

SEEKING EDUCATION BEYOND REFUGE:  
AN ANALYSIS OF SYRIAN PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES  
OF THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN ISTANBUL



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2017

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Thesis submitted to the

Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Sciences

by

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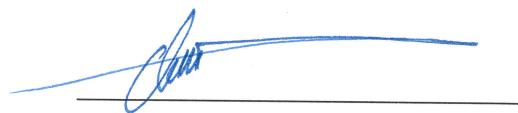
2017

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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## ABSTRACT

### Seeking Education Beyond Refuge: An Analysis of Syrian Parents' Perspectives of Their Children's Education in Istanbul

This study is an inquiry into the experiences of Syrian refugee parents in their pursuit for education in Istanbul for their children. Aiming to analyze the ways their parents struggle for acquisition of cultural capital for Syrian children, this thesis explores the possibilities and constraints encountered within the education system as well as the resources and strategies Syrian parents put into use as a response. A qualitative study was conducted through grounded theory methodology.

The study suggests that children's education has a significant precedence in refugee families' lives but their overall living conditions full of deprivation have adverse influence on children's education. The study also reveals parents' dilemma of school choice between public schools and Temporary Education Centers nourished by the possibilities and constraints that two different school choices bring about. Some parents reported better experiences for their children's educational inclusion in public schools. Acquisition of Turkish before school, extracurricular support in learning Turkish and other studies, having Turkish friends in and out of school, attentive treatment by teachers and strong parental involvement were particular aspects of these children's educational lives. However Syrian refugee families' resources to mobilize in response to the challenges against educational inclusion of their children is considerably scarce and the language barrier is a common obstacle ahead of all their strategies. Still, parents struggle to make use of

their cultural and social capital, learn together with their children, engage with schools at differential levels and find ways to draw resources from the school.



## ÖZET

### Sığınmanın Ötesinde Eğitim Arayışı: İstanbul'daki Suriyeli Ebeveynlerin Çocuklarının Eğitimine dair Görüşlerinin Analizi

Bu çalışma, Suriyeli mülteci ebevynlerin çocukları için İstanbul'daki eğitim arayışlarını analiz etmektedir. Suriyeli ebeveynlerin çocukların kültürel sermayeye erişimi için kullandıkları yolları analiz eden bu tezde eğitim sisteminin sunduğu olanak ve kısıtlılıklar ve Suriyeli ebeveynlerin bunlara karşılık kullandıkları kaynak ve stratejiler incelenmektedir. Gömülü kuram metodolojisi kullanılarak niteliksel bir çalışma yürütülmüştür.

Çalışma Suriyeli ailelerin yaşamında eğitimin bariz bir önceliğe sahip olduğunu ancak yoksunluklarla bezeli genel yaşam koşullarının Suriyeli çocukların eğitim yaşamını olumsuz etkilediğini göstermektedir. Çalışma ayrıca Suriyeli ebeveynlerin devlet okulu ile Geçici Eğitim Merkezi arasında seçim yapmak açısından yaşadığı çelişkiyi ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çelişki farklı okul tiplerinin sunduğu olanaklar ve kısıtlılıklardan beslenmektedir. Bazı anne babalar devlet okullarında okuyan çocukların eğitim yaşantılarına dair daha olumlu deneyimler paylaşmıştır. Bu öğrencilerin eğitim yaşantılarındaki belirgin özellikler arasında okula başlamadan önce Türkçe öğrenmiş olma, Türkçe öğrenmede ve derslerde okul dışı yardım alma, okul içinde veya dışında Türkiyeli arkadaşlara sahip olma, öğretmenlerin ilgili yaklaşımı ve etkili aile katılımı yer almaktadır. Ancak Suriyeli mülteci ailelerin karşılaşıkları kısıtlılıklara karşılık harekete geçirebilecekleri kaynaklar oldukça sınırlıdır ve dil engeli oluşturulabilecek tüm stratejilerin önünü ortak kesen bir engel niteliğindedir. Buna rağmen, aileler sahip oldukları kültürel ve

sosyal sermayeyi kullanmak için yoğun çaba harcamakta; çocuklarıyla beraber öğrenmekte, okula farklı düzeylerde katılım göstermekte ve okuldan kaynak devşirme yolları bulmaya çalışmaktadır.



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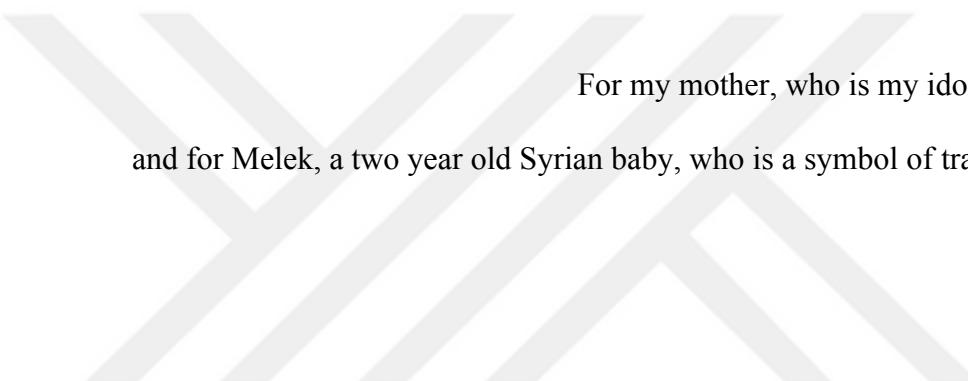


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all who supported me in doing this research, I would like to express my sincere gratitude. I want to share my earnest gratitude for support, encouragement and suggestions of my thesis advisor Ayşe Caner. My sincere thanks are for my thesis coadvisor Fatma Gök for her incredible academic and emotional support all throughout the process of my thesis. It has been my privilege to have had the chance to work with her. I want to express my appreciation to Özlem Ünlühisarcıklı for her constructive contribution and Kenan Çayır, who always generously shared his suggestions with me. I would also like to thank Hande Sart for her ideas and recommendations and Ulaş Sunata for her kind review and suggestions. Besides, I would like to express gratitude for Nurhan Yentürk for her encouragement and support, Müge Ayan for her contribution during analysis of the interviews and Oya Özdoğan for her substantial guidance in finding references.

I feel particularly thankful to Small Projects Istanbul community and particularly Shannon who supported me in getting to know and be involved in Small Projects Istanbul. Also, I want to give special thanks to my interpreters Othman, Abdulwahed and Tareq who spent special time and effort during the interviews as well as Marwa who kindly and carefully helped during the review of transcriptions. I really appreciate the kindness, friendship and hospitality of Syrian refugee parents who openly shared their thoughts with me spending their precious time and effort.

Finally my parents' incredible encouragement greatly contributed in my accomplishment. I am grateful for the support and understanding my partner Serkan has demonstrated, my sister Sevgi who provided emotional and logistic support and my three year old son Genco for all the cheerfulness and charm he brought to my life during this time.



For my mother, who is my idol of courage,  
and for Melek, a two year old Syrian baby, who is a symbol of tranquility and  
peace...

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey
ASR	Asylum seeking and refugee
BPRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
CADE	Convention against Discrimination in Education
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality (of Britain)
DEMA	Disaster and Emergency Management Authority
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
EFA	Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Needs
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Network
EU	European Union
EUFRGD	Union and Foreign Relations General Directorate
FAS	Social Action Fund for Immigrant Workers and their Families (of France)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GCSR	Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
HAD	Housing Development Administration

HEE	Higher Education Exam
HRF	Help for Refugees
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILFL	International Labour Force Law
ILO	International Labor Organisation
ILO	International Labour Organization
INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IOM	International Office of Migration
IRC	International Rescue Organization
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
LEA	Local Education Authority
LFIP	Law on Foreigners and International Protection
LLGD	Lifelong Learning General Directorate
LTC	Law on Turkish Citizenship
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MERNİS	Central Population Registration System in Turkey
MHDA	Mass Housing Development Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAU	Organization of African Union
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OTEGD	Occupational and Technical Education General Directorate

PEGD	Primary Education General Directorate
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
REGD	Religion Education General Directorate
RWPFTP	Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection
SEGD	Secondary Education General Directorate
SESGD	Special Education and Guidance Services General Directorate
SNCHEC	Syrian National Coalition Higher Education Commission
SPI	Small Projects Istanbul
SSL	Swedish as a Second Language
TEC	Temporary Education Center
TMoH	Turkish Ministry of Health
TMoL	Turkish Ministry of Labor
TMoNE	Turkish Ministry of National Education
TPR	Temporary Protection Regulation
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissary for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
URM	Unaccompanied Refugee Minors
US	United States
WB	World Bank

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*“no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark.*

*.....  
you have to understand:  
no one puts their children in a boat  
unless the water is safer than the land.”*

*(Shire, 2015)*

International migration as a concept is a creation of the nation-state system. But at present, the nation-state definitions can fully explain neither today's global migration movements nor today's framework of citizenship. The traditional understanding of citizenship is being transformed by means of non-national's participation in host societies. Pertinent to this transformation, Soysal introduced “post-national citizenship” (1994, p. 1, 44, 142) which is based on universal personhood and human rights rather than national belonging and she raised attention to the increasingly extending meaning of the category of a *refugee*, against the defensively reconsidered immigration policies in the Western states due to reassessments of nationalist narratives at the same time (p. 158). She raised attention to this seemingly contradictory duality between these two principles of the global system (p. 154-156).

Today, this duality appears even more prominent due to the protracted Syrian refugee crisis, going on since 2011 and displacing more than 7 million people in Syria mostly towards the neighbouring countries including Turkey<sup>1</sup> and then towards the West passing illegally through the Mediterranean in highest pace in 2015. The crisis has no clear signs of culmination up until now while this thesis is being written

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<sup>1</sup> Within the last five years of the crisis, number of registered Syrian refugees in Turkey increased at an incredible pace from 14 thousand to 3 million (DGMM, 2017 February 23).

out by the beginning of 2017. Especially in 2015, the deadly immigration of refugees towards the Mediterranean coast and beyond has become a major issue confronting the increasingly restrictive and externalizing asylum policies in Europe which resulted in the EU-Turkey Statement, so-called “refugee deal” of March 18, 2016 between Turkey and European Union (EU). The Statement aimed at controlling the refugee flow towards the West in return for a 6 billion Euro financial assistance to Turkey and the number of deaths in the Aegean curbed significantly after the Statement by the beginning of 2017. However the adherence of the terms of the Statement to universal human rights norms has been seriously questioned since the beginning. There has been an increased confrontation between the two principles of the global system: human rights norms at the one hand and nationalist and anti-immigration narratives at the other along with the Syrian refugee crisis.

Within this global context, the initial point to begin this study has been an assertion in a press release by a group of children’s rights NGO’s in Turkey in October 2015. The claim was that a main reason for the deadly journeys of refugees towards Western countries from Turkey was lack of accession to quality education and children’s right to access to an acceptable education was no less important than their right to shelter or protection (Suggestions for accession, 2015, October 1). Other studies also provide for the fact that, despite an apparent possibility of death, more educated refugee families among the Syrian refugees chose to move across the Mediterranean, in quest for better education for their children (Baban, Ilcan and Rygiel, 2016; Crisis Group, 2016; Spijkerboer, 2016; STL, 2016, p. 5; Van Heelsum, 2016). This claim that puts education in such a fundamental and lifesaving position within the life of a refugee family deserves a researcher’s attention along with how

the refugee families respond to the educational challenges or possibilities their children face in Turkey within volatile conditions of forced displacement.

In Turkey, all children have the legal right to education including Syrian children. Syrian refugees who are registered have an official access to public schools as well as Temporary Education Centers (TECs) since September 2014. However by the sixth year of the crisis in 2017, there is still a gap in accession rates for Syrian refugee children (58% officially, MoNE, 2017, February 27) despite efforts at their enhancement in the last few years. One major reason is the initial assumption of “temporariness” of Syrian refugees in Turkey among the Turkish authorities (MoNE, 2012, October 3), which transformed into policies of inclusion especially after 2016 (MoNE 2016, October 3). Other reasons may involve serious risks concerning children such as child labor (Harunoğulları, 2016; HRW, 2015; ILO, 2016; STL, 2016; Save the Children, 2015; World Bank, 2015) or girls’ bearing of forced marriage (Bircan & Sunata, 2015; ERI, 2017; Kirişçi & Ferris, 2015), which are all pertinent to the depravity of the overall living conditions of refugee families in Turkey.

Obviously, the challenge is not limited to accession to education; there are other critical standards to be achieved such as *availability, acceptability and adaptability* along with *accessibility* (Tomasevski, 2006). Moreover educational inclusion is critical for refugee children, which is reported to assist in their overall integration in society (Gesemann, 2006; Ouald Chaib, 2011; Bačáková, 2011; Mosselson, 2007; Rah, Shangmin, & Thu Suong Thi, 2009). Educational attainment of refugee children has been a major field of focus, when studying educational needs of children. Whether and to what extent, refugee children’s identity would be preserved within the educational context has also been another important concern.

In the absence of economic capital, parents' cultural and social capital emerges as highly critical for enhancing educational resilience (Botrell, 2009; Çelik, 2016). Thus the resources and parents' mobilization of cultural and social resources are critical concerning educational inclusion of Syrian refugee children. Power relations with school affect the manners of parental involvement in school, which is critical for resource mobilization (Delgado Gaitan, 2012). Ercan (2012) suggested enhancement of parental involvement in school through traditional and new ways. This study examines the past and current experiences of refugee children focusing on their parents' resources and means of resource mobilization against the constraints their children faces within the Turkish education system.

### 1.1 Statement of the Purpose

This thesis studies the Syrian families' pursuit of education for their children in Istanbul as members of the Syrian community in Turkey, regarding previous and current experiences and future prospects. It aims to disclose the meanings, feelings and prospects Syrian refugee parents attached to their children's education and raise awareness on the ways they struggle for acquisition of cultural capital by their children in Turkey. Syrian parents' reference frames, basis, and reasoning behind viewpoints and interpretations are studied. The possibilities and constraints their children encounter within the education system in Turkey are explored as well as the resources and strategies they put into use as a response.

### 1.2 Research questions

1. What are the Syrian parents' experiences concerning their children's education in Istanbul?

- a. What factors affect their overall living conditions and how do these associate with children's education?
- b. How is the school choice made for children?
- c. What are the possibilities and constraints encountered in the education system?
- d. With what resources and strategies do they respond to the educational constraints they encounter for their children?

2. What meanings and prospects do Syrian parents attach to their children's education based on their experiences in Turkey?

### 1.3 Definition of terms

For clarification, the following definitions are provided for some specific concepts that are in use throughout this study.

- Migration is the movement of people among countries for resettlement.
- Immigrants are non-national persons who come across borders for the sake of residing in another country than their home country.
- Emigrants are nationals who go beyond national borders and reside in another country.
- Home country is defined as the country of origin.
- Host country is defined as the destination country or the country migrated to.
- Host society is defined as the native society of the destination country or the country migrated to.
- Refugees are a unique and wide group within the broader crowd of non-national migrants. They are persons who are outside their home countries “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race,

religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (GCSR, 1951, art. 1 A (2)). UNHCR database involves people in a refugee like situation such as those enjoying “temporary protection” under the definition for refugees (2013)

- Asylum-seekers are persons “who have applied for asylum or refugee status, but who have not yet received a final decision on their application.” (UNHCR, 2013).
- Internally displaced persons (IDP’s) are “people who have been uprooted because of persecution and violence but who remain in their own countries.” (Loescher, 2000, p. 190).
- Forced migration refers to “persons who flee or are obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence because of events threatening their lives or safety” (Martin, 2000, p. 3).
- Mixed migration points to the recognition that many migrants have mixed motivations for mobility; people may both move to escape conflict or distress and at the same time they might be seeking betterment (Van Hear, 2011, par. 1).
- Temporary protection is “a means, in situations of mass outflow, for providing refuge to groups or categories of people recognized to be in need of international protection, without recourse, at least initially, to individual refugee status determination. It includes respect for basic human rights but,

since it is conceived as an emergency protection measure of hopefully short duration, a more limited range of rights and benefits offered in the initial stage than would customarily be accorded to refugees granted asylum under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol.” (UN, 1994, p. 22, par. 46)

- Refugee status in Turkey refers to people coming from Europe and who are in a situation that conforms to the definition of a refugee under 1951 UN GCSR (LFIP no 6458, art. 61).
- Conditional refugee status in Turkey refers to people who come out of Europe and who are in a situation that conforms to the definition of a refugee under UN GCSR and would be “allowed to reside in Turkey temporarily until they are resettled to a third country” (LFIP no 6458, art. 62).
- Temporary protection status in Turkey is the “Protection status granted to foreigners, who were forced to leave their countries and are unable to return to the countries they left and arrived at or crossed our borders in masses to seek urgent and temporary protection and whose international protection requests cannot be taken under individual assessment” (TPR, Art. 3 (f))  
Temporary protection covers those who crossed [Turkey’s] borders coming from Syrian Arab Republic as part of a mass influx or individually for temporary protection purposes due to the events that have taken place in Syrian Arab Republic since April 28, 2011 (TPR, Provisional Art. 1)
- Syrian refugees in Turkey refer to Syrians who escaped the Syrian crisis towards Turkey and have been living without, under or awaiting temporary protection in Turkey.

- Integration refers to the process of adjustment, which is reciprocal between the refugees and the host society, where the host state's institutions have the primary responsibility in incorporation.
- EU-Turkey refugee Statement refers to the Statement between EU and Turkey signed on March 18, 2016 to control the refugee flow from Turkey towards Europe.
- Syrian Crisis refers to the ongoing internal war in Syria since April 28, 2011

#### 1.4 Significance of the study

Since September 2014, all registered Syrian refugee children have the right to be registered in public schools, or TECs in Turkey. However a wide range of interests face each other within the field of education for refugees where state institutions, municipalities, labour market actors, international or national non-governmental organisations (INGO's or NGO's), humanitarian relief agencies, and the refugee networks that are all related to each other. Amid these governmental or non-governmental, international or national actors that play a part, the refugees generally have the least opportunities to influence the field of education for themselves in Turkey. Too little is known about the position of the Syrian refugee community in Turkey concerning education. Kaya (2016) mentions a major shortcoming in refugee studies in Turkey as "statisticalization". He exemplifies that most research carried out in Turkey regarding Syrian refugees are "either statisticalizing refugees, or concentrating on the host society's perceptions of refugees" (p. 5). He underlines that anthropological research permitting the refugees' own point of view and their "active rather than passive stance with their resourcefulness, motivation and commitment" is missing (p. 6). Without doubt, refugee parents' position concerning education

policies in Turkey is crucially important due to the magnitude of the escalating refugee crisis, which affects Turkey ever more due to the – internationally intervened- internal war in Syria. Moreover, the refugees themselves ought to have a say within the process of development of educational policies where they are supposedly the primary agents within the field. Perceptions and positions of the members of the Syrian refugee community who are parents with school age children require attention and this has been my course of inquiry within this research.

There is a paucity of academic studies concentrating on refugees' opinions concerning education of their children in Turkey. This study describes the case of educated refugee parents and their children's experiences with preschool, elementary and secondary education and provides a theoretical and conceptual contribution to national and international literature.

The experiences and positions of Syrian refugees in Istanbul might give insights to academic researchers as well as policy makers and educators in Turkey. The perspective of this thesis might provide insight for the social and educational context of Syrian refugees and other non-nationals in similar vulnerable circumstances. I believe and hope this study will give a say to the Syrian parents in Turkey concerning their children's educational situation and provide support for educators and policy-makers who are challenged with the complexity and size of the task of educating around one and a half million Syrian refugee children in Turkey.

## 1.5 Organisation of the research

Following this introductory phase, the second chapter provides a background on on the Syrian crisis and the case of Turkey, Europe's cooperation with Turkey on controlling the refugee flow and the Syrian refugees and educational policies in

Turkey. The first phase of the next chapter, the literature review involves a discussion on international migration and paradox of membership. Second section of chapter three is focused on migration, refugees and education in general which is followed by sections on “trans-national sources of refugee children’s right to accession to education”, “adaptation of refugees and the host society”, “education and cultural identity”, “education as a vehicle for integration”, “educational attainment” and “parental involvement, resources and strategies”. The fourth chapter on research methodology involves the research design, participants and data collection and data analysis. The fifth chapter on presentation of the findings initiates with brief self-histories of the participants. Next section of chapter five involves “factors influencing the overall living conditions in Istanbul” which is followed by sections on meaning of education for Syrian parents, Syrian parents reflections on the past about children’s education in Syria, about present on children’s education in Turkey and about their future expectations on education. The sixth chapter is on the discussion of the findings and concluding remarks which initiates with influence of overall living conditions of the families on children’s education, and continues with possibilities and constraints within the education system in Turkey, conditions for educational inclusion in public schools, strategies used by parents in resource mobilization, concluding remarks, limitations and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND ON THE SYRIAN CRISIS, TURKEY'S ACCOUNT AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

This study attempts to examine the Syrian refugee parents' pursuit of education for their children in Istanbul. The possibilities and constraints their children encountered within Turkish education system are explored together with the resources and strategies they put into use as a response. In order to clarify many issues involved, it is necessary provide a background on the Syrian crisis, Turkey's response and relevant educational policies. In the first part, Syrian crisis is reviewed with a focus on the case state of Turkey. Second part is on Europe's position concerning the Syrian crisis and efforts at controlling Syrian refugee flow from Turkey to Europe. In the third part, Syrian refugees' legal status as well as their current state between temporariness and permanence is discussed, and overall living conditions are explored. Final part is on the development of Turkey's educational policies for Syrian children, and their current educational situation in Turkey.

#### 2.1 Syrian crisis and the case of Turkey

There are 6.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs), nearly 3 million Syrians under 5 who have grown up in conflict, and 4.9 million who have been seeking refuge in neighboring countries due to the internal war in Syria (UNHCR, 2017, March 9). Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries are in a protracted refugee situation, where they find themselves in a long-lasting state of limbo (UNHCR, 2004, June). According to UNHCR (2017), 5,031,622 people have migrated to neighbouring countries by May 1, among which 48.5% are women, 51.5% are men

and 47.6 % are children. Only 10 % (487,837) are living in refugee camps and the urban and rural population is 4,545,500. There are 2,973,980<sup>2</sup> registered Syrians in Turkey, 1,011,366 in Lebanon, 659,246 in Jordan, 236,772 in Iraq, 120,154 in Egypt<sup>3</sup> (UNHCR, 2017). Total number of Syrian asylum applications to European Union (EU) during 2011- 2016 is 884,461 (UNHCR, 2016, October). Figure 1 provides the percentage of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring and EU countries with some possible coinciding between registrations in neighbouring countries and applications to Europe. As may be observed in Figure 1 Turkey hosts 53% of the Syrian refugees forcibly displaced from their country, which has embraced the highest responsibility among the host countries.

