eroding legitimacy; weakens the trust link
Integration high where local relations are strong	Social capital / trust (Putnam, 2000); integration (Berry, 1997)	Trust → integration link
Informality and insecurity slow the process	Economic integration (Borjas, 1999)	Economic vein of the integration → stability link
Inter-city / neighbourhood differences in integration	Institutional capacity (Joppke, 2007; OECD, 2018; Katz & Nowak, 2018)	Institutional conditions that keep the chain standing
Return becoming lasting only when conditions mature	Return theory (Long, 2013; Hammond, 2004; Chimni, 2004)	The horizon onto which the chain opens: sustainable return

This framework does not arrange the three principal views of international relations side by side like a catalogue of theories; it uses each as a lens that explains the phenomenon. The state-centred view recounts why sovereignty and order matter so much; this lens illuminates the host society's concern for stability. The rights-centred view shows why the protection of the individual is indispensable; this lens imposes that return must be voluntary and dignified. The identity-centred view, in turn, explains how the two societies perceive each other and how trust and prejudice are formed (Berry, 1997; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

All three lenses illuminate different corners of the same picture; but none can give the whole picture on its own. A view that places only the state at the centre overlooks the individual; a view that places only rights at the centre underestimates the real burden of the order; a view that places only identity at the centre forgets material conditions. The bond that holds them all together is, again, legitimacy. Legitimacy is the common measure that determines which of these three views comes to the fore in which situation.

The study thereby offers a definite contribution to both the national and the international literature. Studies that discuss the tension between multiculturalism and the welfare state (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Koopmans, 2010) were mostly written in the context of permanent migration. This study reconstructs the same debate along the axis of temporary protection and return. It thereby adds, to the literature that places permanent settlement at the centre, the particular logic of temporary protection. This is the essence of the contribution: to think about integration not only through "staying" but also through "a legitimate and sustainable horizon of return."

Such a policy stands not by good intentions but by sound institutions. The first support of this is institutional memory. Migration management must not start from scratch at every change of government; the lessons learned, the records kept, and the relationships established must be preserved. An institution that loses its memory makes the same mistakes again and again and pays the same price anew each time. Institutional memory ties experience not to persons but to the institution; the information thereby does not leave with the departure of an official.

The second support is resilience. Migration waves most often arrive in unforeseeable ways. A resilient system does not break in the face of a sudden burden; it flexes, adapts, and recovers itself. This requires reserve capacity, a flexible budget, and a mechanism for rapid decision-making. A system that leaves everything to the last moment becomes blocked at the first big wave. A system that prepares in advance, by contrast, weathers the same wave with far less damage.

The third support is ethical leadership. When decision-makers remain honest in the eyes of both the host society and the person under protection, even the hardest decisions are accepted. Ethical leadership is the courage to say not what is popular but what is right; it is to heal the concern rather than exploit it. When these three supports—memory, resilience, and ethical leadership—are weak, even the best-written rules remain on paper (Joppke, 2007; OECD, 2018).

All these inferences turn into a concrete set of recommendations. The recommendations are not a scattered list but five layers of a single, mutually complementary reform package: legal, ethical, institutional, social, and international. When one of the layers is missing, the others also weaken; for this reason, all must be thought of together. Below, each layer is addressed within its own logic.

In the legal layer, the first task is to simplify and clarify the status categories. No one should live for years in uncertainty. Under what condition status is granted, what rights it brings, and how long it will last must be clear. Work permits must be eased, and the

obstacles before registered employment must be reduced. As uncertainty decreases, both the individual is relieved and the institutions do their work more easily.

The most critical part of the legal layer is the definition, from the very outset, of a clear and lawful framework of return. This framework must be tied to conditions in the countries of origin, its criteria must be definite, and it must be limited at every stage by the principle of non-refoulement. When it is known in advance when and under what condition return will come onto the agenda, both the person under protection can plan their future and the host society can see the end of the burden. A return left uncertain unsettles everyone.

In the ethical layer, the most basic principle is that no return be made by force or in haste. Return must be voluntary, dignified, and safe. Families must not be divided, and children's education must not be cut off midway. The person must be granted the right of choice and a reasonable period; the decision must be taken not under pressure but with knowledge. The ethical layer is the conscience of the whole package; without it, the legal and institutional arrangements lose their humane meaning.

The ethical layer must attend especially to the most vulnerable persons. The sick, the elderly, children without an accompanying adult, and individuals who have suffered torture or severe violence must be specially protected (Silove, 1999). For these groups, return must be considered only under genuinely safe and supported conditions. The humanity of a policy is measured by how it treats the weakest. A framework that protects the most vulnerable also earns everyone's trust.