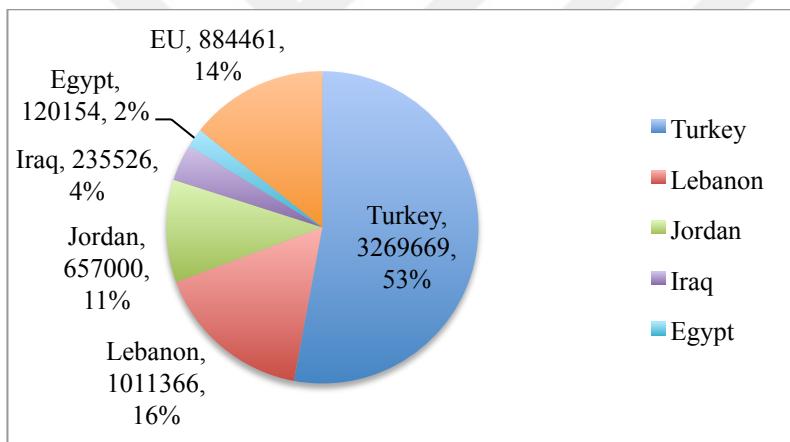


Figure 1. Percentage of Syrian refugees in the neighbour countries and EU

Sources: UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter Agency Information Sharing Portal (UNHCR, 2017), Europe: Syrian Asylum Applications (UNHCR, 2016, October).

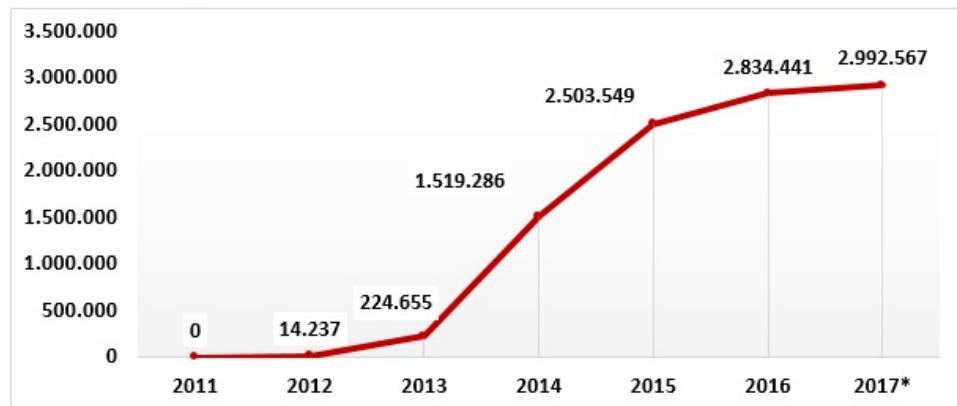
Data for Turkey involves 2,992,567 registered Syrian refugees (DGMM, 2017, April 23) in addition to the 300.000 Syrian refugees assumed to be in the pre-registration process and some possible coinciding between registrations and asylum applications to Europe is disregarded.

<sup>2</sup> 2,992,567 Syrians were registered in Turkey by April 27, 2017 (DGMM, 2017, March)

<sup>3</sup> The statistics provided are updated as of May 1, 2017 for Turkey, December 31, 2016 for Lebanon, March 15, 2017 for Jordan, January 31, 2017 for Iraq, January 31, 2017 for Egypt. (UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response, 2017)

If estimated 300,000 pre-registered<sup>4</sup> Syrians are added to 2,992,567 registered Syrian refugees are living in Turkey (DGMM, 2017, April 23) total Syrian refugee population make up nearly 4% of Turkish population<sup>5</sup>. De Bel-Air (2016) notes that Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, became transit and destination countries for economic and forced migrants. Number of registered Syrian refugees in Turkey from 2011 to 2017 is given in Figure 2. The fact that total number of refugee population was below 100,000 in 2011 provides for the mass of immigration Turkey faced in the last five years (Erdoğan, 2017). The data in Figure 2 provide that the refugee flow gained pace after 2013 and slightly levelled after 2015.

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\*27.04.2017 tarihi itibarıyle

Figure 2. Number of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey by year

Source: DGMM (2017, April 23).

İçduygu and Şimşek (2016) divide the Syrian refugee flow to Turkey into three periods (p. 61). The first period is from the first flow of Syrians into Turkey in 2011 until the summer of 2015, which is marked by the open door policy, building of camps in southern provinces and assumption of a short stay. Kofi Annan's six-point

<sup>4</sup> Those Syrian refugees who have applied for a temporary protection status but who are waiting due to security controls are referred as pre-registered. The reason for the existence of "preregistered" Syrian refugees is that Turkey has started to employ security checks beginning in March 2016.

<sup>5</sup> The official statistics provide that Turkish population in 2016 is recorded as 79,814,871 (Turkish population in 2016, 2017, January 31).

plan for a ceasefire failed in this period and the conflicts in Syria as well as number of refugees arriving in Turkey intensified. The second period marks itself with the perilous refugee flow towards Europe in the Mediterranean mainly from Turkey in summer of 2015. In this phase, EU sought collaboration with Turkey to control the refugee flow. Last phase began in 2016 where the policies and practices in Turkey moved in the direction of inclusion especially marked with the issuance of work permits and the acknowledgement of citizenship for Syrians by the Turkish president (İçduygu & Şimşek, 2016, p. 61).

Having accepted the highest responsibility concerning the Syrian Crisis, Turkey had spent \$25 billion on the refugee response (Kirişçi, 2017). In 2016 and 2017, important developments concerning Syrian refugee crisis happened in Turkey. Open door policy for Syrians formally ended, whereas a more restrictive and externalized regime along with a visa requirement was in effect together with the construction of a 511 km. wall on the border with Syria (Soykan, 2017, March 17). EU-Turkey Statement frequently referred as “EU-Turkey refugee deal” was signed on March 2016. On July 2016, Turkish president promised enabling citizenship for Syrians whereas the same year, the inspection period for gaining temporary protection status was lengthened (Two measures, 2017, January 8). On August, Turkey started military operations to create a safe zone in the north of Syria and to fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Syria (Operation Euphrates Shield, 2016, August 25) which ended on March 29, 2017. Several times during 2016 and 2017 Turkey warned EU of suspension of the Statement if EU failed to live up to its promises. The Statement’s situation became rather ambiguous especially after April 2017 referendum during which the distance between EU and Turkey was claimed to extend (Kirişçi, 2017).

## 2.2 Syrian Crisis, Europe and controlling the refugee flow

Since the beginning of the Syrian Crisis, Turkey criticized Western countries and particularly EU for their reluctance. Yet, the issue of asylum-seekers and refugees became “problematic” in Europe well before the Crisis. UNHCR held Global Consultations on International Protection in 2000 against the background of an increasing perception that asylum system was abused and asylum seekers were economic migrants in disguise (Van Hear, 2011, p. 3). In 2004, “a balanced approach to migration” was embraced in the Hague program<sup>6</sup> which involves “...fighting illegal immigration and trafficking of human beings especially women and children, and development of integrated management of EU’s external borders...” The Stockholm Program<sup>7</sup> (2009) called for the need for “Strong border controls...to counter illegal immigration and cross-border crime” and “... an effective and sustainable return policy, while work needs to continue on preventing, controlling and combating illegal immigration.” The refugee influx of 2015 to EU was received in an atmosphere of rising securitization, which boosted thereafter (Medeiros & Bernardes, 2016). Europe saw a steep rise in the numbers of first-time asylum applications in 2015 as may be seen in Figure 3.

Many Syrian refugees initially headed to EU despite reluctance to accept refugees due to more securitization. The reason for this flow was claimed as lacking of a decent life and basic rights including right to education in the neighbouring countries (Baban, Ilcan & Rygiel, 2016; Crisis Group, 2016; Spijkerboer, 2016; STL, 2016, p. 5; UNHCR, 2015, December 8; Van Heelsum, 2016). Higher educated and wealthier Syrians were claimed to be more among those who took the perilous

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<sup>6</sup> Ten priorities for 2005-2010 period was determined for the EU in the Hague Program (2004)

<sup>7</sup> Stockholm Program (2009) focused on EU’s work in the area of justice, freedom and security for the period 2010-14

journey towards Europe (UNHCR, 2015, December 8; Van Heelsum, 2016)

According to UNHCR, between April 2011 and October 2016, number of Syrian asylum applications in Europe totalled to 884,461<sup>8</sup>. Initial response was to accept and provide shelter, but in time, these popular attitudes changed (Heller & Verwiebe, 2016, p. 361).

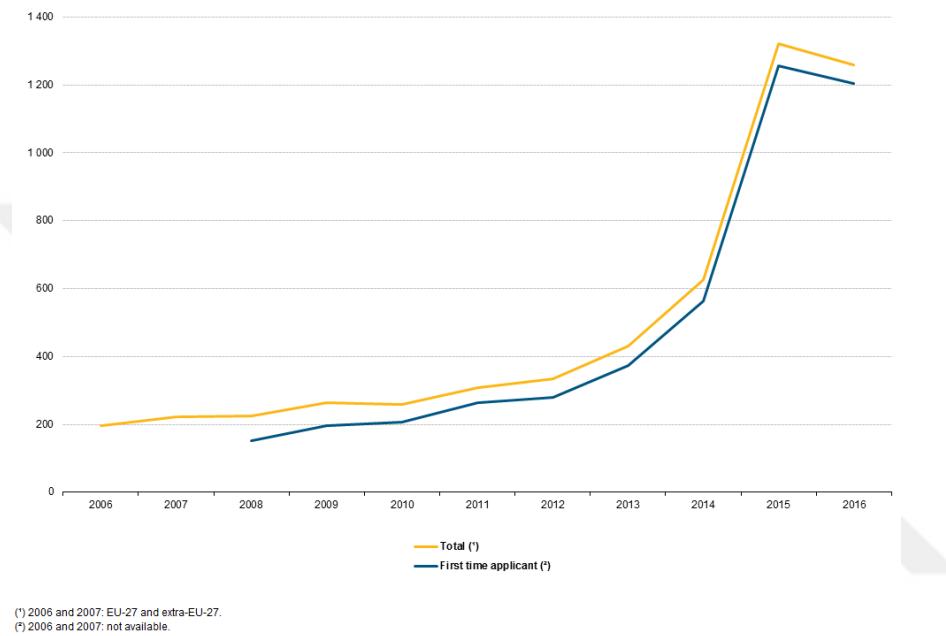


Figure 3. Non-EU asylum applications in EU Member States, 2006-2016 (thousands).

Source: Eurostat, Asylum statistics report, (2017, March 13).

Externalization of migration policies in cooperation with transit countries have been a primary policy tool to prevent irregular border crossings into the EU (Ustubici, 2017, p. 66) During 2015, EU sought collaboration with Turkey to control the refugee flow and on March 18, 2016 the EU-Turkey Statement was signed. EU committed to regenerate accession process, lift visa requirements for Turkish citizens and provide six billion euros to improve the situation of Syrians in Turkey for health,

<sup>8</sup> 52% (456,023) applied to Germany, 12% (109,970) applied to Sweden, 9 % (76,592) applied to Hungary, 5% (42,775) applied to Austria and 4 % (32,720) applied to Netherlands (UNHCR, 2016 October)

education, infrastructure, food and other living costs. In return, Turkey would control irregular departures to the EU, cooperate with EU in readmission agreements and those who do not need international protection would be returned back to their countries of origin (EC, 2015, October 15). The aim was worded as “to replace disorganized, chaotic, irregular and dangerous migratory flows by organized, safe and legal pathways to Europe for those entitled to international protection in line with EU and international law” (EC, 2016, December 8). EU would accept one Syrian refugee from Turkey for each Syrian that Greece returns to Turkey, as Turkey is a safe country for refugees and asylum-seekers. (EC, 2016, December 8).

EU-Turkey Statement has been seriously criticised. Human Rights Watch (HRW) pointed to a “contradiction at the heart of this plan” due to three facts. (HRW, 2016, March 15). First was that international human rights law prohibited the fast-track large-scale returns due to essence of determination of whether international protection is needed for each person. Second, exchanging a Syrian refugee from Turkey for each asylum seeker returned from Greece to Turkey would lead to “conditionality between refugee resettlement and forced return of asylum seekers” (HRW, 2016, March 15, par. 4). And third “the joint endeavour to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria” was dangerous according to HRW as it was not “genuinely to protect Syrian civilians from harm but to contain the flow of displaced people” (2016, March 15, par. 5). Another condemnation was not taking children in to consideration, as children’s getting a fair hearing would not be ensured before being returned and the obligation “to determine whether a decision is in the ‘best interests’ of the child” would be overlooked (Beirens & Clewett, 2017).

Alternatively, the Statement is regarded to have had mutual benefits to Turkey and the EU due to a curb in the flow of irregular migrants to EU, and a

positive impact on Syrians' living conditions in Turkey. (EC, 2016, October 17; Crisis Group, 2016, November 30; Highest record in decrease, 2017, March 11). The daily arrivals to Europe through the Mediterranean was 1740 before the Statement, which decreased to 90 after that; while number of deaths in the Aegean Sea decreased to 63, in 2015 592 people had lost their lives (EC, 2016, December 8).

Concerning living conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Emergency Social Safety Network (ESSN) as the “biggest EU humanitarian aid program ever” was underlined to support around one million “most vulnerable refugees in Turkey by a debit card, onto which they would receive a monthly cash transfer” which would “...help them cover basic needs such as food or shelter, as well as helping them to send their children to school.” (EC, 2016, October 17, par 6). By December 8, €2.2 billion had so far been provided for humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance (EC, 2016, October 17).

EU-Turkey Statement's effectiveness for migration control was questioned (Spijkerboer, 2016, September; Butler, Moodie, Poynor & Townshend, 2016, Dec 8). Spijkerboer underlines that the decline in number of arrivals predates the Statement and claims that it came at considerable cost to the values, which are fundamental to European society. Ustubici (2017) also notes that there is no evidence that the Statement can provide a long-term solution to the issue of refugee protection beyond appeasing the EU panic on the arrival of migrants and refugees (p. 67). One year after enforcement, Amnesty International published a report on human rights impact of the EU-Turkey Statement: “A Blueprint for Despair” (2017), which stated that the flow of migrants across the Aegean was stemmed but principles of refugee protection were violated and a considerable number of refugees were stuck in Greek islands. The report also underlined that number of Syrian refugees who have been resettled

from Turkey to EU was “negligible” compared to over 2.8 million Syrians struggling in Turkey (Amnesty International, 2017). Greek asylum system was condemned due to transformation of reception facilities into detention centers, as well as allowing for lengthy detention on arrival and rejection at first instance with the assumption that Turkey is a safe country (Amnesty International, 2017; Beirens & Clewett, 2017; Butler, Moodie, Poynor & Townshend, 2016, Dec 8; NGO’s criticise Deal, 2017, March 17; Rescuing a Deal, 2017, February). Tunaboylu and Alpes (2017) called for post-deportation monitoring on what happens with the returned asylum seekers from Greece to Turkey (p. 84).

While this thesis is being written out, the EU-Turkey Statement is volatile with the visa requirements for Turkey not lifted, EU’s reluctance on sharing responsibility continuing<sup>9</sup> and frequent warnings by Turkey against EU of suspending the Statement throughout 2016 and 2017<sup>10</sup>. Especially after April 2017 referendum the Statement’s situation became rather ambiguous while the distance between EU and Turkey was claimed to extend.

### 2.3 Syrian Refugees in Turkey

According to DGMM under Turkish Ministry of Interior, there are 2,992,567 registered Syrians living in Turkey (DGMM, 2017, April 23) among which 1,369,735 (%45.8) are made up of children. Among this population, 249,236 (8.3%)

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<sup>9</sup> Up to March 2017, only around 3565 refugees have been resettled from Syria to the EU despite the July 2015 EU commitment was to take a total of 22,504 in 2015-2016 (EC, 2017, March 2).

<sup>10</sup> Throughout 2016 and 2017, Turkey warned EU of suspension of EU-Turkey Statement several times one time in August 2016 when the Greek authorities denied the reinstatement of the July 2016 coup plotters who sought asylum in Greece back to Turkey (Rescuing a deal, 2017, February 13), another time in November 2016 when European parliament stipulated governments to freeze EU accession talks with Ankara (Turkey threatens to end, 2016, November 25) and another time in March 2017 within a widening diplomatic argument between Germany and the Netherlands due to prevention of Turkish politicians from campaigning for April 2017 referendum (Important announcements, 2017, March 13).

are settled in 23 camps in 10 different cities and 2,743,331 formally registered Syrians (91.7%) are living in urban and rural areas in Turkey (DGMM, 2017, March 30). Due to better opportunities for integration, UNHCR encourages hosting refugees in urban areas rather than camps (2009).

Number of formally registered Syrian refugees in Istanbul is stated as 481,548 by DGMM where 3,24% of the population of Istanbul is made up of Syrian refugees (2017, March 30). This figure does not involve those Syrian refugees who are preregistered (around 61,000) and registered elsewhere in Turkey, hence the figures for Istanbul are probably much higher (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 29). Erdoğan estimates that number of Syrians in Istanbul is more than 600,000 of whom 86% of those Syrians live in the European side while the remaining 14% live in the Asian side (2017, p. 34).

As of 2017, Turkey has long been the country, which resides the highest number of Syrian refugees and Istanbul has been the city where highest number of refugees reside in Turkey. Istanbul has been the “most attractive city where Syrian refugees of all ethnic backgrounds prefer to settle in” (Kaya, 2016, p. 13) By 2017, 17,4 % of all Syrian refugees are concentrated in Istanbul and according to Erdoğan, if the mobility between the provinces was not controlled and stabilized, more than 25% of all Syrians in Turkey could soon gather in Istanbul (2017, p. 54)

The two major public institutions dealing with the Syrian crisis in Turkey have been Directorate General Of Migration Management (DGMM) and Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey (AFAD) even if the situation evolved from a case of emergency to persistence. Additionally, local governments have also been very much involved to address the “urban refugees” even by providing services, which “might be considered controversial in the sense of their

legitimate power" (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 11). For effective intervention, Erdoğan calls for the establishment of a presidency/under secretariat or a ministry affiliated to the Prime Ministry specifically with regard to migration a refugee issues. (2017, p. 20).

Syrian refugee crisis is having profound effects on Turkey. An influx of more than 3 million Syrian refugees since 2011, has been at least twofold more than the number of received immigrants to Turkey since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 until 2011 (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 16). Many reports and studies have analysed the socio-economic effects of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey from multiple angles.

Azevedo, Yang and İnan (2015) studied the poverty impacts of Syrians under temporary protection on the host communities from 2011 to 2013 and found no evidence that the influx of Syrians resulted in higher poverty rates among the host community; however they stressed that the Syrian migrants' poverty level worsened during this period. They emphasized that "Syrians are consumers, renters; they open businesses and create jobs, leading local Turkish citizens to benefit as employers and sellers" (Azevedo, Young & İnan, 2015, p. 17). Despite the Regulation on the Work Permit of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection (RWPFTP) in 2016, Syrian refugees' main platform of employment is the informal sector, which puts them under unhealthy, dangerous and unstable conditions (Kirişçi, 2014; İçduygu, 2016; Man, 2016; Özkarslı, 2014; World Bank, 2015). Displacement of native workers is also reported by several studies (Akgündüz, van den Berg & Hassnik, 2016; Kirişçi, 2014; Erdoğan & Ünver, 2015; İçduygu, 2016; STL, 2016). A reduction in wages is also reported (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; ORSAM, 2015). Also local populations' perception that they have lost their jobs due to Syrian refugees is reported (World Bank, 2015, Erdoğan, 2014). ORSAM (2015) reports on the other

hand that rather than displacing the labour force, Syrians may be filling an unmet need for unskilled labour. Rates of unemployment are reported to have increased in Turkey especially for the border cities with Syria (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; ORSAM, 2015; Man, 2016). Balkan and Tumen (2016) have found that consumer prices decreased by approximately 2.5 per cent owing to employment of Syrian refugees in the informal labour market. Akgündüz, van den Berg and Hassnik (2016) indicated that firm entries increased in provinces hosting refugees which suggest an intensified dynamic in the business environment while the mobility of native Turks to and from the affected regions appears to have declined. Border cities' attracting less immigration is reported in other studies also (Orsam, 2015). Crisis Group Report also underlines establishment of Syrian businesses and adds benefits for host communities by international aid especially in border provinces (2016). On the other hand, the Crisis has also hurt the economy because it has diminished cross-border trade with Syria (Culbertson & Constant, 2015)

Refugees in Turkey are settled in poor neighbourhoods and live in crowded houses with high rents, which increase cost of living for both refugees and natives in the host community (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; İçduygu, 2016; ORSAM, 2015; STL, 2016; World Bank, 2015). Another perceived effect of Syrian refugees is the deterioration of the health services in those places where Syrians are populated (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; ORSAM, 2015). Gender based and sexual violence among Syrian refugees is reported (İçduygu, 2016).

Instead of going to school many Syrian children engaged in child labour, who are exploited and provided less payment than natives (STL, 2016). Growing number of street children are reported (World Bank, 2015). Syrian girls' being forced into marriage and polygamy is also concerning (Bircan & Sunata, 2015; ERI, 2017;

Kirişçi & Ferris, 2015, p. 5; UNICEF, 2017, January). An impact of Syrian refugees concerning education has been an increase in the class sizes (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; ORSAM, 2015)

There is the risk of growing tensions between Turkey's native citizens and Syrian refugees (İçduygu, 2016; Yıldız & Uzgören, 2016; World Bank, 2015). Several scholars studied the relations between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees. Chemin (2016) who conducted a qualitative study in Mersin and Adana underlines that Syrians seem close to their Turkish hosts but the host community lacks trust in Syrians and displays negative stereotypes. One such stereotype is regarding Syrians as passive recipients of charity and a transitory population. Lack of empathy among the Turkish population against the sufferings of Syrian refugees in Istanbul is reported (STL, 2016; Kaya, 2016). Aslan (2015) underlined that the experiences of local populations with Syrians is very limited but their perceptions are considerably negative against Syrian refugees. He emphasized that Syrians are regarded as guests who would return to their countries rather than being included in Turkish society (Aslan, 2015). Four major concerns among Turkish citizens about Syrian refugees emerged as concerns on (1) economic problems and unemployment, (2) political problems and security, (3) social problems and social adaptation and (4) urban problems and distribution of basic services in Aslan's study (2015).

### 2.3.1 Legal status of Syrian refugees

Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) was passed in April 2013, whose drafting initiated by 2005 and which was the first comprehensive legal measurement concerning foreigners, refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey. LFIP No. 6458, holds Turkey's geographical reservation to the 1951 Geneva Convention

relating to the Status of Refugees (GCSR) and the 1967 Protocol which are the key documents relating to the international protection of refugees. LFIP no. 6458 provides for four statuses: “refugees” “conditional refugees”, “international protection” and “temporary protection”. LFIP no. 6458 classifies newcomers from Europe as “refugees” (art. 61) and out of Europe as “conditional refugees” (art. 62) where conditional refugees are granted a right for a temporary settlement in Turkey until resettlement in a third country. Another status called “subsidiary protection” (art. 63) refers to “a foreigner or a stateless person, who neither could be qualified as a refugee nor as a conditional refugee” which is mainly referent to Afghan and Somalian refugees in Turkey (Çorabatır, February 11, 2017). Syrians in Turkey receive a “temporary protection” status according to the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR), issued in 22 October 2014 under Article 61 to 95 of the LFIP. Temporary protection in this Regulation is defined as:

A protection status granted to foreigners, who were forced to leave their country, and unable to return to the country they left, arrived at or crossed our borders in masses or individually during a period of mass influx, to seek emergency and temporary protection and who international protection request cannot be taken under individual assessment. (TPR, Art. 3 (f))

Mass influx refers to “... situations where a high number of people come from the same country or a geographical region and procedures related to international protection status cannot be individually followed because of the high number of people” (TPR, Art. 3 (j)). In its provisional first article, the regulation claims to cover those “who have ... crossed [Turkey’s] borders coming from Syrian Arab Republic as part of a mass influx or individually for temporary protection purposes due to the events that have taken place in Syrian Arab Republic since April 28, 2011”. Syrian nationals, stateless persons and refugees from Syria are covered within the temporary protection regime.

No clear provision exists on how a permanent legal status could be achieved, but no time limit exists for temporary protection. The rights, which the Syrian refugees are entitled to, involve access to health, education, social assistance and the labor market as well as non-refoulement. European Commission accepts temporary protection as a “sufficient protection or protection that is equivalent to foreseen by the Geneva Convention” (EC, 2016, December 8).

Access to education is issued by 2013 LFIP no. 6458, 2014 TPR and Circular on Educational Services for Foreign Nationals (Circular 2014/21). Unlimited free health care is issued by 2013 LFIP, 2014 TPR and AFAD Circulars 2014/4 and 2015/8 on Administration of Services for Temporary Protection Beneficiaries. Work permits are issued by the Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection (RWPFTP) since January 2016 and International Labour Force Law (ILFL) No. 6375 since July 2016. Syrians are also entitled to sign contracts for services like mobile communication, water, gas or electricity. All these services under the temporary protection regime are actually partly realized mainly due to the language barrier, registration difficulties and difficulties in dissemination of information.

Temporary protection regime does not provide a long-term solution and the only options for acquiring long-term residency in Turkey are through a legal short-term residence permit or a work permit<sup>11</sup>, each with a long and bureaucratic application processes. Poverty, and a state of limbo due to temporary protection

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<sup>11</sup> The 2013 LFIP (Law 6458) provides for a long-term residence permit for foreigners who have stayed at least eight years uninterrupted in Turkey and the permanent residence holder has the rights of a Turkish citizens except for voting, standing for election, enter into public service and import tax exempt vehicles. Foreigners can receive a one-year valid work permit to be renewed every year according to 2016 ILFL, (Law 6735). Foreigners who have long-term residence permits may acquire indefinite work permits or legal work permits for at least eight years. Those with indefinite work permits have the same rights as Turkish citizens except for the right to vote, stand for election and military service liabilities.

status, puts refugees into a precarious position where they are neither refugees nor guests (Baban, Ilcan & Rygiel, 2016). Alternatively, the regime is criticized by human rights organizations due to privileged treatment for Syrian refugees with respect to others (Amnesty International, 2016, June 3).<sup>12</sup> The ideal formal status to be provided for Syrian refugees in Turkey would be a formal refugee status to cover all asylum-seekers not only Syrian refugees, which is currently unlikely without lifting the geographical limitations to the 1951 UN GCSR (Crisis Group, November 30, 2016, p. ii).

### 2.3.2 Syrian refugees between temporariness and permanence

Since 2011 when the official vision was rather limited to an emergency response, Turkish government officials have been using the terms *misafir* (guest), *muhacirun* (referring to those who escaped from Mecca to Medina because of religious persecution) or *ansar* (referring to those who welcomed and helped them in Medina) in their references to Syrian refugees<sup>13</sup>. Concept of *misafir* underlines the temporariness of the subjects while *muhacirun* and *ansar* evokes the common Islamic roots. Korkut also notes a temporary situation in *ansar* as the Muslims later returned to Mecca after their forces recaptured the city later on, which is indicative of Turkey's initial acceptance of Syrian refugees with the assumption that they are "temporary". (2015). Erdemir on the other hand claims that Syrian refugees' being edged within the discourse of *muhajirun* and *ansar* also elevates the responsibility

<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International briefing provided that Turkey had "2,75 million Syrian refugees and 400,000 asylum seekers and refugees from other countries (primarily Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran) who have inevitably placed a considerable strain both on Turkey's new asylum system and its capacity to meet people's basic needs" (p. 36). Those asylum-seekers coming from other countries than Syria could apply for international protection through UNHCR, which involved a long duration process where they have no state protection at all (Amnesty International, 2016, June 3).

<sup>13</sup> Syrian refugees are considered as "guests" by the Lebanese and Jordanian states due to some deep-rooted values such as "Muslim fraternity", "Arab hospitality" and "guest hood" traditions (De Bel-Air, 2006, Perouse, 2013 and Chatty, 2013 as cited in Kaya, 2016)

towards a religious and charity-based duty (2016). Erdoğan (2017) also underlines that the legal and practical policies have been based on “well-intentioned support of the host to the guests- within the bounds of possibility-” rather than the “rights” of refugees and the “obligation” imposed on the state in this sense (p. 18).

Until Syrian refugees long-term situation was accepted, urban refugees received scattered and limited support from municipalities and community centres established by NGO’s, INGO’s or *Kızılay* (Turkish Red Crescent)<sup>14</sup>. In September 2015 in a public acknowledgement, Deputy Prime Minister accepted that the issue of Syrian refugees was regarded as temporary but now it is seen that “...two million two hundred thousand refugees *may be* [emphasis added] permanent in Turkey for long years... a large portion of the mass who were thought to have come and would go seem to be *destined to* [emphasis added] stay” (Important accounts, 2015, September 23). By the end of 2015, Senior Advisor of Prime Ministry Responsible for Migration and Assistance referred to a concept of “temporary permanence”, which he explained as: “Syrians have to go back to their countries after the war but we have to make plans as if they were going to stay here.” (Situation of temporary protected Syrians, 2015, December 17). Even though the permanence of Syrian refugees seemed to be accepted, the ambiguity concerning the length of stay of Syrian refugees somehow prevailed. Not knowing what is on offer from Turkey in the long term had implications for Syrians’ motivation to integrate (Crisis Group, 2016, November 30, p. 3).

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<sup>14</sup> After the Syrian crisis, lots of community centers have been established to facilitate the integration of Syrians in Turkey in areas that are highly populated with Syrians. International organizations including UN agencies (UNHCR and UNICEF); the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM); the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO); as well as international NGOs have funded community center projects that are usually implemented by their local Turkish counterparts.

Despite Deputy Prime Minister's assertion that citizenship would not be provided (Refugees not to be accepted as locals, 2016, April 11), in July same year, Turkish president announced that Syrians who were willing to have it would be provided with the opportunity of citizenship (Citizenship acknowledgement, July 2). Government representatives later said initially around 300,000 would be naturalized probably summing up to 1,000,000 with the families with educational and technical skills-based criteria (International Crisis Report, 2016, November 30, p. 9-23). Interior Ministry was announced to work on a citizenship formula through the “exceptional citizenship” clause No. 12<sup>15</sup> of the Law on Turkish Citizenship (LTC) No. 5901 (Exceptional Citizenship for Syrians, November, and July 15).

After acknowledgement of Turkey's intention for Syrians' citizenship, a public and political debate arose. A hashtag *#ÜlkemdeSuriyeliİstemiyorum* (I don't want Syrians in my country) disseminated in the social media despite the ambiguity of conditions or process (Why Syrians' citizenship refused, 2016, July 5). Turkish community is generally reported to be prejudicial, discriminatory and exclusive against Syrian refugees and discontent exists on the policies for Syrian refugees in Turkey (Çelik, Alkış, Sayan & Ekinci, 2014; Deniz, Ekinci & Hülür, 2016; Ekinci, 2015; Erdoğan, 2014, December; Erdoğan, 2015, February; Gökay, 2015; Gültekin, 2014). Negative attitudes towards Syrians are justified with possible negative effect of Syrian refugees on the employment possibilities of the local community; Syrians' being provided with public services free and without paying social security unlike

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<sup>15</sup> LTC No. 5901 provides general criteria for extraordinary citizenship, which requires approval by the Committee of Ministers: On condition that the applicant has no situation that would pose a threat on national and public security, those who bring industrial facilities or who provided or is expected to provide extraordinary services in scientific, technological, economic, social, sportive, cultural or artistic fields and about whom, proposals have been issued by relevant ministries could become a Turkish citizen. (art. 12 (a)).

citizens; supposed security threat the open border policy developed due to possible entrance of members of radical networks; and the society's becoming more distinctly Sunni conservative marginalizing local minorities (Crisis Group report, 2016, p. 13). The deeply rooted anti-Arab sentiments also exist among the community in Turkey deriving from the long-time tradition of regarding Arabs as "traitors" due to their political position during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The history textbooks, which also had such negative content, were cleared of negative statements related to Arabs only in 2008. Additionally after the Syrian refugee influx, there have been concerns about Arabization and rising Sunni Islamism in Turkey (Crisis Group report, 2016, p. 21). "The sight of Syrians begging in the streets is causing particular resentment among local people, especially in the western cities of Turkey" and there is "a growing public perception that Syrian refugees are associated with criminality, violence and corruption" (Kaya, 2016, p. 8). However the impact of refugees in criminality is astonishingly low in the official statistics (Crisis Group, 2016, November 30). However, not all reports on relations between Syrian and Turkish community is negative (STL, 2016; Kaya, 2016). Overall relations with Turkish community were reported as positive in the STL field research carried out in six districts of Istanbul, despite some instances of discrimination and exclusion (2016). Kaya (2016), on the other hand refers to the cultural intimacy that refers to the emotional proximity and familiarity due to the common Ottoman past (p. 2). Crisis Group (2016, November 30) lists "proximity to Syria, cultural similarities (especially in border provinces), social tolerance, government's hospitable approach, absence of Islamophobia and the desire of being actively involved in making a new Syria" among the reasons that make Turkey more desirable than Europe (p. 4). Syrians' response to the citizenship announcement was also variant; low-income and

low-skilled groups seemed to have less appetite for citizenship due to tax and social benefits they might loose; others more concerned about their legal status and future in the country, such as skilled workers looking for equal opportunities or those concerned about training/education and work prospects, seemed to welcome the citizenship prospect more (Crisis Group, 2016, November 30, p. 25).

Despite lacking national consensus, by the beginning of 2017, Turkey began the process of provision of citizenship to Syrian refugees (Citizenship coming, 2017, February 23) however on the same day that it was announced by the governor of Istanbul, it was also announced that that Syrians would get citizenship after April's referendum on constitutional change in order to discharge accusations of strengthening government's electoral base (Syrians' citizenship after referendum, 2017, February 23).

### 2.3.3 Overall living conditions

Overall living conditions of Syrian families are directly influenced by the policies of integration of Turkey. Previous research suggests that Syrian refugees continue to face barriers in accessing the education system, health services, housing and access to meaningful employment and that they suffer from low wages and subsistence problems even if they are employed (Amnesty International, 2014; Baban et. al., 2016; İçduygu & Şimşek, 2016; Kirişci, 2014; Kutlu, 2015; Mazlumder, 2013; Mülteci-Der, 2014; STL, 2016; ORSAM, 2015) Mistreatment in a foreign and difficult bureaucracy with difficulty in communication due to language barrier is another challenge. Language barrier also hinders daily communication.

STL (2016) carried out a research with 1744 Syrian refugees living in six different districts of Istanbul<sup>16</sup>, Syrian refugees were asked to tell about problems in daily lives. In the report, “30.4 percent of them complained about unemployment, while others respectively complained about their lack of knowledge of the Turkish language (17.4 percent), poverty (13 percent), exploitation (12.2 percent), discrimination (11.3 percent), and limited access to social services (7.8 percent).” where poverty, exploitation, exclusion, and discrimination were the major problems (Kaya, 2016, p. 19). An analysis of “quality of life through objective and subjective criteria” carried out by IMM Directorate of Urban Planning in 39 provinces of Istanbul provides that poverty is widespread, conservatism-religiosity is significant, solidarity is dominant in social environment and life is relatively cheaper in the districts of Istanbul where refugees are settled more<sup>17</sup>; hence refugees live in districts with less quality of life but with a higher potential of solidarity (As cited in Erdoğan, 2017, p. 30).

Employment possibilities for Syrian refugees are scarce since the beginning of the refugee influx leading most Syrian refugees to engage in informal sector employment in abusive working conditions, acquisition of work-permits has a weighty and long process. As of January 2016, only 17,213 Syrian nationals have so far received work permits among which 5089 were temporarily protected and number of temporarily protected Syrians who received work-permits in Istanbul had been 1022 most of whom were restaurant owners and entrepreneurs. (Turkish Ministry of Labour, 2016, January 27). No free public housing opportunities exist except refugee camps; hence urban refugees have to provide their housing expenses

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<sup>16</sup> Küçükçekmece, Başakşehir, Bağcılar, Fatih, Sultanbeyli and Ümraniye

<sup>17</sup> Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi, Bağcılar, Esenler, Esenyurt and Sancaktepe

themselves<sup>18</sup>. Those who choose to live outside the camps need to afford themselves in an abusive environment with rents. İçduygu and Şimşek underline the necessity of a public-funded housing and shelter mechanism for the majority of refugees live outside the camps (2016). Health services are provided for registered refugees in the province where they are registered and referral is needed for health facilities in other provinces. Those who are not registered are not entitled to benefit from health services except from emergency and primary healthcare services.

Risks concerning Syrian children involve child labour (Harunoğulları, 2016; HRW, 2015; ILO, 2016; STL, 2016; Save the Children, 2015; World Bank, 2015) and its detrimental effects like child abuse, developmental and health related risks and being deprived of education; whereas another serious concern is on girls' being forced into marriage as well as spread of polygamy involving Syrian women and girls (Kirişçi & Ferris, 2015, p. 5). Common among Syrian refugee households, there exists increased drop-out rates when children reach secondary and upper secondary levels and that many school-aged Syrians illegally do low-skilled labour, mostly in construction, manufacturing and textiles to help support families (International Crisis Group Report, November 30, p. 6). According to UNICEF, Syrian children in Turkey who have directly been subject to war trauma are at risk of violence, psychological problems, child marriages and involvement in armed groups (UNICEF, 2017, January).

ESSN was launched on November 28 with EU funding as a multi-purpose cash assistance scheme “for more than one million most vulnerable refugees” who are non-nationals living in Turkey under international or temporary protection and

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<sup>18</sup> After the acknowledgement that selected Syrian refugees would be entitled for citizenship by the president of Turkey, the Deputy Prime Minister announced the possibility of long-term mortgages to purchase MHDA housing in July 2016. However there has yet to be any legislation formulated on the subject by the end of 2016.

“who are most in need, such as large families, the elderly, and people with disabilities.” (FAQ on Emergency Safety Net, 2016, p. 1) Each eligible family receives an ESSN card and receive monthly 100 TL transfers for each member of the family. The amount is planned as “enough to cover some of the family’s essential needs, helping towards stability, adequate accommodation and food on the table” to continue until the end of 2018 (p.2). The assistance aimed primarily at coping with child labour and low accession rates with Syrian children by providing for the basic needs of the most needy Syrian families (Crisis Group Report, 2016, November, 30; EC, 2016, October 17).

#### 2.4 Syrian refugee children and educational policies in Turkey

Educational inclusion of Syrian refugee children is challenging. Refugee education has an inherently political nature with important social consequences that should be considered (Bircan & Sunata, 2015, p. 229). Low accession rates, incapacity of the system to embrace such a population, unwillingness by the Turkish public, incompetency of the school staff and so forth intensify the challenge of educational inclusion of Syrian refugee children. Yet, the refugee crisis provides an opportunity to rethink the way that the Turkish education system can best serve its multi-ethnic, multi-lingual student body in a more inclusive way and to improve the curriculum and pedagogy while strengthening education management and expanding accession (ERI, 2017).

In this part, Turkey’s educational policies for Syrian children are explored under two sections. First section involves the initial educational policies developed as a response to the Crisis during 2011-2014 with the assumption that Syrian refugees would be back in their countries in a short time. Second section explores

educational policies developed after mid 2014 with a perspective towards permanence when the assumption of temporality has gradually changed.

#### 2.4.1 Educational policies with assumption of temporariness

Temporariness assumption initially shaped Turkey's educational policies for Syrian refugees. In 2012, Turkish Minister of Education underlined that Syrian children in Turkey would not be registered in public schools "not to cause adaptation problems when they returned to Syria as soon as the situation got better". They were "guests" in Turkey to be provided education "as much as possible" (MoNE, 2012, October 3). Due to their "guest" status, they lacked a comprehensive right to education by the beginning of the crisis; educational policies were generally geared towards camps (Coşkun & Emin, 2016, p.14).

TECs were established in the camps and also in the urban areas since the beginning of the Crisis with the assumption that Syrians were temporary and would soon return to their countries (Kirişçi, 2014). MoNE established the TECs in the camps. Urban TECs on the other hand, financed partially or fully by local municipalities, national or international NGO's or private donations. However, many were established as schools with charge where the burden was with the family. They played an important role providing for a familiar educational environment for massive numbers of Syrian children urgently after they arrived in Turkey. İçduygu and Şimşek underline the essence of TECs because of the language barriers the children would face in public schools (2016).

In 2013, two different circular orders were published. The first, issued on April 23, 2013 underlined Turkey's commitment to build physical capacity to provide food, shelter, healthcare and education to Syrians in a secure environment.

The second issued on September 26, 2013 provided that the educational needs of Syrians in camps or in cities ought to be met with common standards. Aim of their education was: “to compensate for the recession in education and to prevent year loss when they return to their countries or go to a third country.” The circular settled assignment of teachers in camps, development of curriculum by the Syrian National Coalition<sup>19</sup> Higher Education Commission (SNCHEC) under control of MoNE Turkey and provision of materials by MoNE, AFAD, SNCHEC and volunteer organizations permitted for activity in Turkey. Among urban refugees, those with residence were entitled to schooling under 2010 Circular No. 48 on education of foreign nationals but those without residence were entitled to educational services by local governments or permitted national or international volunteer organizations whose activities would be inspected to ensure that they are in line with standards.

#### 2.4.2 Educational policies towards permanence

Especially after mid 2014, the temporariness assumption noticeably altered and longer-term policies were initiated. 2014 TPR covered educational services to be provided to persons benefiting from temporary protection, which states that, educational services for preschool (36-66 months), primary, secondary and high school children would be provided according to relevant codes of MoNE Turkey. MoNE Turkey issued Circular 14/21 “Educational Services for Foreign Nationals” on September 23, 2014 in accordance with TPR. All Syrians under temporary protection have the right to be registered at public schools or TECs for basic education in Turkey according to Circular 14/21. Circular brought the establishment of Ministerial and Provincial commissions, responsible for reporting the educational

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<sup>19</sup> National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces

needs of foreigners, ensuring coordination between civil society and public institutions and guiding and implementing the application process for educational services for foreigners. TECs were invited to seek protocols with the Provincial Directorate, which would control and approve their operations. TECs curriculum required five hours Turkish every week to ensure learning Turkish (MoNE, 2016, February 2).

MoNE Turkey's Strategic Plan of 2015-2019 involves the education of Syrian children under temporary protection in Turkey for the first time<sup>20</sup> (2009). In accordance, inclusion of refugees, temporarily protected and stateless persons in Turkey to the education system would be enabled during their stay in Turkey. Problems on accreditation and general problems on education would be solved in cooperation with international organizations (MoNE, 2009).

Despite development of longer-term and more functional policies, the concept of "guest" prevailed in the discourse of MoNE Turkey authorities:

... school administrators in all over Turkey have the obligation to accept [the children of] our registered Syrian *guests* [emphasis added]... (MoNE, 2015, November 11)

... around 3 million Syrians have been our *guests* [emphasis added] and as the [Turkish] state and nation we have spent 25 million dollar funds and continue to spend more for the provision of livelihood possibilities for our Syrian siblings. (MoNE, 2016, October 3)

... Our expectation lies with the problems in Syria to be solved urgently so that our *guests* [emphasis added] can return to their countries but if it is going to take long and it seems to be so, then we will encompass 100% of these children of ours that we have currently covered 58% in our own education system. (MoNE, 2016, November 4)

... The children of our Syrian *guests* [emphasis added] happened to get education by involvement in Turkish education system. Relevant to this, we

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<sup>20</sup> The major responsibility concerning these strategies is left with EU and Foreign Relations General Directorate (EUFRGD) of Turkey and other responsible units involve other Units under MoNE Turkey such as Religion Education General Directorate (REGD), Occupational and Technical Education General Directorate (OTEGD), Secondary Education General Directorate (SEGD), Special Education and Guidance Services General Directorate (SEGSGD) Primary Education General Directorate (PEGD) and Lifelong Learning General Directorate (LLGD).

are developing projects with international organizations. (MoNE, 2016, November 22)

By Circular 2014/21 Syrian school age children had three legal possibilities; enrolling in public schools to study Turkey's official curriculum in Turkish or in TECs to study in Arabic with a revised version of the Syrian curriculum<sup>21</sup>; or in Syrian private schools.

TECs legalized with Circular 2014/21. There were 10,200 volunteer Syrian teachers in TECs; they received 600 TL in camps and 900 TL out of camps by UNICEF funds and the remaining 1.500 were supported by NGOs and local governments (MoNE, 2016, February 2). UNICEF supported human resources of over 400 TECs in 21 cities around Turkey and building, renewal or equipment of 498 TECs (UNICEF, 2017, January). 12.675 Syrian volunteer teachers received monthly incentives, 29.875 teachers were trained, 21 libraries were built and learning equipment for Syrian and Turkish children and educational institutions were distributed (UNICEF, 2017, January). Yet, reports emphasize lower quality of education and lack of competencies of their teachers (Erdoğan, 2017)

MoNE Turkey issued a Circular<sup>22</sup> to enroll all Syrian refugee children in public schools and close all TECs at most in three years in August 2016 (MoNE,

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<sup>21</sup> Syrian Education Commission in Turkey was claimed to provide "a curriculum taught in Arabic and based on the Syrian curriculum with adaptations, including the removal of any glorification of Bashar al-Assad and his regime" (Kirişçi, 2014, p. 24).

<sup>22</sup> The Circular issued in August 2016, planned for four measures: (1) A "Migration and Urgency State Education Head Department" would be established under LLGD to focus on education of school staff on educational inclusion (2) In cooperation with the closest primary school in the preschool level and at first grade, Turkish curriculum would be provided. Secondary schools could be opened if necessary. Transfer to public schools would be reinforced and intensified. Turkish language education would be provided in TECs to ease the adaptation of children in the coming years. (3) Syrian children in public schools could be provided with extra-curricular classes so that they would not lose their culture and language. Adequate number of teachers would be assigned before the education term started. (4) In the first grades "a primary reading and writing" curriculum would be utilized and at other levels LGDD Public Education Center would provide Turkish courses. Remedial courses would be available when needed in Turkish and in other courses at other times than school hours, during the

2016, September 6). Preschool and first grade students (approximated around 100.000) would be enrolled in Turkish public schools (MoNE, 2016, September 6) First fifth and ninth grade students would no more enrol in TECs starting from 2017 (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24).

TECs were not free and accessible to all. Hence their facilities were limited, they were sometimes situated in places against basic standards of education, and they were dependent on external support along with donations by parents. Most TECs were charged, though with a differential amount according to affordability (Aras & Yasun, 2016). However, for unregistered children they were the only choice for accession to school (Aras & Yasun, 2016, p. 3.). Referring to the MoNE Circular (2017, August), some TECs were closed and a large majority was corresponded with a nearest public school after which the management of TEC was left to the administrator of the public school whose facilities were shared in an afternoon shift with the Syrian students of the TEC<sup>23</sup>. Number of TECs was announced as 425 in 23 different cities of Turkey after enforcement of the Circular (2017, August) (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). By January 2017 teacher salaries in TECs were increased to 1300 TL. (MoNE, 2016, November 11).