In the institutional layer, local and central units must talk to one another. Data must be shared, plans must be made together, and records must be kept in a way that goes beyond a single administration. Institutions working unaware of one another both waste resources and send the individual from door to door. When coordination is provided, by contrast, far more work is done with the same resource.

Service capacity must be adjusted according to each province's real burden; more resources must go to the provinces carrying the burden heavily. Local governments are at the centre of this process, because both integration and tension are experienced most at the local level (Katz & Nowak, 2018). The targets set by the centre and the everyday reality of the local coincide only when authority and resources are given to the local. The field is best known by those who are in the field.

In the social layer, the aim is to reduce the distance between the two societies. Programmes that bring the host society and persons under protection together in common work, neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces reduce prejudice and reweave trust (Berry, 1997). When people come to know one another not from afar but side by side, fear gives way to habit. Contact is the most powerful dissolver of prejudice.

In this layer, the language directed at public opinion also has a large share. The matter must not be presented within only a narrative of threat or only a narrative of victimhood. Frightening language hardens the host society; language that belittles real concerns, in turn, magnifies the reaction. A balanced, honest, and clear language shows both problems and solutions and strengthens social acceptance (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). The consistency of the word is as important as the consistency of the deed.

The international layer is perhaps the most critical link of the package, because Türkiye cannot reach the horizon of return on its own. The reconstruction of the countries of origin, the formation of safe conditions, and the ability of returnees to hold on there require broad cooperation. Without fair sharing of the burden, financial support, and durable-solution mechanisms, return remains only a wish (Sassen, 1998; OECD, 2018). When this cooperation is not provided, temporary protection turns into a permanent in-betweenness in which everyone loses.

When these five layers complement one another, the package carries value for both the academic and the practitioner. The legal layer establishes the framework; the ethical layer makes it humane; the institutional layer makes it workable; the social layer prepares its ground; and the international layer makes it possible. None is sufficient on its own; but together, they form the skeleton of a sustainable order. To neglect one layer weakens the whole structure.

These inferences must be read together with a few limits arising from the nature of the study. The research is a predominantly qualitative study conducted in three large provinces and within a particular time interval. It rests on interviews, conversations, and long-term observation. This method makes it possible to understand people's experience in depth; but it makes it difficult for every finding to be generalized one-to-one to the whole country. For this reason, the conclusions here must be read not as definite judgments but as strong tendencies.

A second limit is that the narrative mostly belongs to the present. People's views and conditions change over time; a tendency valid today may turn in another direction over the years. Moreover, since the horizon of return is still largely a possibility, its real effects can be seen only through implementation. These limits do not invalidate the findings; they only require us to read them more cautiously and more openly.

Future studies can open ways to overcome these limits. Following the processes over a longer span of time can show how integration and the tendency toward return change over the years. Listening again to the same people at certain intervals reveals change most clearly. Such a monitoring turns today's photograph into a film.

Comparing different provinces and different country-of-origin groups can also clarify the effect of local dynamics. A particularly intriguing question is this: when a horizon of return is clearly announced, how do both the host society's trust and the everyday choices of the person under protection change? Do people see return as a threat or as a hope? The answer to this question is valuable for both policy and theory.

In addition, it is necessary to lend an ear to the voices the study heard less. The experience of women, children, and the second generation radically changes the meaning of integration and return (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Levitt, 2001). What does "return" mean for a child born or raised in Türkiye? This question is both theoretically rich and difficult in policy terms. When future research deepens this area, both return policy and integration policy will rest on a more realistic ground.

The gist of the matter is this. The question this study asked has a plain answer. Sovereignty and human rights do not clash when a policy is legitimate in the eyes of both sides; they meet. The most legitimate and most sustainable way is a safe, voluntary, dignified, and lawful return that grows as the countries of origin attain stability and is carried by strong international cooperation. This way protects, at one and the same time, Türkiye's social stability and the dignity of the person under protection.

For this reason, rather than setting integration and return against each other, it is necessary to see them as the stages of a single humane and realistic policy. Protection is an obligation as long as the danger persists. Return, in turn, is an aim when conditions allow. A state that attends to both at once protects both its own order and its humanity. A policy that sacrifices one for the other, by contrast, sooner or later loses both.

The idea the study wishes to leave behind is precisely this: stability and dignity are not the price of each other; they can be won together. Türkiye's peace and the future of the person under protection are two faces of the same solution. And that solution is a safe and dignified return that takes place step by step, within a clear, fair, and legitimate framework, as the countries of origin recover. When this way is taken, both a society finds its own balance anew and a human being returns to their own homeland with their dignity. This named model is the real contribution left to the literature as the study's signature.

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