Number of Syrian school age children between ages 6-18 is 835,000 and those who accessed education is provided as 491,000 (58.8%) among which 305,000 (36.5%) goes to TECs and 186,000 (22.3%) goes to public schools (MoNE, 2017, February 27). In the statistics provided by UNICEF, the rate of children who accessed school is slightly lower; %56,3 of the Syrian school age refugee children in Turkey (around 490.000 in 870.000 school age children), have been registered in

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weekend, mid-term vacation or in the summer. Those children with low proficiency in Turkish would be disseminated within classrooms so that they can get more in contact with their Turkish peers.

<sup>23</sup> Only two TECs were permitted to operate in their previous facility after the enforcement of the Circular (2017, August).

schools (UNICEF, 2017, January). Figure 4 presents the access of Syrian children to education by school type.

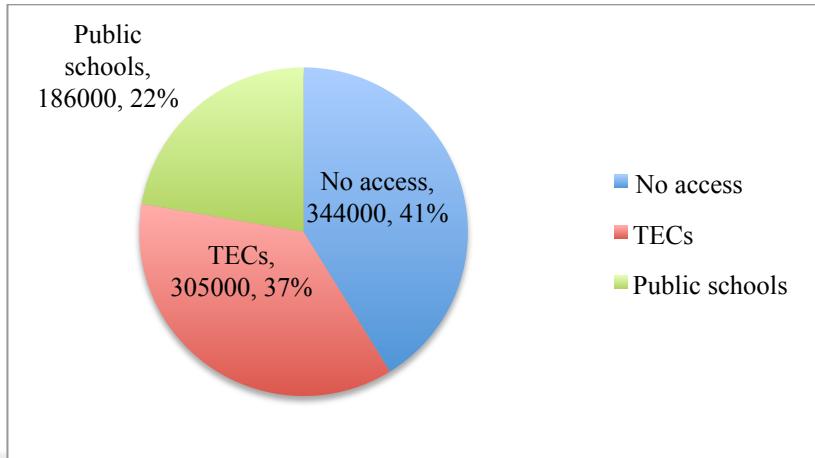


Figure 4. Syrian children's accession to education by school type in Turkey

Regarding that around 41 % of Syrian refugee children are still out of school by the beginning of 2017 despite considerable effort, and that another 37 % goes to TECs (MoNE, 2017, February 27), the decision aims to enroll 78 % (649,000) in public schools, hence it necessitates proper planning of infrastructure, human and financial resources. At least 40 thousand new teachers and 30 thousand classrooms are deemed necessary where only the annual cost of teachers would be more than € 700 million (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 25).

It is necessary to note that there are not very reliable official data and hence it is difficult to make estimations about the number of children enjoying education (Kaya, 2016). Figure 5 provides distribution of students in TECs and public schools by grade. As may be seen in Figure 5, after second grade on, a dominant majority of Syrian refugee students are enrolled in TECs.

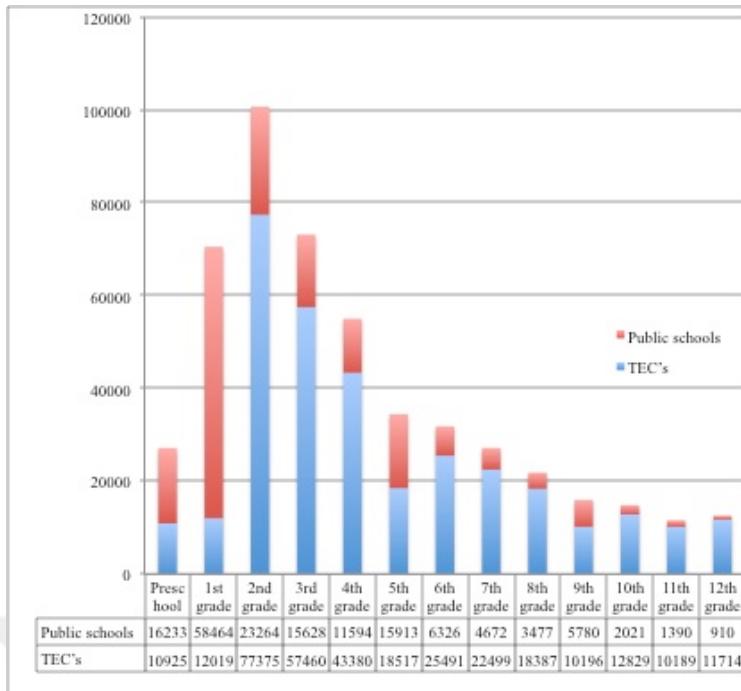


Figure 5. Distribution of students in TECs and public schools by grade

Source: Education Reform Initiative (2017, April, p. 10)

Figure developed with data in “Table 1. Distribution of Students in TECs and Public Schools by Grade” in *Birarada Yaşamı ve Geleceği Kapsayıcı Eğitimle İnşa Etmek*. (p. 10) by ERI, 2017, Istanbul Developed with permission.

When the official figures are regarded, despite a considerable increase in numbers of schooling since the beginning of the crisis there is still a considerable gap to be closed. 334,000 (41%) school age children are still out of school in official numbers by the end of February 2017. Education of girls (Kilic & Ustun, 2015), early marriage risk for girls (Bircan & Sunata, 2015; ERI, 2017), child labor in informal labor market, especially in construction, textile and service sectors (Kaya, 2016; Erdogan, 2017; Bircan & Sunata, 2015; Crisis Group, 2016, November 30; ERI, 2017; On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24), motivation problems due to trauma to be back to schools (Erdogan, 2017, p. 25) and costs associated with student attendance such as transportation, supplies and nourishment (ERI, 2017) remain a challenge concerning Syrian refugee children's accession to

school in TECs or in public schools. MoNE authorities also refer to the reluctance of Syrian children enrolling in high schools, as high school was not compulsory in Syrian education system (MoNE, 2015, November 12; On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24).

To cope with the problem of low accession at high school due to child labor, conditional cash transfers and free transportation facilities are planned (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). It was announced that UNICEF would provide 30 TL cash transfer to the Syrian families for every Syrian refugee child who accessed education in Turkey (MoNE, 2017, January 17). Crisis Group pointed to ESSN to cope with child labour and low accession rates with Syrian children as well as a work in progress for an additional conditional “education cash grant” to encourage families to send their children to school which involves monthly support of 35-60 TL for each child attending school and a one-time financial allowance of 100 TL per semester (2016, November 30, p. 7). According to ERI (2017), 35-60 TL monthly incentives might be enough to incentivize families living in rural areas where living expenses are low, but could be inadequate in larger cities where the cost of living is considerably higher.

Open education is advised for those children beyond age of schooling especially after secondary school without reference to how they would overcome language barrier (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). Age limit 15 for primary and 19 for secondary school in Turkey, however being out of those limits is common for Syrian children who had lost school years due to war and migration. Hence, remedial education is critical, and some of EU budget is allocated for remedial education (MoNE, 2016, October 3).

The official discourse utilized to describe Syrian children without school access is important to note. Especially in 2016, when the issue of school access is prioritized by the Turkish government, they are commonly generalized in a discourse of “lost generation” by MoNE authorities which is associated with a dangerous, failing or a lacking future:

Syrian students would be integrated to the Turkish education system in at most five coming years in order for them not to become a lost generation. (MoNE, 2016, September 2)

We do not want our children to be a victim of some terrorist organizations or mafia structures as a lost generation. We want to walk towards the future hand in hand” (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24)

There is a possibility of a lost generation. This lost generation is a big danger for Europe even if they stay in Turkey or in Syria. These will lack occupation and hope even if they stay in Turkey or not. (Controlled camp established, 2016, December 26)

... If we left these people that we welcomed with a feeling of *Ansar* without a vision, hope, occupation. Let's imagine 10 years after. Imagine that they stay in Turkey, or imagine that they return to Syria... (Five themes to be taught for Syrians, 2016, December 29)

The description of “lost generation” is frequently utilized by the transnational and international organizations (UNHCR, 2017; UNICEF, 2016, July; UN, 2016) and the researches, reports, program and policy proposals developed on the challenge of education for Syrian children (Kirişçi, 2004; Culbertson & Constant, 2014; HRW, 2015; Heyse, 2016) as well. Lost generation label<sup>24</sup> is utilized at various times to present traumatic experience of youth facing recession, unemployment or war with potential discursive effects in constructing generational subject positions (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014). Hence, the discursive positioning of Syrian children, especially those with no access to schooling needs reconsideration especially concerning whether such discourse genuinely leads to their empowerment.

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<sup>24</sup> Lost generation label has been attributed to Hemingway's book “The Sun also Rises” (1926) (as cited in Pritchard & Whiting, 2014).

Two years “Project on Supporting Integration of Syrian Children Under Protection to Turkish Education System” was initiated on October 3, 2016 in cooperation between MoNE Turkey and EU, which had 300 million euros budget. The Project would involve programs on Turkish and Arabic language education, remedial and supportive education at different levels, support on educational materials, clothing, transportation, resources books and scholarships; as well as in service trainings for school staff, infrastructure support and establishment of an online database and monitoring system<sup>25</sup>. (MoNE, 2016, October 3). On December 22, 2016, EU announced another contract was signed which worth €270 million for establishment of around 100 school buildings for Syrian refugee children in Turkey, benefiting over 70,000 Syrian children especially in the border cities (EC, 2016, December 22).

An important element of the educational inclusion policy for Syrian children in Turkey seems to involve enhancement of competencies of school staff. MoNE announced that Syrian teachers would be employed in public schools in the coming years (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). Teacher competencies in public schools are also lacking as for intercultural pedagogy and working with traumatized children. To cover for these needs, in August 2016 and January 2017 when the efforts towards inclusion gained pace, a range of training programs were carried out by MoNE to enhance the capabilities of teachers in TECs

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<sup>25</sup> The project aimed at provision of Turkish language education for 300,000, Arabic language education for 40,000, remedial education for 10,000 and supportive education for 20,000 Syrian children as well as provision of stationaries, educational materials and clothing for 500,000, transportation support for 50,000, resources books for 340,000, and 60,000 scholarships for Syrian children. An evaluation system would be developed and implemented. 500 psychological guidance teachers would be assigned for psychosocial support, 500 security personnel and 500 cleaning personnel would be employed in schools. 15 thousand teachers and 2 thousand school administrators would be provided with in-service trainings. 10 thousand euros of infrastructure support on average would be provided for the schools where Syrian children are registered. And an online database and monitoring system would be developed to provide for the monitoring of the project activities. (MoNE, 2016, October 3; MoNE, 2016, October 3)

and in public schools. Table 1 shows those teacher trainings implemented which aimed at development of teaching competencies as well as competencies on intercultural education and working with traumatized children.

Table 1. Teacher and School Personnel Development Trainings Carried out by MoNE, 2016-2017

Trainings for Education Personnel in Academic Year 2016-2017
Pedagogical formation training for 514 Syrian teachers working in TECs in Konya, August-September 2016 (in partnership with the UNICEF) (The trained teachers carried out two weeks, 90 hours training programs towards 20.000 Syrian teachers in a variety of cities in Turkey)
Training for teaching Turkish as a second language for 4,200 public school teachers in Kemer, Antalya, November-December 2016 (in partnership with EU)
Training program on inclusive education <sup>26</sup> for 500 public school counselors selected from 81 cities in Antalya, November-December 2016 (in partnership with the UNICEF) (the trained teachers trained around 25 thousand teachers who teach foreign students)
Pedagogical formation training for 500 Syrian teachers working in TECs in Antalya, January-February 2017 (in partnership with the UNICEF)
Training for 827 administrative personnel in Antalya, January 30-February 3 2017

Sources: (Education Reform Initiative, 2017, p. 19; MoNE, 2016, September 8; MoNE, 2016, November 11).

MoNE authorities emphasized that Syrian students would be ensured to learn Arabic, their culture and history with extra measures in the Turkish education system (MoNE, 2016, September 2; September 6; On education of Syrian Children in Turkey, December 24; December 29; On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, Five themes to be taught to Syrians, December 24). International Crisis Group Report also provided that the ministry of education was working on ways to enable the children to maintain their Arabic language with elective and extra-curricular classes in public schools to provide for the concerns of Syrian families that their

<sup>26</sup> The content of this training program involves: activities to raise awareness among teachers about the current conditions of foreign students, conceptual framework of inclusive education, the essential context of the school and instruction for inclusive education, how the teachers could support foreign students pedagogically, how to evaluate these children, effective communication methods and psychosocial support for these children and methods of adult education (MoNE, 2016, November 23)

children might lose their proficiency in their mother tongue (2016, November 30). It was emphasized that, starting from the first grade until the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 5 hours elective Arabic lessons would be provided for Syrian and Turkish students every week which would be provided by the Syrian teachers who were employed in TECs (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). Even if the system of education of Quran and Arabic was different than the one in Syria, *imam hatip high* schools were advised for the Syrian children “both boys and girls” as the graduates could apply to any branch they liked in the universities in and out of Turkey. In addition, he noted that those parents who did not want to educate their daughters with boys could send their children in those schools, as there is gender segregation in imam hatip schools. (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24) Implementation of Arabic education in public schools is still indeterminate. Even if involvement of Arabic courses in the curriculum is promising, it is limited. The advantages of mother tongue based multilingual education programs for refugee and immigrant children have been proved as in the best interests of the child (Ball, 2011; Benson, 2004; Borjian, 2014; UNESCO 2007; UNESCO, 2008).

Quality Turkish language education is also required. However it was not provided in TECs or public schools due to lack of relevant competencies, experience and materials on teaching Turkish to foreigners (ERI, 2017). 2016-2017 is announced as “Year of mobilization for teaching Turkish to Syrian children” to prevent nonaccession to school (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). 4200 Turkish teachers were certificated for teaching Turkish as a foreign language in primary, secondary and high schools who started work by December 12<sup>th</sup> using the proper books and learning materials prepared to teach

Turkish for foreigners. Fifteen hours Turkish lessons was involved in the curriculum of TECs (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24). On December 29, 2016 Deputy Prime Minister announced that he received an assignment of five tasks from the President of Turkey concerning education of Syrians living in Turkey. These five tasks included teaching Turkish, teaching Arabic, teaching religion, teaching occupation and teaching national values “which were humane values that the whole world required” (Five themes to be taught for Syrians, 2016, December 29).

Concerning difficulties in registration due to lacking *kimlik*, it was assured that children’s registrations would be made even before they acquired *kimlik* and their names would be sent to DGMM in Ankara so that their process of acquisition of *kimlik* would be fastened. Data of children registered in public schools would be included in the e-school system of Turkey together with all other children. (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24)

It was announced that preschool education would soon be involved within compulsory school age but there were capacity problems especially in the border cities where Syrians were highly populated. Hence the primary aim concerning preschool education was to solve the problem of space. (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24) It was announced that preschool education would be compulsory for 54 months and older children starting from 2017-2018 academic year. (MoNE, 2017, March 17)

Syrian children who were graduated from TECs’ high schools had to enter a high school proficiency examination in Turkey before they could apply for universities. However the system changed where high school graduates from TECs no longer need to enter a proficiency exam but they are called to apply local ministry

of education offices for equivalency. After having acquired equivalency they are invited to apply to open education high schools, pass its entrance exam and get some elective courses and be graduated from them so that they could apply to the Universities in Turkey (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24)

A large majority of Syrian children (37%) continues their education in TECs despite efforts by MoNE on the educational inclusion of Syrian children in public schools. As the principle of acceptability (Tomasevski, 2006) requires possibility of parental choice for education, the public education system ought to make effort towards responding to the needs of refugee families so that public schools would be favored more. Discrimination and bullying against Syrian refugee students in public schools (HRW, 2015; Beyazova & Akbaş, 2016) ought to be addressed. Besides, special education possibilities fall behind when Syrian child refugees are concerned (Bircan & Sunata, 2015, p. 235). ERI (2017) emphasizes the need for an inclusive curriculum responding to the needs of variant children. Educational environment in Turkey calls for a more multicultural paradigm where all the dimensions of multicultural education ought to be considered (Banks, 2011a, p. 15-17).

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aims to analyse the Syrian refugee parents' pursuit of education for their children in Istanbul as members of the Syrian community in Turkey regarding their previous and current experiences, as well as future prospects. The possibilities and constraints their children encountered within Turkish education system are explored together with the resources and strategies they put into use as a response. To review the relevant and wide literature on refugee children's education in the world, this chapter provides major topics gathered around some critical concerns. First part explores discussions on citizenship and belonging in today's world of immigration. The second part named "Migration, refugees and education" involves six sections, each corresponding to a critical concern regarding education of refugee children. First part covers the literature on the transnational sources of right and accession to education for refugee children, second involves major theories and conceptualization on adaptation between the refugees and the host society, third covers the literature on cultural identity and education, fourth explores education as a vehicle for integration, fifth is on educational attainment, and in the final part, the refugee families' perspectives, resources and strategies concerning their children's education are explored.

#### 3.1 International migration and paradox of membership

First of all it is necessary to note that various concepts are utilized describing different forms of migration: political migration, labor migration, business migration, educational migration, return migration and so on. A wide variety of concepts also

exist to describe the migrants themselves like temporary or permanent migrants, labor migrants, professional migrants, business migrants, students, refugees, asylum-seekers, illegal migrants, hidden migrants and so on. Moreover, a migrant often may shift between these categories, where one basic and common attribute is non-citizenship.

Taking the nation-state as the frame of reference, emigrants are defined as “people who go beyond national frontiers” and immigrants are defined as “people who cross frontiers from the exterior” (Soysal, 1994, p. 14). So far, such nation-state based definitions are left inadequate to define the diverse forms of international migration today. The notion of “refugee” falls beyond the above distinction, whose explanation entails the principles of human rights and the idea of universal personhood. Despite being left inadequate to explain the diversity of their experiences, “nation-state” is influential in the lives of the refugees to a great extent in fact it has become what strictly frames their everyday lives. Similarly, Syrian refugee families within this study are in the pursuit of right to education for their children within an environment restricted and broadened by the nation-state.

Nation-state as a frame of reference is neither enough to explain citizenship today in today’s framework (Benhabib, 2004; Pinson, Arnot & Candappa, 2010; Soysal, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Soysal (1994) underlines that the conventional assumption that foreigners would transform into formal citizens through education has failed (p. 24-27). Even if the central regulating access to social distribution is still the nation state, she argues that a *post-national citizenship* exists whose legitimating principles are based on universal personhood and human rights, where neither a clear territorial relationship, nor a uniform citizenship status, but a multiplicity of memberships exist between the state and the individual (Soysal, 1994, p. 1, 44, 142-

143). Today, a growing flux of asylum seekers in the world face the reassessments of nationalist narratives along with defensively reconsidered immigration policies at the one hand, while the category of *refugee* is broadened to encompass new definitions of persecution at the other, which are attributable to the “two seemingly contradictory principles of the global system: national sovereignty and universal human rights” (Soysal, 1994, p. 154-156, 159).

This paradox of membership could never be entirely got around or solved according to Benhabib (2004) who argues that the alternative is in the complexification of citizenship where communities are required to engage in democratic iterations as “self-reflexive discussions that periodically reassess and modify exclusionary practices” aiming at destabilizing exclusions by rendering “the distinctions between ‘citizens’ and ‘aliens,’ ‘us’ and ‘them,’ fluid and negotiable” (p. 5, 47). Underlining the bounds of the community within discourses on justice, Benhabib demonstrates that the interaction between states and non-citizens can no longer be imagined as a one-way unilateral projection of power (Rehaag, 2006, p. 402)

Boundary discourses and the ways of separating “us” from “them” convey the notion of *political belonging*, which refers to “political projects constructing belonging to particular collectivities” (Yuval Davis, 2006, p. 197). Focusing on what is requested from a person to be entitled to belong, Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that “different projects of the politics of belonging requisite different levels of belonging” with variant permeability; while common descent (or its myth) might be demanded in exclusionary; a common, religion, culture and/or language may be required in assimilationist; and a myth of common destiny is demanded in pluralistic societies centered around loyalty and solidarity based on common values (p. 209). Political

belonging corresponds to citizenship and conveys three major arguments concerning immigrants: economic belonging, about being part of the hosting economy, social belonging, about participation in daily interactions and universal belonging, about appealing to human rights (Antonisch, 2010, p. 14). Still, sense of belonging may not be generated even through provision of citizenship, as “belonging is indeed a ‘thicker’ concept than citizenship” (Crowley, 1992, p. 22).

Different politics of belonging for different groups exist at the same time and context, as evident in the case of asylum-seekers and refugees, reflecting the State’s need “to define its boundaries, its political identity, and its commitment to tolerance, and human rights” (Pinson et al., 2010, p. 31-32). This “national boundary-making activity” serves the countries’ best-interests rather than the child’s, and develops the hierarchical categories of *deserving* and *undeserving* constructing the moral parameters of compassion towards the asylum-seeking and refugee children, which significantly affects the work of schools (p. 210-211). Pinson et al. suggest that even if some disregard this hierarchy; local educational authorities, teachers, students and schools are “caught in the conflict between citizenship and personhood” (p. 213-217). The education responses to asylum-seeking and refugee children in schools provide for “the social and political values of … education system and the ways the principles of inclusivity and cohesion operate in the context of globalizing forces” (Pinson et al., 2010, p. 1) Drawing from Sayad’s (1999) famous phrase, “immigration policy reveals how a state thinks of itself”, the educational policies for immigrant children reveals, “who is a child” within boundaries of a state.

Yet, migrants’ lives cannot be understood strictly within the boundaries of the host society as their lives are shaped by complex relationships across more than one country (Somerville, 2008, p. 23). The multiplicity of involvements that migrants

sustain at home and host societies is an essential element of transnationalism (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton-Blanc, 1994, p. 7). Transnational belonging is about being simultaneously “home, away from home”, “here and there” or “for instance being British, and something else” at the same time (Vertovec, 1999, p. 5), which is attributable to some contemporary facts like the advancement of travel and communication technologies, migrants’ capacity for political organization for home and host contexts, the massive flow of remittances that migrants send home and so forth (p. 574-575). Without travelling to the countries to which they feel they belong to, migrants can establish transnational belonging (De Bree, Davids & Haas, 2010, p. 491). Transnational belonging of migrants’ children however, raises questions as they are seemingly less tied to their home country; still, some scholars argue that second generation also maintains some [transnational] ties (Somerville, 2008, p. 23-24).

### 3.2 Migration, refugees and education

Migrations in the world today have raised significantly “complex and difficult questions about citizenship, human rights, democracy and education” (Banks, 2011a). Pinson and Arnot note that, “people with different immigration status and in particular non-citizens in a society, raises challenges [for] education” (Pinson & Arnot, 2007, p. 400). An extensive global literature on “international migration and education” exists focusing on several issues including systems and policies of education for non-nationals, educational attainment, educational inclusion, citizenship education, language acquisition, mother tongue and multi-lingual education, need for diversified teaching staff, parental involvement, problems of segregation, education in refugee camps, education of returning refugees and IDP’s

and so forth. In addition to a wide literature concerning the education of non-nationals as a wider group, refugees' education in particular is also a major field of study.

Refugee studies have been criticized for employing the adaptation experiences of immigrants rather than searching for refugees' own experiences. (Mc Brien, 2005; Mosselson, 2006). Refugees are those who fled their country due to war or other violence experiencing forced migration and immigrants are those people who chose and planned to migrate. Even if the motives might be mixed, the response of the host society differs to a great extent for a refugee and an immigrant, which influence the life-experiences considerably. Experiences of asylum-seekers are further different as they are not granted a status yet. Hence even if they have some vary basic commonalities like non-citizenship, each group deserves exploration of their own educational experiences. Also, the needs of specific refugee communities should be studied to discover their needs in particular (McBrien, 2005).

Pinson and Arnot (2007) point to the scarcity of sociological studies on education of asylum-seeking and refugee children; arguing that challenges of educational systems due to diversification of national populations are not studied enough within the literature of globalization, forced migration or in educational sociology (p. 399-401).

Education is regarded as a useful mechanism against psychosocial impact of displacement and trauma (Sinclair, 2001; Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003) where refugees suffer from high rates of depression (Aras & Yasun, 2016; Mosselson, 2007). However, ascendancy of psychological approaches, the focus on war trauma and the homogenization of refugee children's experiences have been criticized as it frames *all* the refugee children as weak, vulnerable and pathologic, disguising

political and personal oppressions, and poor official policies (Matthews, 2008; Pinson and Arnot, 2007; Pinson et al., 2010; Rutter, 2006). Pinson et al. signify the political risks in the form of compassion towards the refugee children, which disregard the children's cultural capital, identity and their migration background but construct them as passive and vulnerable, underlining that "... such modernist images of childhood, if reused in the post-modern context, can maintain prevailing colonial and paternalistic relations." (Burman, 1994; as cited in Pinson et al, 2010, p. 222).

Even if they are the primary actors of educational inclusion, comparatively less research examines refugee children's subjective experiences as they adapt to schools (Prior and Niesz, 2012; Bash and Zezlina-Phillips, 2006; Bačáková, 2011). Refugee children's perspectives may differ from that of their parents, as they may not regard their parents' home country as a place to return to (Zhou, 1997). The child-centered approach requires programs and methods to adapt to children's needs situating them in the centre of the educational universe (Krasteva, 2013, p. 15). In order to ensure good programming, children "should be recognized as key actors in their own education rather than passive beneficiaries" of service ((UNICEF & UNESCO, 2007, p. 13). On the whole, "the transition from the non-citizen child to the learner citizen is not complete unless a safe visibility and voice is offered to such children" (Pinson and Arnot, 2010, p. 217).

Along with the children themselves, other actors' role is critical. Several researches on the educational needs of refugee children provide for the importance of partnerships between families, community, religious organizations, schools and local and state governments (Sidhu and Taylor, 2007; INEE, 2004). School staff's role and competences are crucially important and studies that explore teacher's challenges

and professional development needs are numerous (Bartolo and Smyth, 2009; Hoot, 2011; MacNevin, 2012; Smyth, 2013). A teachers-pupils-parents nexus is essential for enabling communication and cooperation and “trust and confidence of parents and children in teachers and schools are crucial for sustainable [inclusion] in the educational system” (Krasteva, 2013, p. 23). Peer support also matters where it can serve both as positive and negative social capital (Portes, 1998). A whole school approach including staff, school structures, culture, pedagogy and curriculum is needed to manage diversity in the classroom (Pugh, Every and Hattam, 2012).

School based and teacher involved interventions, state policies, programs and strategies as well as civil society contribution comprise an extensively large segment of the literature on refugee children’s education. Since this study mainly focuses on refugee parents’ perspectives, resources and strategies, the requirements, competences or methods of intervention of other actors will not be explored in specific but will be addressed throughout the study by relevance.

### 3.3 Trans-national sources of refugee children’s right to accession to education

A multitude of transnational sources exist that preserve the right to education of children. Recognized as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), education should be free and compulsory at least in the basic stages (UDHR, 1948, art. 26 (1)). International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) expands this idea of the “right to everyone” and states that “primary education shall be free, compulsory and available to all and secondary education shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education” (ICESCR, 1976, art. 13 (2a, 2b)). Convention against Discrimination in

Education (CADE) guarantees access to education to non-nationals together with nationals (UNESCO, 1960, art. 1). According to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) every child has a right to education and primary education should be compulsory and free (CRC, 1989, art. 28). CRC states the right of children against discrimination in article 2, the best interests of the child in article 3, the right to life and development of the child article 6 and the right to participation in article 12; all of which make up the basic principles of the UN CRC. Additionally, article 29 about the “aims of education” states that the education is for the “development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (art. 29 (1(a))) and “development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.” (art. 29 (1(c))).

Transnational legal sources specific for migrant and refugee children are also numerous. GCSR (1951), holds the states responsible for providing the same education to refugees as the nationals at elementary level (art. 22 (1)) and at other levels, refugees are ought to be treated “not less favorable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances” (art. 22 (2)). International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) guarantees the same right to education as nationals to irregular and regular migrants and that access to public schools or “pre-school educational institutions ought not be limited by reason of the irregular situation of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment” (art. 30). The ILO Convention 1975 guarantees social and cultural rights of migrant workers and their families where the participating countries would ensure that they “preserve their

national and ethnic identity and their cultural ties with their country of origin, including the possibility for children to be given some knowledge of their mother tongue” (art. 12(f)).

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has issued General Comment No. 6 on “Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin” (2005) which asserts “that every unaccompanied and separated child irrespective of status, to have full access to education in the [host] country” without discrimination “during all phases of the displacement cycle” (par. 41). General Comment No. 6 also emphasizes the essence of registration to appropriate schools “as soon as possible and getting assistance to maximize learning opportunities and right to maintain cultural identity and values, including the maintenance and development of native language” (par. 42).

The European Union Council Directive of 2003 focused on the reception of asylum seekers and relevant standards states in Article 10 on the “Schooling and Education of Minors” that, member states ought to grant asylum-seeking children “access to the education system under similar conditions as nationals for so long as an expulsion measure against them or their parents is not actually enforced” (EC, 2003, art. 10).

Concerning the right to education of refugee children, numerous non-binding transnational declarations exist where initiatives by the UN or its agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR are significant. The World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Needs, (EFA, 1990) describes refugees as an underserved group along with all other groups which suffer from educational disparities for whom the states are entitled to make an active commitment to remove educational disparities (art. 3(4)). The second of the

Millenium Development Goals (MDG, 2000) by the UN is to achieve universal primary education that was to “ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.” UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 is “to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning” until 2030. The declaration on “A World Fit for Children” by the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002 “stated that all boys and girls [ought] to have access to and complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality” by 2015; a progressive provision of secondary education was also aimed at (UN, 2002, May 10).

Binding or non-binding, all these transnational soft law, which influence national legal frameworks are developed to guarantee the right to education for all children, including refugee children. Along with accessibility, other criteria that education should guarantee for exist, to ensure continuation and effective completion of school. UNHCR asserts, “the trauma of exile should not be aggravated by the trauma of loss of educational opportunity” (1995, p. 8) and emphasizes that,

...there is solid evidence that quality education gives children a place of safety and can also reduce child marriage, child labor, exploitative and dangerous work, and teenage pregnancy. It gives them the opportunity to make friends and find mentors, and provides them with the skills for self-reliance, problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork. It improves their job prospects and boosts confidence and self-esteem. (UNHCR, 2016, September, p. 5)

Quality education is regarded as “the anchor that will keep the children in the classroom”, and schools “play an important role in identifying refugee children at risk of abuse, sexual and gender based violence, and forced recruitment, where they can help connect them with appropriate services” (UNHCR, 2016, September, p. 10-11). Education’s role in preventing children from being drawn into labor markets or forced marriage is also underlined within literature (Watkins & Zyk, 2014).

Previous UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski generated the concept of 4 A's of education: *availability, accessibility, acceptability* and *adaptability* (Tomasevski, 2006), which are valuable in emphasizing refugee children's right to education. The 4 A's of education can be summarized as follows (p. 12-14): "Availability [is] that education is free and government-funded and there is adequate infrastructure and trained teachers to support education delivery... Accessibility [is] that the system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and positive steps are taken to include the most marginalized. Acceptability [is] that the content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and of quality; and the school itself is safe and teachers are professional. Adaptability [is] that education can evolve with the changing needs of society, and... that it can be adapted locally to suit specific contexts" (Tomasevski, 2001, p. 13).

Even if a multitude of transnational sources of right to access to quality education for the refugee children exist, access to education for refugees is uneven around the world. UNHCR (2016, September) states that

Refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children [where] only 50 percent have access to primary education compared with a global level of more than 90 percent; only 22 percent refugee adolescents attend lower secondary schools while the same rate is 90 percent globally... At global level, for every ten refugee boys in primary school, there are fewer than eight refugee girls; at secondary school, fewer than seven refugee girls. (p. 43)

Secondary education is a bigger challenge, as it is more expensive, more costly for the families, requires more qualified teachers and advanced equipment and materials (UNHCR, 2016, September, p. 24). Un-recognition of previous education or certification is another challenge for the refugee children's educational access (p. 25).

### 3.4 Adaptation of refugees and the host society

A major concern within literature on refugee children has been on whether and how they would adapt in the host society concerning which relevant theories and policies are developed, experimented, and redeveloped all over again. Krasteva (2013) argues that theories' being better equipped than policies as a general rule, is not valid here due to the political, dynamic and challenging nature of migration (p. 5).

One of the critical concepts in the area of adaptation of refugees is assimilation. In the *liberal-assimilationist ideology*, the immigrants are expected "to forsake their original cultures and languages in order to become effective citizens of their nation states" (Banks, 2011a, p. 11). Historically, schools in most Western societies embraced *assimilation*, where students were expected to leave their culture rather than *acculturation*, where the students' culture would be modified maintaining its essence (p. 28). In 1940's and 1950's, the ethnic groups themselves also accepted assimilation which worked out for the White groups, but not for the non-White in most Western nations; and in 1960's and 1970's ethnic revitalization movements arose, challenging the assimilationist ideology (p. 12)

Milton Gordon (1964) framed seven stages of assimilation<sup>27</sup>: (1) acculturation, (2) structural assimilation, (3) marital assimilation, (4) identification assimilation, (5) attitude reception assimilation, (6) behavior reception assimilation, (7) civic assimilation, which immigrants' would pass through inevitably; yet his theory of assimilation has been criticized both normatively and empirically (Alba & Nee, 1997). Assimilation was questioned as the ethnic differences persisted across

<sup>27</sup> Seven stage assimilation model of Gordon (1964) involves: (1) Acculturation: newcomers adopt language, dress, and daily customs of the host society (including values and norms). (2) Structural assimilation: large-scale entrance of minorities into cliques, clubs, and institutions in the host society. (3) Marital assimilation: widespread intermarriage. (4) Identification assimilation: the minority feels bonded to the dominant culture. (5) Attitude reception assimilation refers to the absence of prejudice. (6) Behavior reception assimilation refers to the absence of discrimination. (7) Civic assimilation occurs when there is an absence of values and power struggles (as cited in Houtkamp, 2015, p. 74).

generations and poor immigrants' were trapped in permanent poverty (Zhou, 1997, p. 71).

Berry (1980), in his two dimensional acculturation model referred to four stages of acculturation, which immigrants could choose: *assimilation*, *separation*, *marginalization* and *integration* where integration, which is referent to those “who both value their own cultural heritage but also wish to get into contact with other groups”, was most effective for the well-being of the minorities with least suffering from acculturative stress. Berry’s model was both praised for its emphasis on multiculturalism and the right to determination of minorities (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 37) yet was also criticized for assuming that minorities had a free choice in how far they would go within the acculturation process (Houtkamp, 2015, p. 76). The principle of *integration*, at least in the beginning regarded adaptation as a “gradual process that required some degree of mutual accommodation but the final goal was still absorption into the dominant culture” (Castles, 2011, p. 57).

The major alternative frameworks to assimilationist ideology have been *pluralism*, which perceives the society as “a context of ethnic and racial minority groups” who serve as an asset where cultural attributes interact with the culture of the host society and *structuralism*, which regards adaptation “in terms of advantages and disadvantages inherent to social structures [where] ethnic hierarchy systematically limits access to social resources have” (Zhou, 1997, p. 73-74). As the basis for social inequality, structural approaches involve a focus on deep social structures of class formation as the basis for social inequality, while post-structuralist approaches are more concerned with discourses and the way these are implicated in the making of social inequalities (Gillborn & Youdell, 2011, p. 173).

In the *interactive acculturation model*, proposed by Bourhis, Moïse, Perraults, and Senécal (1997) majority culture, the minority cultures and the state ideologies are taken into consideration. Four state ideologies distinguished are *pluralism*, *civic ideology*, *assimilation ideology* and *ethnist ideology* (p. 372). *Pluralism* actively seeks to reinforce immigrants to maintain their cultural distinctiveness but at the same time to adopt the public values of the host majority; *civic ideology* shares those two principles but in contrast, no state funds would be allocated for preservation of the culture of the minority groups as state “noninterventionism” is embraced; *assimilation ideology*, expects the immigrants to adopt the cultural and linguistic aspects and values of the dominant group and abandon their own and *ethnist ideology*, in which immigrants’ rejection of own ethno-cultural identities as well as adaptation to norms and values of the majority is expected where the host state might interfere with some private values (Bourhis et. al., 1997, p. 373-374).

Soysal (1994) asserts, “that the institutionalized modes and organization of membership in host countries should be studied as the principal determinants of the *incorporation* of migrants” rather than their individualistic, demographic, social or cultural characteristics (p. 30-31). For Freeman (2004), the concept of incorporation refers both to the strategic decisions of the migrants and the state’s institutional incentive structures which “is the product of the intersection of migrant aspirations and strategies with regulatory frameworks in four domains — state, market, welfare, and culture” (p. 950).

1990s were marked with the ascendance of multiculturalism as a public policy (Castles, 2011; May, 2011), which requires “that immigrants should be able to participate as equals in all spheres of society, without being expected to give up their

own culture, religion, and language, although usually with an expectation of conformity to key values". (Castles, 2011, p. 57).

However, especially by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the increasingly securitized post 9/11 environment, policies on integration have been questioned and there has been a significant backlash on multiculturalism (Castles, 2011; Krasteva, 2013; May, 2011) The host, which used to be welcoming in pluralistic state ideologies, "has become demanding and insistent [whereas] the financial, cultural and social [burden] of integration is increasingly placed on migrants'/refugees' shoulders (Krasteva, 2013, p. 9). The return to the assimilationist views in Western democracies is reflected in the meaning of "integration" and immigration policies are increasingly focused on building barriers and securitization (Freeman, 2004; Ingleby and Derluyn, 2012; Ingleby & Kramer, 2012). Relatively in all Western countries, refugees have a gradually less desirable representation, migration politics and policies are less or not multicultural at all, and the security discourse defines the frames of the policies of educational inclusion.

Torres observed that multiculturalism is criticized on several grounds (as cited in May, 2011, p. 34). First, there is the ongoing critique from the Right on its possible threat to social and political cohesion. Second, it is criticized for tending to "concentrate on culture at the expense of structural concerns such as racism and socioeconomic inequality" (p. 34). Third are "the challenges that postmodernist understandings of identity present" and fourth is "the urgent [but] unfulfilled need to develop a multiculturalist paradigm that effectively addresses" all of the above (as cited in May, 2011, p. 34) May (2011) suggests "critical multiculturalism", which analyzes these structural, culturalist and postmodernist concerns; but which at the same time holds onto the possibility of emancipatory politics; he attracts attention to

the essence of a defensible, credible and critical paradigm that can still act as a template for the possibilities of “a more plural inclusive, and democratic approach to both education and wider nation-state organization in this new [securitized] century” (p. 45).

An interesting concept is transnationalism. It refers to immigrants’ “being settled permanently in their new country, while maintaining their ties to countries they still saw as homelands” which is unacceptable both for assimilationist approaches, which expect immigrants to “abandon, forget or deny their ties to home” or multiculturalist approaches which expect them to “incorporate into a country of diverse cultures” (Basch et al., 1997, p. 51). Today, transnationalism is enhanced by advancements in communication technology and transportation, as well as the impossibility or undesirability of incorporation to the host countries; and is accompanied by essentialized nationalisms constructing a deterritorialized nation-state that encompasses the diasporic population within the sending countries’ domain (Basch et al., 1997, p. 52). Due to advancement of transnationalism, the shift towards assimilationist policies is unrealistic today, as a complete adaptation of minorities is near impossible and the question of maintaining identity is largely irrelevant, thus *inclusion* as a concept would be more appropriate, which lays the responsibility of adaptation with the majority and its institutions. (Houtkamp, 2015, p. 79) Inclusion today, has to have a transnational component, which brings about “the possibilities of cultural minorities to express their heritage culture across the borders of the nation-state” along with a national component, referring to “an acculturation process wherein a nation-state facilitates the cultural and linguistic expression of its minorities whilst the minorities in turn adapt to the mainstream society” (Houtkamp, 2015, p. 80).

Social inclusion, which is sometimes used as a substitute to integration is defined in a wider perspective: “a process of increasing opportunities for social participation, enhancing capabilities to fulfill normatively prescribed social roles, broadening social ties of respect and recognition at the collective level, enhancing social bonds, cohesion, integration, or solidarity” (Silver, 2015, p. 144). Amartya Sen (2000) who deeply concentrated on the idea of social exclusion as a useful concept in explaining capability deprivation, introduced “unfavorable inclusion” which may be another route to capability deprivation as for instance in the case of “exploitative” conditions of employment, or “unequal” terms of social participation (p. 28).

In the context of education, inclusion is concerned with developing appropriate responses to diverse needs of the learners and necessitates a philosophical change that requires the transformation of the education system to respond to the diversity of learners rather than a focus on how some groups can be integrated in the mainstream education (UNESCO, 2003, p. 7). Inclusive education focuses on how education responds to the diverse needs of the students and how schooling contributes to social inclusion of diverse students rather than how students would integrate in the mainstream education (UNESCO, 2006a). UNESCO defines educational inclusion as a human right and defines it as a “dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems but as opportunities for enriching learning” (2005, p. 12).

Deriving from the abovementioned discussion concerning the adaptation between the host society and the refugees, the concept of “integration” is utilized in this thesis, as the process of adaptation; which is reciprocal between the refugees and the hosting society and where the hosting state’s institutions have the primary responsibility in incorporation. Alternatively, “inclusion” is utilized for the

educational context, where the focus is on the development of appropriate responses to the needs of the Syrian refugee children regarding educational environment as a multicultural environment where students have a diversity of needs.

### 3.5 Education and cultural identity

Appreciation of diverse cultures in education has been a challenging ambition. Integration in the host country versus preserving cultural identity has been an essential question where national language vs. mother-tongue education, education of religion and content of curriculum in multicultural contexts, besides coping with beliefs, attitude and behavior involving prejudice, stereotypes or racism have all been critical concerns in this respect.

As one of the founders of multicultural education, James A. Banks was one of the first scholars who examined the multicultural context of schooling. Banks suggests that multicultural democratic schools should enable both *acculturation*, that is modification of cultures through contact preserving their essence and *accommodation*, that is maintenance of separate identities for groups within a context of peaceful interaction of diverse cultures (2011a, p. 28). Educators should gain insights into their students' cultures by viewing the world from their perspectives.

Main goals of multicultural education are:

To restructure schools so that all students acquire ... [the competences needed to function in diverse nations]; actualize educational equality for students from diverse groups and facilitate their participation as critical citizens in an inclusive national civic culture; enable students to maintain their community cultures and function in the national civic culture; and help students develop cosmopolitan attitudes and become effective world citizens (Banks, 2011a, p. 14).

Five dimensions of multicultural education are (1) *content integration*, where examples and content are used by the teachers of diverse cultures to explain “key concepts, principles, generalizations and theories in their subject area”, (2) *the knowledge construction process*, which describes activities of teaching support students’ critical thinking on “the implicit cultural assumptions of researchers and textbook writers influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed”, (3) *prejudice reduction*, which aims at development of “democratic racial attitudes” among students, (4) *an equity pedagogy*, which refers to modifying ways of teaching to enable students from diverse groups academic achievement is enhanced and (5) *an empowering school culture and social structure*, that involves restructuring of the school culturally and organization-wise so that all students including those from diverse groups experience equality (Banks, 2011a, p.15-17).

Underlining the “considerable political damage” multiculturalism as a policy has suffered within the last decade Meer and Modood note that the concept of “interculturalism” emerged in the public discourse as a “‘competitor’ term … [which] appears to retain something of what multiculturalism is concerned with” (2012, p. 176). While interculturalism is promoted as having “positive qualities in terms of encouraging communication, recognizing dynamic identities, promoting unity and critiquing illiberal cultural practices”, such qualities are also important features of multiculturalism which is “able to recognize that social life consists of individuals and groups” that are essential in “‘formal and informal distribution of powers” and an ethical conception of citizenship, and currently multiculturalism surpasses interculturalism as a political orientation (Meer and Modood, 2012, p. 192).

Multicultural education has been suspected of interfering with national cohesion (Coulby, 2006; May, 2011), embracing a tokenistic understanding and denigration of cultural differences (Castles, 2011; Coulby, 2006; Sarmento, 2014), disregarding structural factors such as socioeconomic inequalities and race (Castles, 2011; May 2011), and disregarding informal and “illegal” children (Castles, 2011).

Multiculturalism has been suspected of orienting toward essentialism and “being obsessed with the other and what one needs to know about him/her”, interculturalism is suggested alternatively as “it focuses on the self, questioning one’s identity in relation to others … conviviality, and … communication” (Sarmento, 2014, p. 610). In UNESCO’s definition, multicultural education and intercultural education has a similar distinction; the former “uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures”, whereas the latter “aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). Still, Rată criticized utilization of two notions interchangeably without a clear, semantic definition and epistemological foundation (2013, p. 3)

Schiffauer, Baumann, Kastoryano and Vertovec focused on what “nation-state schools put across their pupils” in the northwestern Europe using the notion of “civil enculturation” as the “crucial mechanism of the post-nationalist nation state school” (2006). They underlined that what the school provides is not about “who you are” no more, but about “how one does” (Baumann, 2006, p. 3). Civil enculturation is expanded likewise:

Civil enculturation ... combines three strands of learning and teaching participation in a nation state's civil culture: first, ... understanding ... civil society as a space of, relatively more or less, uncoerced association in the presence of a centralized state claiming to remain a nation-state; second an understanding of the locally dominant civic culture, that is, the methods to structure the interactions of citizens and residents with the organs of the state, as well as the expected and sanctioned criteria of exercising 'proper' civility; and third, an understanding of, or at least familiarity with, the particular nation state's national imagery. (Baumann, 2006, p. 14)

In four different schools in Paris, Berlin, Rotterdam and London, the authors studied: social space of the school, representation of nation in the history textbooks, construction of otherness, place of religion, attitude towards Muslim headscarves, situation of the mother tongue and native language, "regimes of discipline and civil conduct", "argumentative strategies and pupils' negotiations of cultural difference [within] identity management and discursive assimilation" (Baumann, 2006, p. 15).

The students' processes of enculturation were not only marked by the nationally specific civil cultures but also by shared consumption ideals and attributes of the 'good life' they strived for, which depended on individual tastes rather than ethnicity (Mannitz, 2006a, p. 329). Secondly, the immigrant children demanded a value-neutral recognition of their being different and an equal access to the achievement-based competition, providing the constraints on the integration of the newcomers of each culture. (p. 330). A variety of ideals were derived from the construction of the nation in each school: In Britain, immigration is positive, group rights are acknowledged and individuals are integrated in their communities gaining multicultural competence. In contrast, formation of identity in an immigrant community is regarded as a threat against integration in France, as the expectation is everybody's participation in a common sense of "universal civilization" and emancipation of all from "parochial" [emphases added] cultures. In Netherlands, where different cultures are tolerated as empirical plurality, original identities are

played down for a collective identity of the Dutch, treating one's background as a sub-cultural life-style. Alternatively, German political culture seemed skeptic about the loyalties of foreigners to the liberal democratic order (Mannitz, 2006a, p. 330) and no positive strategies of integration existed where Germans and foreigners were differentiated in discourse and foreigners are regarded as a residual category (Mannitz and Schiffauer, 2006, p. 82-84). Mannitz's epilogue, states that:

Paradoxically, ... the Dutch attention to the presumed differences appears to produce the ... demand that the French school aims to achieve through its denial of difference. On the other hand, due to the particular restraints they encounter in the French setting, ethnic minority pupils in Paris displayed an insistence on their 'other' backgrounds that sounded as if they had invented the British idea of multiculturalism afresh. At the same time, their peers in London expressed their overall consent to this multicultural vision but declared that it was not reflected in reality, thus turning the idea of cultural and ethnic diversity into a bias characterized by jealousy in its measurement of differential treatment. While these three political projects all entail ideas of how immigrants should either be incorporated into societies defined as multicultural or inspired to participate in a universal venture of civilization, no positive concept of this sort is given significance in the German case. Therefore, in a way the most extreme situation in the four case studies was the phenomenon of young people from ethnic minorities in Berlin ... the children of the immigrants in Berlin played down the impact of their background and treated the existing diversity as if it were already a politically acknowledged circumstance in society, so that it was not necessary to make a special issue of it. (Mannitz, 2006a, p. 332)

In all four examples, the immigrant adolescents valued their value-neutral recognition of taken-for-granted differences within the public sphere, they argued against the excluding effects linked to the dominant images of otherness and expected being included in the national imaginaries preserving cultural differences (p. 332).

Right to learn one's own language and culture makes up a critical aspect of refugee and migrant children's right to education. The UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978), European Community General Directive on Education of Migrant Workers (1977), UN CRC (1989) guarantees the right of the

child to enjoy his/her culture, learn and use their language. UNESCO's principles on mother tongue instruction are

(1) Supporting mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building on the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers (2) supporting bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies. (3) Supporting language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 30)

Theory of forcible assimilation claims that “bilingualism causes academic failure and mental confusion” so mother tongue skills are to be abandoned for hindering integration; or there is, “reluctant bilingualism” which tolerates and supports bilingualism “only as a strategy for achieving the ultimate goal of linguistic assimilation” by means of transitional bilingual programs (Zhou, 1997, p. 87), However, many studies have been underlining the effectiveness of learning mother tongue and essence of multilingual education (Ball, 2011; Benson, 2004; Borjian, 2014; Bühmann & Trudell, 2008; Golash-Boza, 2005; Hatoss & Sheely, 2009; Hovens, 2002; Smolicz & Secombe, 2003; Samuelson and Freedman, 2010; UNESCO, 2007; UNESCO, 2008). Zhou asserts that the ethnic language, allows “immigrant children to gain access to a social capital generated from a distinctive ethnic identity, such as support and control from bilingual or non-English speaking parents and ethnic communities” (1997, p. 89). Additionally, “skills developed in learning to read the parental language may be transferred to other areas of intellectual endeavour, such as history, geography, or mathematics” (p. 90).

Yet, no consensus exists among states on essence and methods of teaching mother tongue. Even if there is no one correct approach, children should be protected from discrimination by the governments, they must ensure their culture is respected

and “every effort is made to prevent social exclusion and educational disadvantage as a consequence of speaking a minority language” (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2007, p. 36). Two major visions on pro-mother tongue education exist: the first proposes that immigrant communities and their organizations should teach the mother tongue, the second proposes that the state should have the responsibility even if no one country has yet been able to provide it country-wide but only in specific schools (Krasteva, 2013, p. 19). As an example, mother tongue teaching is available in Sweden or “its inclusion is recommended”; during preschool, students learn both in Swedish and in their mother tongue and during compulsory and upper secondary school they can have mother tongue tuition (Eklund, Höglund & Rydin, 2013, p. 85).

In Schiffauer et al.’s (2006) study, place of mother tongues in school in relation to the national language was also studied. Teachers and staff in the four schools invoked three factors in their responses; cognitive skills and social competence, cultural politics or interaction and communication: There was a more frequent use of mother tongue in London where it was regarded as a potential means of attaining the British concept of multicultural citizenship and in Berlin even if it was regarded as a sign of unwillingness to adapt to German culture, however, in France where refraining from speaking in mother tongue was an act of integration and in Netherlands where the arguments against it were pedagogical and explicit, usage of mother tongues in the school was limited (Sunier, 2006, p. 159-163).

In contrast to mother tongue learning, consensus exists on the importance of learning the national language, with a symbolic meaning, and a role in integration and empowerment of refugees (Krasteva, 2013, p. 18). Research shows “that it takes 5 to 7 years of optimal academic instruction to develop” academic second language skills for immigrant children during when actual skills and knowledge can be masked

(Cummins, 1991; as cited in Orozco & Orozco, 2011, p. 67) Refugee parents, who are often not able to learn the national language, reinforce their children for it as they value efficient communication within the society (Atwell et. al., 2009; as cited in İşik Ercan, 2012). However, situating children in a key position such as the family translator may lead to a sense of superiority in them challenging the family leadership (Zhou & Bankston, 2000).

For Krasteva, language learning should be complemented by “social competences and acculturation training by learning the visible and invisible cultural rules” where the children and the society transforms (2013, p. 20). Schiffauer et al.’s (2006) study on civil enculturation also inquired for expectations of adequate conduct and school disciplinary regimes, which reflect and reproduce the ethos of the specific civil culture. In France where the creation of citizen is the responsibility of the school, a systematic order separates teaching and questions of conduct, whereas in Germany schools are expected to cooperate with the parents who are assumed as insufficient, which turns this expectation of cooperation into a vicious circle where blame is shifted to the familial environment (Mannitz, 2006b, p. 202-204).

Place of religion and teaching of religion(s) in schools are also indispensable questions. Schiffauer et al. (2006) studied place of religion in schools also in their study on civic enculturation. In France no religious instruction existed in schools, religion was confined to the private sphere and all religious manifestations were banished, in Germany, religious education was a regular element of the school where [Christian] religion was regarded as the guardian of citizen’s conscience but Islam was regarded as lacking to meet the required standards, in London different religions were taken seriously and taught as belief systems as a compulsory ingredient of the curriculum and in the Dutch model religious plurality was taken into account and no

state formulated solution existed for religious education (Mannitz, 2006b, p. 114-116).

Content of the curriculum and citizenship education in particular is noteworthy in this respect, which faces the challenge of acknowledging today's paradoxes of membership. Banks calls for "an effective and transformative citizenship education that helps students acquire knowledge, skills and values needed to function effectively within their cultural community, nation-state and region and in the global community" (2011b, p. 303). To help marginalized groups "to attain civic equality and recognition" Young (1989) suggests "a differentiated concept of citizenship, rather than a universal one." (Young, 1989; as cited in Banks, 2011b, p. 304). Responding to the problems brought by international migration, schools in multi-cultural nation-states must deal with complex educational issues where multicultural citizenship and *transformative citizenship education*, which recognize the cultural identities of students, should be considered (Banks, 2011b, p. 309, 314). Çayır (2015) notes exemplary grounds Turkey provides to explore "relations between constructing common national goals and [recognizing] cultural diversity." With increasing claims of to equal citizenship by non-Muslim and non-Turkish minorities, Turkey requires creation of "a new collective imaginary for equal inclusion of differences"; but Çayır's study demonstrates that textbooks maintain the ethno-religious conception of the national identity and identity-based claims to recognition are not addressed (2015, p. 531). Un-recognition of language, religion and culture or degradation of identity within education is symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000), which is probably best visible in the negative representation and positioning of Kurds within textbooks, curriculum and education in Turkey (Can, Şimşek and Gök, 2013). The anti-Arab perspective and the negative

Arab image in textbooks is also important to note within this study, which is reported to have left its place to a more positive recognition starting from 1990s (Küçükcan, 2010).

### 3.6 Education as a vehicle for integration

Modern education systems have been regarded as a primary means of nation state formation, but today, due to international movements of people and diversification of the national populations, the changing role of education needs exploration (Pinson and Arnot, 2007). Baumann directs attention to the double mission of the nation-state school: expectations on perpetuation of “a sense of nation-state continuity” and integration of “non-nationals and first-generation citizens into the democratic project of equalizing chances for all” (2006, p.1). There is nearly a consensus among diverse ideologies of adaptation, scholars and decision-makers that education paves the way towards integration (Gesemann, 2006; Heckmann, 2008; Ouald Chaib, 2011; Bačáková, 2011; Mosselson, 2007; Rah, Shangmin, & Thu Suong Thi, 2009; Szente, Hoot & Taylor, 2006). Transnational organizations also assert the critical role of education in integration (UNESCO, 2005; UNHCR, 2012). Yet, “refugee and asylum-seeking children and their integration represent a litmus test in terms of social inclusion [today and] could tell us about how we define education and its role in society”, where the pending question of *temporality* and *permanence* prevails involving those who deserve to be integrated against those who do not (Pinson and Arnot, 2007, p. 405).

Variant models of educational inclusion are developed, experimented and revised in various states, which differ according to the weight given to integration by the state, whether and how multiculturalism or other ideologies of integration is

embraced, level of securitization of immigration policies, the extent immigrant communities' influence and so forth. According to Krasteva, educational policies in EU countries which give a differential weight to integration with a changing proportion of multiculturalism classifies into three types: (1) *interculturalism / multiculturalism* exemplified by Ireland and United Kingdom (UK) which is based on encouragement of ethnic, linguistic and religious differences at school (2) *non-differentialism* exemplified by France, Spain, Netherlands and Sweden, which sees participation in the civic republican society as an autonomous choice and considers school as a space for integration and (3) *human rights approach*, which is exemplified by Germany and Austria, mainly established by the UN and its agencies defend universality, inalienability, equality and non-discrimination, where children are recognized as key actors and state is regarded as the primary duty-bearer (2013, p. 6). Still, Krasteva underlines that most countries mix elements in implementation and they "can shift from one conception of integration to another, sometimes [to] the opposite one" (2013, p. 8). As for implementation, some countries form special classes with a "personalized approach and individual curricula for refugee children", other countries include "refugee children in the general educational system without specific measures"; and at others the newcomers are involved in "preparatory" or "introductory" classes first and involved in the general education system when they are perceived as ready; alternatively many central and local governments pass from one model to another. (p. 13).

Pinson and Arnot studied how local education authorities (LEA's) in the UK, provides education for asylum seeking and refugee students by investigating the national and local context where they identified six different conceptual models (2005, p. 4-6). First model was *English as an alternative language (EAL) model*

where the main focus is on competence in English. Second is the *holistic model* where students' multiple and complex learning, social and emotional needs are acknowledged to contribute to their wellbeing and social inclusion. Third need is the *minority ethnic model* where the primary focus is on the underachievement of minority students. Fourth is the *new arrivals model* where the focus is on school admission and introduction to the new environment. Fifth is the *race equity model* where the focus is on racial discrimination, cultural differences and vulnerability. Sixth is the *vulnerable children* model where the focus is on the risk of dropping out from school (Pinson and Arnot, 2005, p. 4-6). *Holistic models* which Pinson and Arnot (2005) regarded as better practices had:

Particular strength in relation to parental involvement, community links and working with other agencies along with positive characteristics such as previous experience with minority pupils, promoting positive images of asylum-seeker and refugee students, establishing clear indicators of successful inclusion, an ethos of inclusion and the celebration of diversity, a holistic approach to provision and support and a caring ethos and the giving of hope. (p. 6-7, 48)

Nilsson and Bunar (2016), studied the *post-migration ecology*<sup>28</sup> in Sweden, and analyzed legal, organizational and pedagogical responses for inclusion of newly arrived students. Legal-wise there are four different groups of new-coming children in Sweden: (1) refugees and (2) immigrant children have the same compulsory educational rights as natives whereas the (3) undocumented and (4) asylum-seeking children's accession to education is not compulsory and their accession rates are lower (p. 403-404). Organizational-wise the system is decentralized and no national legal framework exists except for a set of recommendations<sup>29</sup> (Skolverket, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> "Post-migration ecology", is drawn from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model against "a one sided and homogenizing focus on singular factors, such as trauma,... migrant children's adaptation .... focusing only on individual social backgrounds, traumatic experiences, or the search for best practices and teachers' skills" is insufficient ; "how individual experiences and trajectories are conditioned by broader social contexts at different points in time" and their interactions and overlaps should be understood. (Nilsson & Bunar, 2016, p. 400-401).

<sup>29</sup> In 2008 the National Agency for Education (NAE) issued a set of recommendations

The different tracks of educational inclusion used by local governments are: (1) *transitional classes* from which transfer to local schools is indeterminate and arbitrary, which are most frequent, and offer limited opportunities to meet and socialize with other children, (2) *direct immersion* in mainstream classes to promote educational and social inclusion which are subject to criticism from school staff due to risk of lowering quality of education, (3) the *landing* classes to get accustomed to the new country before starting school, where children and parents come together regularly for a time which may range from a couple of weeks up to a few months and which is regarded to produce the best results, (4) *the schools exclusively for newcomers* which are criticized due to possibilities of accumulation of resources, segregation and isolation (p. 405-406). The pedagogical responses also led to “separation from the mainstream” and there were collective, standardized solutions such as Swedish as a second language teaching (which was most effectively embraced), mother-tongue education, bilingual scaffolding<sup>30</sup> and mapping of the previous knowledge of newcomers (p. 406). However, “the pedagogical responses that theoretically [recognize] prior experiences and knowledge (i.e., mother-tongue tuition, bilingual scaffolding, and mapping of previous knowledge) [worked] poorly in practice” and Nilsson and Bunar concluded that newly arrived students’ life experiences were “understood through a deficit model” and hence the educational aim was “not to ‘develop’ previous experiences and knowledge, but to ‘rectify’ various real and imagined problems” (p. 411). What they suggested was a holistic, “systematic and coherent approach that links practices in the classroom with local

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to schools drawn from organizational and pedagogical best practices.

<sup>30</sup> Bilingual scaffolding was applied primarily to enable students to follow tuition in other subjects by using their pre-existing capacity. Even if the Swedish educational legislation supports the right to bilingual scaffolding if a student risks failing a subject, it is an underutilized resource which is generally linked to lack of resources and competent teachers (Nilsson & Bunar, 2016, p. 409).

and national policy regulations [and where] the children would be treated as individuals with different needs and resources" (p. 412).

Matthews (2008) studied the educational inclusion needs of the Australian refugee students and how schools, local communities and State and Federal policies meet them. She also calls for a "holistic approach" which pays attention to "school ethos, welcoming environments, good induction procedures, home liaison, community links, pastoral care, ESL and English language support, racism and xenophobia and first language support" to highlight preparedness and "to address pre- and post-displacement issues that make the present acceptable and put hope for the future" (p. 41).

Factors and conditions critical for educational inclusion as well as those that hinder it are also studied thoroughly. It is suggested that a variety of factors are influential in immigrant youth's adaptation to the educational environment; these involve the society of origin, the society of settlement and reasons for migrating (Gibson, 1997; Ogbu, 1987). Also factors such as age, gender, previous schooling, economic situation and support in the host country all influence this transition (Prior and Niesz, 2012). Conversely, parents and community members can hinder (Erickson, 2001; Phelan, Davidson and Yu, 1993) or encourage (Ascher, 1985; Delgado-Gaitan; 1994; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) adaptation of the immigrant children. Eventually, adaptation to the educational environment is more common among those who regard the new cultural practices as an addition to their existing life, rather than those who seek them for replacement of their own (Gibson 1988, 1995).

Bačáková carried out a study on educational inclusion of refugee children in the Czech Republic and identified several factors that hinder it: inadequate

educational information, lack of appropriate evaluation and counseling for refugee students and their families, insufficient funding for schools, insufficient resources and teacher competences, insufficient support provision for refugee children's inclusion in schools, insufficient home-school cooperation, and inappropriate grade placement due to lack of second language acquisition by refugee children (p. 171). Deriving from these constraints, Bačáková notes the conditions that are essential "for full enjoyment of the right to education for refugee children: [provision of information] and support, teacher training for competence, financial, personnel and teaching resources, school-home partnerships and grade placement" (p. 172).

### 3.7 Educational attainment

Adaptation levels of young immigrants are frequently measured by "educational attainment [that involves] academic orientation, aspiration and performance" (Zhou, 1997, p. 75). "Family background variables, the [kinds] of schools that immigrant students encounter, second language acquisition challenges, student engagement and relational supports that together serve to undermine or bolster academic integration and adaptation" multiply determine academic performance (Orozco & Orozco, 2011). Banks (2011a) studied the patterns and prototypical responses of educational institutions –which he describes as *paradigms* –against the demands of the "ethnic revitalization movements in Western democratic nations such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia in 1960's and 1970's" concerning provision of means of equal participation and achievement for structurally marginalized ethnic groups in school (p. 17-29).

The *ethnic additive paradigm* refers to "infusion of bits and pieces about ethnic groups into the curriculum, especially into courses in the humanities, the

social studies, and the language arts" and *self-concept development paradigm* refers to addition of ethnic content "to increase the self-concept and academic achievement of ethnic minority students" (Banks, 2011a, p. 21). The *cultural deprivation* paradigm on the other hand "assume that low income youths do not achieve well in school because of family disorganization, poverty, the lack of effective concept acquisition, and other intellectual and cultural deficits that these students experience during their first years of life" where the aim is to compensate their deficits through provision of cultural or other experiences (p. 22). In such deficit perspective, success is associated "with the degree to which the students leave their tradition and languages" (Isik Ercan, 2012, p. 3029). In contrast, *cultural difference paradigm* argues that ethnic groups have strong, rich and diverse cultures and the school rather than the cultural deficits of the families is responsible for the underachievement of the children while there exists an overarching set of common values and goals and a need for a national identity shared by all ethnic and racial groups which the children should acquire by the help of the schools (Banks, 2011a, p. 22). Another is the *language paradigm*, where educators regard the achievement problems of ethnic minority "groups as resulting primarily from their language or dialect differences" (p. 23).

The *cultural ecology paradigm*, developed by Ogbu and Simons (1998) hypothesized that the low academic achievement of African Americans was due primarily to their opposition to White mainstream culture (Banks, 2011a, p. 24). Studying school performance, Ogbu and Simons (1998) classified minority groups mainly into two: (1) *voluntary (immigrant) minorities* are those who willingly moved to U.S. to look for better opportunities and who do not experience long-lasting school performance difficulties or cultural/language problems; (2) *involuntary*

(*nonimmigrant*) or *caste-like minorities* in contrast, are those who were forcibly made a part of the U.S. society and who are generally poor, experience persistent cultural/language problems and have low performance at school (p. 164-167).

*Voluntary* communities and parents have a trust in public schools, are committed to the success of their children with high academic expectations, support their children's learning English as an "additive", and hold their children responsible for academic performance rather than the schools; correspondingly the *voluntary* minority students work hard, show respect for teachers and school's rules (Ogbu and Simons, 1998, p. 144, 177). *Involuntary* minority communities and parents on the other hand have an ambivalent attitude towards schools where they expect children to work hard but have distrust in schools as a white institution, ask for inclusion of minority history in the curriculum, regard learning English as a "subtraction" from their non-White identities and hold school staff responsible for poor academic performance rather than their children; correspondingly *involuntary* students share the ambivalence of parents concerning success in school (p.178). Refugees are similar to the *voluntary* group according to Ogbu and Simons where they demonstrate a "tourist attitude ", which "helps them to learn to behave like Whites without fear of losing cultural identity often leading to success at school" (p. 165). Banks argues that *cultural ecological paradigm* has serious limitations as the theory "essentializes the *caste-like minorities* and does not describe variations within these groups"; besides the theory also "provides a rationale for educators to 'blame the victim' for their educational problems" (2011a, p. 24).

*The protective disidentification paradigm* (Steele, 2004) occurs as a response to *stereotype threat* which occurs "when individuals sense the possibility of ... being judged in terms of the stereotype" and respond by "disidentifying with the domain";

hence, remedial programs for minority students should pay attention to the reduction of the *stereotype threat* (Banks, 2011a, p. 24).

The *structural paradigm* to which theorists including neo-Marxists (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), critical theorists (McCarthy, 1988), antiracist theorists (Bonnett & Carrington, 1996), and critical race theorists (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) have participated, provides a structural and institutional analysis of the achievement problems of low-income and minority students and argues that “the school is part of the problem and plays a role in keeping ethnic groups marginalized” (Banks, 2011a, p. 25). To exemplify, underlining the misplacement of focus on the education gap, Ladson-Billings (2006) termed *the education debt* the American society owes to the immigrants in exchange for centuries of exploitation and oppression. The structural paradigm has been critical of multicultural education as it refrained from “serious discussion of class, institutionalized racism, power, and capitalism” and that “educators needed to focus on the institutions and structures of society rather than on the characteristics of minority students and cultural differences” which led to incorporation of elements of the structural paradigm into multicultural education (p. 25-26). Rather than the single-factor paradigms, which fall short of explain the complexities of low achievement of minorities, Banks suggests application of a multi-factor *holistic paradigm*, which conceptualizes the school as a social system where “educators should formulate and initiate a change strategy that reforms the total school environment in order to implement multicultural education successfully” (p. 26-27).

Another thesis which was not involved in the classification of paradigms by Banks (2011a) is the *segmented assimilation thesis* developed by Portes and Zhou (1993), which underlines that assimilation occurs in a segmented manner where the

outcomes would be “... either confinement to permanent underclass memberships or rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community’s values and solidarity.” Zhou (1997) discussed how various aspects of immigrant families’ lives, involving class, race/ethnicity, social capital, inter-generational relations, ethnic identity and language skills affect the process of educational attainment of their children. Underlining the emphasis of Coleman et al. (1966) on the considerable affect of parent’s social capital on children’s academic performance, Zhou attracted attention to children’s doing better by attending schools where peers rather demonstrated higher socioeconomic backgrounds (*residential segregation*) and by utilizing the “benefits of deliberate cultivation of ethnicity” (*ethnic resilience*) (1997, p. 76-78) where the advantage would be less for *caste-like minorities* in Ogbu’s classification.

Concerning the dominance of research on educational attainment in search for educational needs and adaptation of refugee children, there are some important criticisms. Rutter (2006) argues that “the dominance of school effectiveness discourses – in UK schools- and their emphasis on raising achievement” is against the implementation of “an ecological model to support refugee children” in order not to homogenize the refugee experience.” (cited in Pinson & Arnot, 2007, p. 404). Another concern is about operationalizing “success” predominantly as academic achievement, which “leads to overlooking other forms of accomplishments” (Sellick, 2010). Sellick studied perceived successes and support systems by refugee students in a Canadian context and found that “most participants did not speak about success as academic achievement, but rather as integration in school life, feeling competent, and forming relationships.” (p. ii)

### 3.8 Parental involvement, resources and strategies

Student engagement in education involves *cognitive engagement*, which refers to the degree to “which students are intellectually involved in what they learn”; *relational engagement*, which refers to the “extent to which students feel connected to their teachers, peers and others in school”; and *academic* or *behavioral engagement* which refer to “students’ participation and efforts to perform academic tasks”; all of which are highly influenced by parental involvement, resources and strategies (Orozco & Orozco, 2011, p. 68).

Several researchers attribute academic success of the students into the family, which is also factual for immigrant and refugee children (Orozco & Orozco; 2011; DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007; Desforges, 2003; McBrien, 2011; Delgado Gaitan, 2012; Pinson & Arnot, 2005). School achievement is about cognitive ability, motivation and also about families’ economic and social resources; which depend on the social conditions they exit from and the possibilities they receive in the host society; “their cultural patterns, values, family relations, and social ties reconstructed in the process of adaptation” (Zhou, 1997, p. 79-80, 90). Orozco & Orozco underlined that family background mattered referring to *education, poverty* and *status* where educated parents were better equipped to guide their children in studying, poverty brought about unsafe neighborhoods and segregated, overcrowded and understaffed schools and undocumented status conveyed past traumatic experiences of immigration and present anxiety about being separated from parents along with obstacles ahead of access to post-secondary education (2011, p. 65).

Social and cultural capital and relevant family resources to invest in children’s education has been a source of scholarly interest. Social capital is the

magnitude of existing or possible resources due to one's having an enduring network of some established relationships whose volume is determined by the size of economic, cultural or symbolic capital s/he possesses as well as his capability of mobilization of these networks (Bourdieu, 1986). However possession and activation of resources in social ties are two different things and as Lareau and Horvat (1999) states, individuals activate resources through consistency between their cultural capital and standards of the field, such as the school (Çelik, 2016, p. 2). Social capital may safeguard against adverse effects of disadvantage and this potential varies by class and race (Bottrell, 2009; Çelik, 2016; Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003).

Çelik studied educational resilience in disadvantaged neighborhoods of Istanbul with particular attention to parental network structure, by employing a Bourdieusian social and cultural capital approach where he studied resilience as an outcome of larger societal processes than regarding it normatively as a personal trait (2016, p. 1). Parental network structures of resilient students and dropouts differed along socioeconomic status and ethnicity; where dropouts were mostly from Kurdish and Romani families and it was more difficult for them to possess and activate resources in their networks when compared to Turkish parents, due to the long-term social exclusion which the two groups have been exposed to (p.10). Two main strategies the resilient children's parents utilized were *intergenerational closure*, which is whether or not parents are acquainted with the parents of their children's friends (Coleman, 1988) leading to creation of a small resourceful island of networks that the resilient parents form together with other parents and *drawing resources from school* by close involvement and activating social ties at school through relationship with the teachers, together with exercising high levels of caution and

close monitoring of children's schooling (p. 5). In Çelik's study (2016) ethnicity turned into a cultural resource for Turkish parents, because it increased their compliance with the standards of school and neighborhood where –unlike Kurdish and Romani parents- they did not feel inhibited and did not develop auto-control in their resource activation attempts concerning their environments and dominant institutions (p.11).

Parental involvement in schooling could help children build bridges over the cultural dissonance between home and school (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Prior & Niesz, 2012). "Family cohesion and the maintenance of a well-functioning system of supervision, authority, and mutuality" can shape the well being and social outcomes of children; when the family lives as a part of a larger community offering what Felton Earls (1992) termed "community agency" (as cited in Orozco & Orozco, 2011, p. 69).

At the heart of the family-school partnerships is a power relationship determined by families' knowledge about the educational system and schools' knowledge about the families between whom three major types of power sharing relations exist: "(a) conventional, (b) culturally responsive family-school-community connections, and (c) empowerment" (Delgado Gaitan, 2012, p. 306). The *conventional power relationship* is the one where schools exclude parents from participating and their role is limited to provision of the physical needs of the children on the ground that successful integration requires isolation from family traditions; involvement strategies involve sending notes to parents even if they can not read, parent-student-teacher activities and parent-teacher conferences where parents are judged as disinterested about their children's schooling if they can not attend, *culturally responsive family-school-community connections* is the second

type of power- relationship which refers to a power sharing where educators involve parents in ways that give them more of a voice creating a common culture with families through enhancing their knowledge of the students' home culture "as a means to provide a rich curriculum that allows students to express themselves and participate fully in their learning", *empowerment* is the third type of parent-school relationship where parents exercise their agency, make use of the opportunity to learn from other families through parent groups and grass-roots mobilization, establish strong communication with the child's teacher, and learn about the educational process enough to hold the school educators accountable (Delgado Gaitan, 2012, p. 307-310).

Despite their strong motivation and strong trust in public schools, parents may still be unable to involve in their children's education because of limited school experiences of their own, incapacity to help with homework, and lack of knowledge and acquaintance with curriculum, classroom methodology and materials; especially if the relevant school policies that recognize their diverse needs are lacking (İşık Ercan, 2012). Additional life challenges may make it especially difficult for refugee parents to be involved in education of their children (McBrien, 2011) as well as mistrust in authority figures due to having escaped repressive governments and difficulty in coping with lengthy bureaucracies (Earner, 2007; Hynes, 2003; Weine et al., 2006).

McBrien studied parental involvement of refugee mothers from Vietnam, Somali and Iran in US schools and utilized Bronfenbrenner's *ecological systems* (1979) as a theoretical model that emphasizes the importance of social and environmental contexts in the lives of individuals where he notes that each of the layers: "(1) *microsystem*, ... family, friends, school etc., *mesosystem* ...relationships

between people and settings, *exosystem*, ... indirect influence of people and settings, i.e. parent's [work place], *macrosystem*, ... social culture and values, and *chronosystem*, ... interplay between chronological personal development and environmental changes, are prominent in the life of a refugee, due to the traumatic events that occur before, during, and after flight from one's homeland and the rapid physical and psychological effects on one's sense of identity" (2011, p. 79).

McBrien's (2011) study provided for parents' challenges at different levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model such as reported prejudicial attitudes and differential level of appreciation concerning teachers that could point to lack of support by school staff at the *mesosystem* layer, lack of time due to long work hours that may indicate failure in the *exosystem* layer, perception of lack of discipline in US schools due to prohibition of corporal punishment may reflect a challenge to the *macrosystem* level, and discrimination which may be experienced on many levels: "from one's immediate contacts (*microsystem*), from networks of microsystems, such as schools (*mesosystem*); and from one's experience with the society at large (*macrosystem*)" and finally, painful memories along with less personal power in their new environment due to inadequate control of English, struggles with poor-paying jobs and unfamiliarity with new cultural expectations pointed to challenges at the *chronosystem* layer (p. 85-87).

Cultural dissonance and related miscommunications between refugee parents and school are commonly reported. McBrien (2011, p. 77-78) reviewed the US, Australian and Canadian literature on familial involvement in school among refugee parents from South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodia refugee parents regarded it as disrespectful to make suggestions to the teachers, in contrast US teachers regarded this abstinence as not valuing education;

while teachers valued independence, Southeast Asian parents believed in interdependence and obedience (Blakely, 1983; Smith-Hefner, 1993; Timm, 1994). Sudanese parents disagreed with US teachers' emphasis on play, preferring more academic materials and teaching styles, and avoiding eye contact was a culturally appropriate stance for Sudanese, but not for the teachers from the US (Tadesse, Hoot, & Watson-Thompson, 2009). Refugee parents generally complained about insufficient discipline in schools and tied their children's discipline problems to the prohibition of corporal punishment, which they believed challenged their parental authority (Birman, Trickett, and Bacchus and Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse, 2009, 2001, Dumbrill, 2008, Lewig, Amey and Salveron, 2010). Sudanese, Somalian, Iraqi, Irani and Vietnamese parents also shared they associated being called for meetings at school, with their children being in trouble (Lewig, Amey and Salveron, 2010). Another study in Australia provided that most refugee parents were "torn between the fear of shame if their children departed from the cultural values of their homeland and their desire for them to successfully acculturate into Australian society" (Atwell, Gifford and MacDonald-Wilmseti, 2009).

Concerning parental involvement, Ercan (2012) suggested bilingualism of children; enhancement of parental involvement in school through traditional and new ways; community education in the first language; early bilingual education experiences; facilitation of parents' awareness on the rights and opportunities of children and cultural responsiveness by the school by supporting family goals for child development. Delgado Gaitan mentions three different avenues for the parents to learn *the language of schooling* (Bourdieu, 1986): parents can learn to communicate with educators individually in the first avenue, the schools reach out to parents in the second and the community outside the school mobilizes in the third

within community groups to support families learning in how to advocate for themselves and for their children in schools (p. 311). Teachers, administrators and policymakers should be aware of cultural differences and not judge differences as inferiority acknowledging refugee parents various needs and their genuine interest in their children's education and finding ways to include refugee parents in their children's education should such as through the help of linguistic and cultural interpreters even if expected methods of involvement would not work, and carrying out cultural awareness and in-service trainings "that address innovative pedagogies in light of increasing linguistic and cultural diversity" (McBrien, 2011, p. 78). Importance of multi-level services by non-governmental organizations, especially the liaison services compensated more for the deficits in refugee parent-school-child relations (McBrien, 2011, p. 87). Bircan and Sunata also pointed to the critical importance of school liaison for urban refugee education (2015).

Intergenerational conflicts, which challenge parental authority "and have negative effects on children's self-esteem, psychosocial wellbeing and academic aspirations" should be considered concerning integration; while the younger generation focuses on current adaptation the parents may be "concerned both with making the best of a new environment and with retaining traditional family life" (Zhou, 1997, 84). *Generational consonance* happens "when parents and children both remain unacculturated, both acculturate at the same rate, or both acculturate selectively" and *generational dissonance* happens when children and parents do not acculturate at the same level leading to intensified parent-child conflicts which "deprives children of family or community resources and leads them farther away from parental expectations" (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; as cited in Zhou, 1997, p. 84-85) Rumbaut (1994) demonstrated that "parent-child conflicts were significantly less

likely to occur in families with both natural parents at home and with parents or siblings available to help with homework,” whereas factors which appeared to increase tension were children’s choice of speaking English at home, having low grades and low educational aspirations, longer duration of watching television, spending less time on homework and perceived or real experiences of discrimination (Zhou, 1997, p. 85).

The access to social resources for children can be lessened by the loss of family, but in some cases even if parents are not available or left behind, this “reconstructed family pattern” gave rise to a strength in reestablishing new mechanisms and social ties, still under unfavorable socioeconomic conditions and in isolation, families can not function effectively even if two natural parents are available. (Zhou, 1997, p. 80-81) Because of racial or class disadvantages, immigrant community involves “shared obligations, social supports and social controls which may either be supportive in educational inclusion but other times lead to lack of resources. (p. 82)

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis studies the Syrian families' pursuit of education for their children in Istanbul as members of the Syrian community in Turkey, regarding previous and current experiences and future prospects. It aims to disclose the meanings, feelings and prospects Syrian refugee parents attached to their children's education and raise awareness on the ways they struggle for acquisition of cultural capital by their children in Turkey. Syrian parents' reference frames, basis, and reasoning behind viewpoints and interpretations are studied. The possibilities and constraints their children encounter within the education system in Turkey are explored as well as the resources and strategies they put into use as a response. A qualitative study is conducted through grounded theory methodology by means of interviews and participant observations. First of all the grounded theory methodology and how it guides data collection and analysis is provided in this chapter. Then the design of the research, data collection procedures and instruments, research sites, research participants and data analysis will be explained.

#### 4.1 Grounded theory methodology

Grounded theory research methodology developed both as a reaction to the hegemony of quantitative research methods and an endeavour to develop systematic guidelines for qualitative research in 1960's (Dunne, 2011, p. 112). Glaser and Strauss, founders of the grounded theory describe it as facilitating "the discovery of theory from data" (1967, p.1). In grounded theory methodology, "hypotheses and concepts come from data during the course of the research [and] are systematically

worked out in relation to the data” towards a systematic discovery of the theory which “accounts for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved” (Glaser, 1978, p. 93). The elements of theory, which are *conceptual categories* of data, their *properties*, which are conceptual aspects or elements of a category; and *hypotheses*, which are “generalized relations among the categories and their properties,” are generated through comparative analysis and are all “indicated by the data” rather than being “the data itself” (Glaser and Strauss, 2006, p. 35-36). All the phases, coding, analysis and the generation of theory are done together as much as possible (p. 43).

Sampling method in grounded theory methodology is theoretical sampling, which is “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (Glaser and Strauss, 2006, p. 45). In theoretical sampling, “which is done in order to discover categories and their properties, and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory... groups must be chosen according to theoretical criteria” (p. 47, 62). The depth of theoretical sampling is attributed to the size of data collected on a group or a category while the researcher stops sampling when a category reaches *theoretical saturation* (p. 61). Theoretical sampling reduces the mass of data that otherwise would be collected on any single group (p. 70).

The research instruments may be either qualitative or quantitative in grounded theory research, but interviews and observations are common. The research initiates with open-ended conversations and, when the theory emerges through interviews and observations, the researcher starts asking questions relevant to her/his

categories, aiming “to fill in gaps and to extend the theory, [which] is an integrative strategy” (Glaser and Strauss, 2006, p. 76, 109).

The method of analysis in grounded theory methodology, constant comparative analysis has four stages: (1) *Comparing incidents applicable to each category*: All the incidents in the data are coded into new or existing categories, compared with the previous incidents coded in the same category while the category’s dimensions, conditions of its statement, its outcomes, its links with other categories, and its other properties are considered, which soon starts “to generate theoretical properties of the category” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006, p. 105-106). After coding for a category a few times, the conflicts in the emphases of her/his thinking will draw the analyst to stop and record some memos to catch the idea (p. 107). (2) *Integrating categories and their properties*: As the coding continues with constant comparisons, incidents are compared with the properties of the categories that which resulted from initial comparisons, while the diverse properties themselves start to become integrated as well as their categories drawing the analyst to make some related theoretical sense of each comparison (p. 107-109). (3) *Delimiting the theory*: As the theory develops, the analyst reduces and consequently generalizes the terminology, reduces the original list of categories for coding and as the categories reach theoretical saturation, delimitation is enabled so that *parsimony* of variables and formulation, and *scope* of applicability to other situations would be achieved, while keeping a close correspondence of theory and data. (p. 111) (4) *Writing theory*: Finally, the coded data and a series of memos develop into a systematic substantive theory, which is a reasonably accurate statement of the matters studied, and useful for others in the same field. (p. 113).

A highly divisive issue has been the use of existing literature in grounded theory research. Glaser & Strauss in their initial assertions, advise to ignore the literature on the area under study (1967, p. 37). However, Strauss split with Glaser who argues that grounded theorists must learn “not to know” and together with J. Corbin he advocated an early review of relevant literature (1992; Dunne, 2011, p. 114). The division is not on *whether*, but *when* the literature review should be done. A range of problems exist with delaying the literature review such as impossibility of “unlearning” and inevitability of preconceptions, inescapability of reviewing some literature while preparing the research proposal, possibility of “lazy ignorance of the literature”, the risk of reinvention of the wheel and underestimating potential of reflexivity of the researchers (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Dunne, 2011; Thornberg, 2012, p. 246). As Coffey and Atkinson assert, “open-mindedness should not be mistaken for empty mindedness”, which shows an inadequate stance in the research traditions of a discipline (1996, p. 157).

Reflexivity is the influence of the researcher on the research, which is already an important element of grounded theory, and is suggested to overcome the risks associated with an early literature review (Dunne, 2011; Thornberg, 2012). Another suggestion is *abductive reasoning* where the researcher moves back and forward and makes comparisons between data and extant knowledge in search for patterns and best possible explanations (Thornberg, 2012, p. 247). Other data sensitizing principles proposed by Thornberg in reviewing literature in his *informed grounded theory* are: *theoretical agnosticism* that is working cumulatively but being critical towards the existing literature, *theoretical pluralism* that is using different theoretical perspectives in order not to force extant concepts to the data, *theoretical sampling of literature* that is reviewing the literature in the guidance of the codes, concepts,

questions and ideas that emerge during data collection and analysis, *staying grounded* that is not treating prior knowledge as sacred truths but focusing on the data rather than the literature, *theoretical playfulness*, that is thinking in associative and creative ways that allow movement “beyond a descriptive cataloguing of data to theorizing imaginatively”, and *memoing extant knowledge associations* is using pre-existing concepts only as “flexible, modifiable and sensitive ideas, creative associations and heuristic tools” (p. 249-254).

*Constructivist grounded theory*, which is later developed as a version of grounded theory, assumes that; the theory is constructively generated by the researcher and the participants through interaction (Charmaz, 2006; Thornberg, 2012; Gehrels, 2013). In constructionism, “the essence of creating knowledge is not finding an objective truth waiting to be discovered [but] knowledge is seen as being constructed in a process of social interchange between the subject and the object” (Gehrels, 2013, p. 21). Constructivist grounded theory, which is divergent from positivism of the original epistemology of the grounded theory, also involves the reflectivity of the researcher in the research and the “interplay between data and researcher constructs the outcomes of the study” (Charmaz, 2006).

#### 4.2 Research design

Syrian refugee parents’ perspectives and interpretations, as active agents within the field, are ambiguous concerning their children’s education in Turkey. Grounded theory methodology was selected in this study, to inquire perceptions regarding a particular subject area with a scientific method, also remaining “faithful to the interpretive nature of qualitative analysis” (Hennik, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; quoted in Gehrels, 2013).

As for data collection, in depth qualitative interviews with Syrian parents were held to explore their subjective experiences, perspectives and expectations. Still, merely conducting in-depth interviews would leave an important part of the picture aside. The study is carried out during 2016 when the permanence of Syrian refugees in Turkey, was ultimately undertaken by the Turkish authorities and relevant educational policies were under experimentation together with other social policies. In such a dynamic period both politically and policy-wise, I decided to volunteer in a community center to catch a continuous grasp of developments concerning educational lives of Syrian children and to ease building contact with Syrian refugee parents living in Istanbul. From February 2016, still continuing when this thesis is being written, I volunteered in teaching Turkish to Syrian school age children regularly every week which was helpful for the collection of participant observations contributing to the analysis of parents' narratives on children's educational lives.

Pilot interviews are conducted on March 31, 2016, and the rest of the interviews are conducted from May 11 till November 6, 2016, while participant observations have been recorded throughout the research. The study was approved by the Committee on Ethical Conduct in Extramural Academic Relations in Boğaziçi University on July 2013 where the approval is provided in Appendix A.

#### 4.3 Participants and data collection

Initially, as a result of a series of discussions with the members of the Thesis Supervisory Committee it was decided that participants would be recruited among parents of Syrian school age children in Istanbul and gender balance would be preserved among them. After the coding and analysis of the four pilot interviews,

participants were selected on this criteria and the education level of parents was determined as an additional criterion. Then, the criterion was refined in a way that parents with school age children who were graduated from intermediate school, which is end of compulsory school in Syria. The aim was to reach more data rich parents where cultural capital was regarded as worthy, with the assumption that educated parents would put more effort in education even in the difficult circumstances of seeking refuge. As the data collection and analysis progressed through coding and comparison, it soon revealed that it was not the level of education itself but the educational motivation of the participant that led to richness of data concerning education of children. Hence, those parents whose education levels were lower than intermediate level were also involved but the selection criteria became the educational motivation of the parents through the course of the research.

Initially the inquiry was centered on parents of compulsory school age but through data analysis and concurrent literature review, it was adjusted to involve preschool children also as preschool education is of particular importance for refugee children and the future educational plans of Turkey include involvement of preschool age in compulsory education. Additionally, the research group was expected to involve Syrian parents who were living under temporary protection in Turkey, however a considerable number of Syrian parents who lacked temporary protection emerged among those interviewed appearing to comprise a category facing additional educational and other constraints. Hence parents “lacking kimlik” were also categorized and added in the group of participants. Also, as interviews were initiated in the community center, mothers who were involved in the community center activities or families who received support and counseling from the community center were interviewed initially. However, since the categories and their

properties required comparison with other groups, the researchers also aimed at reaching parents who had no connection to the community center.

A thorough review of literature was not carried out before initiating research but was initiated concurrent to the data collection, coding and analysis processes after data collection started. As Thornberg (2012) suggested, the researcher made comparisons between data and extant knowledge in search for patterns and best possible explanations (*abductive reasoning*) while the review has been guided by the codes, concepts, questions and ideas that emerged during data collection and analysis (*theoretical sampling of literature*) but the researcher paid attention to *staying grounded*.

Hence theoretical sampling, as a purposive method was utilized as the sampling methodology of the grounded theory study of Syrian parents' perspectives. Initial recruitment strategy for mothers has been to reach them through the community center and for fathers to interview them in their work places. Some parents were reached through others who already participated in the research. The population of the study was held flexible until data and theoretical saturation has been reached. Interviews have been made with 20 female and 15 male participants reaching 35 parents in total.

#### 4.3.1 Interviews

Main data collection instrument in this study has been qualitative interviewing, which refers to "... conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in extended discussion. The researcher elicits depth and detail about the research topic by following up on answers given by the participant during the discussion" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 4) The qualitative interviews with Syrian

parents led to a compilation of a list of diverse and useful questions which the researcher names as the interview guide. Through progress in data collection, coding and analysis, issues at hand were diversified and specified according to emerging categories and their properties. Questions in the interview guide were also diversified during this course but they were used selectively during the interviews in accordance with what the participant wanted to focus on. Hence an extensive list of questions are involved in the interview guide which is provided in Appendix B. A focused and *responsive interviewing technique* (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) enabled the researcher to depart from the interview guide whenever needed. Responsive interviewing reminds, “qualitative interviewing is a dynamic and iterative process [rather than] a set of tools to be applied mechanically … useful in learning about a topic but also what is important to those being studied” (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p. 15).

Thirty-four interviews conducted from May 11, 2016 to November 6, 2017, and one pilot interview conducted on March 31, 2016 was also considered in the research group. Refugee parents provided valuable insights during the interviews and the course of the interview was revised to accommodate their experiences when needed.

The interviews, implemented in a flexible manner involved two parts: demographics of the participant parent and educational trajectories of their children. Demographics involved age, region in Syria, region in Istanbul, duration and place of settlement in Istanbul, duration and place of settlement in Turkey, level of education, employment in Syria and in Turkey, education level and employment of her/his spouse, number of children, children’s age, gender and education level. Children’s educational trajectories involved educational experiences in Syria and current experiences of education in Turkey, also future prospects on education. The

interviews focused on decision-making, parental involvement, strategy building and resource mobilization in response to challenges and possibilities encountered.

Experiences in Syria have been inquired with caution in order not to regenerate any traumatic experiences.

The interviews were initiated in the community center in Çapa and places around so only four of the first 15 interviews were with fathers, eleven of them were with mothers. So, even if not intentional female participants' interviews are carried out mostly in the first four months and male participants' interviews are conducted mostly in the last three months. This provided the researcher to concentrate on the conditions and perspectives of mothers and fathers distinctively. There was a strict division of space, all female refugees were consulted in their homes or the community center; whereas all male refugees were consulted in their work places.

In thirty of the interviews the researcher made the first contact herself by the assistance of an interpreter. Only five of the participants were reached through snowball sampling. The interviews lasted between 12 to 70 minutes, conducted in Arabic and English, with assistance of three different Arabic to English interpreters, who are also volunteers in their local community and who are university graduates. Syrian refugees were intentionally chosen as interpreters so that participants would share thoughts comfortably. The researcher and the interviewer had a few hours meeting before the interviews where the research purpose and methodology was explained thoroughly. Nineteen of the interviews were conducted with a Syrian English teacher who was 32 years old, 15 of them with a Syrian pharmacy graduate who is 24 years old and one of them with a Syrian computer engineer who is 28 years old; all of whom were males. The transcriptions were reviewed by a native Arabic - English speaker to check any meaning lost in translation.

An informed consent form in English and Arabic, which are available in Appendix C and D were prepared and the researcher explained that the data to be collected would be confidential to the participants. After the interviews, the participants signed the consent form. All interviews were recorded, always with the permission of the participants. I have renamed all the participants during analysis for the sake of confidentiality.

#### 4.3.2 Interview sites

Thirty-five interviews were conducted in Istanbul, 31 of them in Fatih, three of them in Kağıthane and one of them in Avcılar. As for the Syrian population in various districts of Istanbul, Fatih ranks fourth with 30,747 Syrians who make up 7.33% of the whole district, Avcılar ranks the tenth with 19,554 Syrians who make up 4.54% and Kağıthane ranks the sixteenth with 14,216 Syrians who make up 3,24% (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 36). Most interviews are conducted in “the capital of Syria in Turkey”<sup>31</sup>, that is the Fatih district of Istanbul, which is a most cosmopolitan space in the world hosting different international migrant communities along with conservative background Muslim communities (Kaya, 2016). The neighbourhoods of Fatih where the interviews are conducted are Çapa, Yusufpaşa, Fındıkzade and Karagümrük.

The interviews were held in comfortable places for the participants. Fourteen of the twenty female participants were recruited in Small Projects Istanbul (SPI) Community Center<sup>32</sup> in Çapa neighbourhood of Fatih district, two others were

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted from an interview with the head of Support to Life Association working with Syrian refugees in Istanbul.

<sup>32</sup> SPI Community Center is operated by a multicultural team of volunteers involving Syrians under a registered association in Turkey named *Zeytin Ağacı Derneği* (Olive Tree Association). As a grassroots organization aiming to support “those displaced by conflict in the Middle East and North Africa Regions” and working to “rebuild lives through sustainable grassroots initiatives, including a

interviewed in the garden of the Fatih Mosque, one in a hotel in Yusufpaşa where she was employed and three others in their own houses in Kağıthane. Thirteen of the father's interviews were carried out in their work places in Fatih, only one was exceptionally held in a barber's shop in Avcılar and another one in the garden of the Fatih mosque. Father's workplaces involved barber's shops, restaurants, coffee shops, a grocery store, and a breakfast shop. One family whose father was recruited among the participants inhabited in the small grocery store that the father operated.

Table 2 shows the number of participants by site of interview and gender.

Table 2. Number of Participants by Site of Interview and Gender

Participants	Community Center (in Fatih)	Work place (in Fatih and Avcılar)	House (in Kağıthane)	Garden of the mosque (in Fatih)	Total
Female	14	1	3	2	20
Male	0	14	0	1	15
Total	14	15	3	3	35

Most interviews with female participants (no: 17) were held either in the community center or in their houses; whereas most interviews with male participants (no:14) were held in their work places.

#### 4.3.3 Participants

The study, conducted between March – November 2016 involves 35 Syrian parents aged from 22 to 53 who escaped to Turkey during 2012-2016 among whom, 19 mothers, 14 fathers, one elder sister, and one elder brother exist. Average age is 36. This generation was of particular interest because their children were supposedly at school age, however through theoretical sampling the research group was adjusted to

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women's craft collective, an array of language classes, as well as other activities such as music, art, and computer programs" (SPI, n. d.), SPI is situated in a small basement in Çapa which was formerly a *merdivenaltı* (illegally operating under the stairs) textile workshop which evolved into the present community center where the concept is genuinely realized as the center involves a dedicated community made up of Syrian people themselves.

involve preschool children. Additionally parents mentioned experiences for elder children; thus the researcher captured the characteristics of school experiences at different ages.

All the men and women among the research group are married except four. One of the mothers had a divorce, one had lost his husband in war and two of them were single who were an elder brother and a sister. There were four single mother families. One mother had divorced in Syria, one had lost his husband in war, one's husband was arrested in Aleppo, and the other's handicapped husband was stuck in Idleb.

The level of education of the participants does not fall below primary education and is summarized in Table 3. As is indicated in the table, women's level of education is higher than men among the research group. Also, when all the participants and their spouses are considered, mother's level of education is generally higher than their husband's level of education, which is worth to consider for it is generally the mothers who support children's education at home.

Most participants' families could be described as working class, while most fathers work either in restaurants, barbershops or in textile industry. Fathers work as restaurant accountants or managers (no: 6), *bakkal* (small grocery store operator) (no: 3), cooks (no: 2), coffee shop operators (no: 2), and barbers (no: 2). Mothers work as teachers (no: 2), house-keepers in a hotel (no: 1) or housewives at home (no: 17). The data presented in Appendix E is designed to help develop an understanding of the correlation between participants' spouses' and children's age and their access to education and employment, both in Syria and in Turkey.

Table 3. Participants' Level of Education

Participants' Level of Education	Female	Male	Total
Primary	1	1	2
Primary+	2	6	8
Intermediate	7	2	9
Intermediate+	1	1	2
High school	4	1	5
High school+	1	2	3
University	4	2	6
Total	20	15	35

The families had at least one and at most seven children where average is 3.3. The inquiry is on preschool and compulsory school age with an age range from 4 to 18. 69 children's educational experiences are discussed with their parents, among which eight of them are preschool age, 34 are primary school age, 19 are secondary school age and 8 are high-school age. Number of girls is 33 and number of boys is 37. Table 4 provides the number of children at various age levels with respect to gender and school accession.

Table 4. Number of Children at Various Age Levels by Gender and Access to School

Number of Children in Various School Age Levels by Gender	Boy		Girl		Total		Grand Total
	Accessed School	No Access	Accessed School	No Access	Accessed School	No Access	
Preschool age	2	2	0	4	2	6	8
Primary school age	13	2	14	5	27	7	34
Secondary school age	11	1	6	1	17	2	19
High school age	1	4	2	1	3	5	8
Total	27	9	22	11	49	20	69

Most participants come from Damascus and Aleppo. The cities that the research participants come from are summarized in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Participants' City of Origin in Syria

Participants' City of Origin	Female	Male	Total
Damascus	8	6	14
Aleppo	8	5	13
Deraa	1	0	1
Palmyra	0	1	1
Rakka	0	1	1
Latakia	2	1	3
Zabadani	1	1	2
Total	20	15	35

The years of entry for the participants are indicated in Table 6, and most participants came during 2014-2015.

Table 6. Participants' Year of Entry in Turkey

Participants' Year of Entry	Female	Male	Total
2012	0	2	2
2013	4	1	5
2014	8	7	15
2015	8	3	11
2016	0	2	2
Total	20	15	35

Though the interviews were held in Fatih, Kağıthane and Avcılar, the districts of settlement in Istanbul are scattered which are provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Participants' District of Settlement in Istanbul

Participants' District of Settlement	Female	Male	Total
Fatih	15	10	14
Balat	2	1	3
Kağıthane	3	0	3
Sultangazi	0	1	1
Esenler	0	1	1
Güngören	0	1	1
Avcılar	0	1	1
Total	20	15	35

#### 4.3.4 Pilot interviews

Four pilot interviews were held in *Kağıthane* in Istanbul on March 31, 2016 in Syrian refugee households with which the researcher had previous contacts. Interpreter was a 28 years old Syrian computer engineer with high proficiency in English. First pilot interview was with a 42 years old Turcoman father from Damascus who studied until the end of second grade having one school age son among 10 people in the household who was enrolled in a public school nearby. He emphasized the optionality of education in their community in Syria but shared his contentment with his son's enrolment in school in Turkey. Second pilot interview was with a 38 years old primary school graduate Arab mother who had seven children; five of whom were school age. Only two of her children, 9 years old son and 12 years old daughter were going to a TEC, all of the others were working. She shared her destitute for living conditions in Turkey bursting into tears. This painful experience proved my concerns on the fragility of the participants and importance of ensuring comfort during the interviews. I decided refraining from any questions, which may regenerate trauma. The challenge was not only due to the fragility of the situation of refugees, but also the difficulty of building connection and comfort through translation. I also involved this caution in the interview protocol for translators. Third interview was with a 32 year old Turcoman father who studied until fourth grade and had three school age children out of school. He said he thought about sending his son to a primary public school next year so that he learnt Turkish but he did not think of sending daughters to school at all, as "they already know Turkish". The fourth interview was with a 22 years old mother from Aleppo who was an Arab who was a high school graduate. Her daughter was school age and was at a Turkish school at first grade whereas his son was in preschool education at the

same school. She shared her hopes on a good education and a good life for children. The pilot interviews pointed to rise in emphasis on education with respect to education level. Henceforth the research group was initially limited to compulsory school graduate parents in the study, however this limitation was once again extended through theoretical sampling as through coding and analysis it appeared that not the level of education but the level of educational motivation enhanced the richness of data.

#### 4.3.5 Participant observations

As a qualitative method with roots in traditional ethnographic research, participant observation facilitates the continual reassessment and redevelopment of research questions and hypotheses through generation of new insights by increasing familiarity with the context and enhancing both the quality of data and the quality of interpretation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p. 15-16). In this study, the researcher started volunteering with school-age Syrian children by teaching Turkish in Small Projects Istanbul Community Center operating for Syrian refugees in *Çapa* neighbourhood of *Fatih* district of Istanbul in February 2016, well before starting interviews in May 11, 2016. The volunteering experience proved valuable as it provided for collecting participant observations and eased building trust and familiarity so that interviews could be conducted with mutual trust and comfort. After becoming a regular volunteer and participating also in other activities of the center, the researcher had the opportunity to meet and contact some of the mothers who participated in the research more than once. Participant observations were collected in field notes throughout the volunteer work, during the interviews or in other encounters with parents in and out of the community center, or during assisting

a Syrian parent in some public space. These field notes involved both the researcher's observations and also thoughts, feelings and reflections, all of which were involved in the analysis of data within the study through constant comparative methodology.

During the research, realizing the difficulties of Syrian parents in involvement in public schools, I assisted in holding parent-teacher meetings in a public school, which had regular parent-teacher conferences where Syrian parents were reluctant to participate due to the language barrier. After the school's approval, six volunteers from the network of the community center volunteered and through translation in Arabic-English-Turkish, parent-teacher meetings were held during which participant observations were collected and field notes were taken afterwards.

#### 4.4 Data analysis

The researcher applied a variation of Glaser and Strauss' (2008) grounded theory approach, where data collection and analysis, and theory building coincided. Emerging categories, properties and relational theories were continuously searched in constant comparison of the data collected through the interviews and participant observations.

Data analysis depended on Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open-ended coding approach. A three-column table is developed for each interview where the narratives are in the first column, open codes in the second and the categories in the third. In open coding, conceptual labels are attached line by line to narratives while researcher's assumptions are recorded by memoing. The phases of the data analysis within the study are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Phases of Data Analysis

Phase	Process
1	First interview Open-coding, categorising and memoing Emerging categories: “resources & strategies”, “self education”, “public school”, “temporary education center”, “meaning”, “overall conditions”, “future prospects”, “language learning”, “Syrian education”, “Turkish education”
2	Second interview Emerging category: “intermission in school”
3	Third interview Emerging categories: “school choice” & “parental involvement”
4	Fourth interview Emerging category: “accession”
5	Constant comparison Properties and relations developed
6	Twelfth interview Literature review initiated, diversification of questions, analysis by another researcher, emerging category: “emotions”
7	Sixteenth interview (after Turkey’s decision to integrate all Syrian children in public schools) Emerging categories: “educational integration” and “curriculum”
8	... Going back and forward, coding, categorizing, memoing with constant comparative method

After open coding of the first interview, using open codes as a starting point, the categories are developed such as “resources & strategies”, “self education”, “public school”, “temporary education center”, “meaning”, “overall conditions”, “future prospects”, “language learning”, “Syrian education”, “Turkish education”. In the next interview “intermission in school”, in the next “school choice” and “parental involvement” and in the following “accession” category was added. After coding and categorizing five interviews, through constant comparison, narratives are studied in these categories to assign properties and develop relations in between them. Searching for relations, definitions, and meanings and reasoning in parents’ narratives, new categories emerged and memoing continued throughout the process. When the main categories arose after first twelve interviews, literature review through these categories was initiated, which enhanced and provided the researcher to rethink and assess understanding, which also contributed in the diversification of

research questions in later interviews. To compare results for inter-rater reliability, selected four interviews were coded and categorized by another researcher who studies educational sociology and qualified in qualitative research. This double coding experience has been also valuable to see the commonalities and divergences in coding and resulted in an additional category of “emotions”. Turkey’s decision to integrate Turkish and Syrian students in public schools and to close TECs influenced Syrian parents’ educational decisions and the research considerably. Categories of “educational integration” and “curriculum” were developed and added to the list thereafter. The process of coding involved going back and forward between data, coding and writing memos, comprehension and evaluation through constant comparison. The analysis followed the scheme developed by Saldana (2009) given in Figure 6.

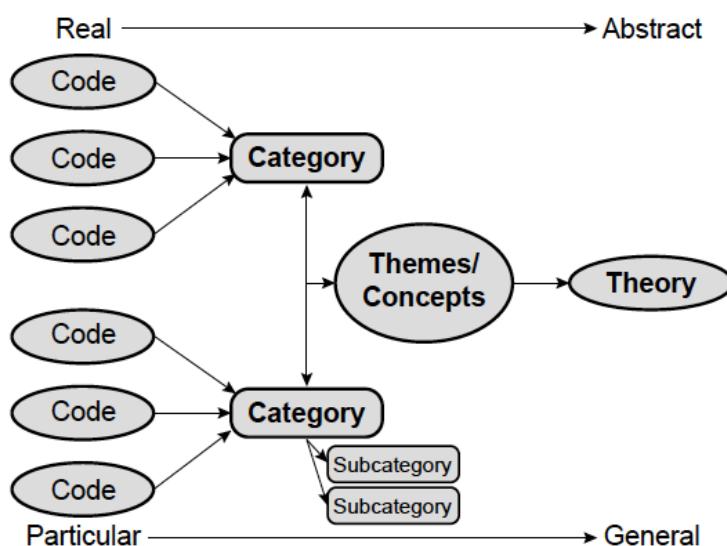


Figure 6. A streamlined codes to theory model for qualitative inquiry  
 Source: Reprinted from *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (p. 12) by J. Saldana 2009, London: Sage.

Participant observations collected in field notes, were transferred into an excel table regularly since the beginning and by the end, they have been subject to a similar

coding, categorizing and analyzing process which enriched the data as well as provided for a checking of interpretations of the researcher of the narratives.

Lastly, theoretical coding is applied, which thoroughly explores the relationships between categories, as the data is believed to have reached theoretical saturation.

In this study, through constructivist grounded theory methodology, the research was influenced by my interpretation and reflections as a researcher where I aimed to acknowledge when and where it impacted. And while the literature review and voices of the participants were taken into consideration together, the grounded theory methodology proved effective in exploring perspectives of Syrian parents on their children's education.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The effort and perspectives of Syrian parents for the acquisition of cultural capital for their children in Turkey is investigated in this research, taking their past and present experiences together with future prospects into consideration. Meanings and prospects attached to their children's education and the possibilities and constraints encountered in pursuit of children's education by Syrian refugee parents in Turkey is studied as well as the resources and strategies they put into use as a response.

I present the findings of the study under six headings. First section involves brief self-histories for a broader understanding of parents' reflections. The second explores the factors influencing the overall living conditions of Syrian families in Istanbul, including status, subsistence, housing, employment, child labour, health, social encounters, learning Turkish and emotions. Third section explores the meanings attached to children's education by Syrian parents. Fourth section is on the reflections of parents on the *past*, that is the Syrian education system and schools in Syria. The fifth section focuses on the *present* educational experiences in Turkey under three sub-sections of "Dilemma of school choice", "Public schools: Quest for adaptation and permanence", "TECs: Magnetism of cultural familiarity and friendship". The last section is about the reflections on *future* that involves, the future prospects and expectations of parents concerning education of children.

## 5.1 Brief self-history of the participants

Brief self-histories of the participant parents are provided in this section in chronological order. Female and male participants' self-histories are provided respectively to provide understanding of general patterns with respect to gender.

### 1- AMAL (mother)

Interview date is March 31, 2016. Amal (age: 24) is from Aleppo and came to Istanbul two years ago. Her seven brothers and sisters are intermediate school graduates and she is a high-school graduate. She could not continue her education due to financial reasons and the war totally demolished any possibility to continue afterwards. She lost her home due to war. She only worked as a housewife in Syria but in Turkey she tried working as a bus guide in a TEC and quit after two months due to low salary. Her husband has no education and is currently working in a textile workshop for 320 TL a week in Istanbul. She has two children, a six-year-old daughter in the first grade and a four-year-old son at the kindergarten of the same public school.

### 2- BARA (mother)

Interview date is May 11, 2016. Bara (age: 41) is from Damascus and has been in Istanbul for the last 11 months. She is originally Palestinian. She graduated from high school. She is divorced. She has worked as a laundry manager for a few years and after that she assisted in a doctor's clinic in Syria. She worked in a restaurant in Turkey for sometime but she quit due to hardship. She tried but could not find another job in Turkey. She only works as a housewife. She also receives some stipends from the Community Center in Fatih in return to her assistance in organisational activities and in translation. She has four children. Two daughters are 19 and 18 and two sons are 16 and 15 years old. Two daughters have finished high

school in Syria. Her 18-year-old daughter and 15-year-old son are living with her in Istanbul. The other children are in Germany and are now waiting for a residence permit. Her 18-year-old daughter works as a sales person in a language education company in Istanbul and sustains the home. Her 15-year-old son has gone to a Syrian school for some time, but now he has quit as she is planning to send him to Germany as well and as he looked after her when he was sick a few months ago.

### 3 – HALA (mother)

Interview date is June 3, 2016. Hala (age: 40) from Aleppo has been in Turkey for two years. There had been an explosion at home in Aleppo. She got burnt seriously. Due to lack of health care in Syria she came to Turkey. But she could not have full treatment here as well, due to financial reasons and as the family gave priority to the education of their children. She is an intermediate school graduate. She worked as a hairdresser for 25 years in Syria but she does not work outside the home in Turkey. She has four children. Her two sons are seven and nine and her daughter is eight years old. She did not give information about the other child. All three children in Turkey go to a public school in Fatih district of Istanbul.

### 4- HOUDA (mother)

Interview date is June 3, 2016. Houda (age: 40) from Damascus has been in Turkey for two years. She graduated from intermediate school. She worked as a housewife but occasionally also worked as a tailor at home. Her husband, also an intermediate school graduate is a butcher and has been arrested in Syria for the last four years. She has three children, two sons aged 17 and four, and a daughter aged ten. The 17 years old son is still in Aleppo involved in war. As when they fled Syria, they went first to Lebanon, then to Turkey, the family members are not entitled to temporary protection in Turkey. Her brother is a computer engineer but he works as a translator

in Istanbul and it is him who sustains the home. His salary is 1500 TL. Her daughter has gone to a public school in *Fatih* for a year but since there were difficulties with inclusion, now she is in a Syrian school in the same district. A Yemenian friend she met in Turkey pays for the school expenses of her daughter. She hopes the war will be over, her husband will be discharged and the family will re-join again in Syria.

#### 5- CANA (mother)

Interview date is June 17, 2016. Cana (age: 38) is from *Daraa*, which is very close to the Jordanian border and near Damascus. She has been in Turkey since eight months. She graduated from high school and then she got married. She has four children. Her daughters are 18 and 17 and sons are 14 and 10 years old. All of them are going to a Syrian school in *Fatih*. The oldest girl has finished high school and wants to go to a university. The family is looking for funds for her to study at the university.

#### 6 – MARWA (mother)

Interview date is June 17, 2016. Marwa (age: 42) from Aleppo came to Turkey three years ago and she has lived in *Fatih*, Istanbul since then. She is a high school graduate. She is the mother of four boys aged ten, 17, 21 and 22. Her oldest son had finished high school and started studying economics at the university when the war started in Syria. He could not continue. He is still in Syria involved in the FSA. Her 21 years old son went to Germany and the 17 years old son is in Istanbul working in a textile workshop where he puts emblems on the clothes. Her ten-year-old boy is currently going to an imam hatip school in *Fatih* in Istanbul.

#### 7 – RUKAYA (mother)

Interview date is July 22, 2016. Rukaya (age: 42) from Damascus has been here for a year. She has two children, a ten year old at grade four and a six year old at grade one. She graduated from a two years trading institute in Damascus University and

she was working as a primary school teacher in Syria. In Turkey she is only working as a housewife. They have attempted to go to Europe but were stopped by the police in İzmir. She is learning Turkish and English in the community center. Their children are going to a Syrian school in Fatih but next-year they are thinking of sending them to a Public school in the same district.

#### 8 –YASMİN (Mother)

Interview date is July 22, 2016. Yasmin (age: 52) is from Aleppo and has been in Turkey for a year and nine months. She graduated from high school and has studied three years in the university but did not graduate. She worked as a primary school teacher in Syria for 30 years. She tried to find a job in Turkey, but could not. She mentioned she is not allowed to work as a teacher despite her considerable experience as a teacher. She has four children. Three boys aged 22, 19 and 13 and a girl aged 25. All are in Turkey. Her daughter is married and has two children. Her 22 years old son is working and he is the only one financially supporting the home. Her 19 years old son was accepted to study engineering in Aleppo University but could not continue due to war. They are looking for ways to help him study at the university in Turkey. He applied for 20 universities in and out of Istanbul but was declined by 10 of them after the interview. The 13 years old son is going to a Syrian school in Fatih, Istanbul. Yasmin attended a Turkish course in a primary school in Turkey and finished elementary level A1.

#### 9- SUNDUZ (mother)

Interview date is July 25, 2016. Sunduz (age: 30) is a primary school graduate from Aleppo. She came to Turkey two years ago with her family. She has three sons. During the time of the interview, none of the children were going to school. The youngest is eight years old and has thalassemia. They went to Şişli Etfal Children's

Hospital in Istanbul for health care. He required a surgical operation but Sunduz was not sure whether they could have it free of charge or not as she had confusing information from the hospital and from the other Syrian refugees in Turkey. Her son with thalassemia and the one aged ten never went to school in their lives. The eldest son was 14 at the time of the interview, he had studied in Syria for four years before and went to a public school to the first grade when they first came to Turkey but he quit because it was not useful as the school did not provide the books free of charge and he could not learn Turkish. He started working as an *ortacı* (middleman) in a textile workshop afterwards, as Sunduz who was working for subsistence became ill and could work no more. Sunduz told that she wanted to send her son to the school but the family could not afford living otherwise. The father who is also a primary school graduate is working as an *ortacı* in the same workshop. She studied Turkish in the community center.

#### 10- LUJEYN (sister)

Interview date is July 25, 2016. Lujeyn (age: 26) is from Aleppo. She came to Turkey three years ago and she occasionally goes back to Syria and comes back to Turkey. The family thinks of going back to Syria even if the war does not end due to the poor economic conditions here in Turkey. She finished high school but could not enter the baccalaureate exam due to the war. They were five children in the family but two of them passed away during war. One brother lives in Syria and another who is 9 years old lives in Istanbul with them. He goes to a Syrian school in Fatih district of Istanbul.

#### 11- LINN (mother)

Interview date is August 3, 2016. Linn (age: 33) is from Zebadani and she came to Turkey two years ago with her children. She is an intermediate school graduate. She

never worked outside the home in Syria or in Turkey. Her husband has a university degree of economics. He had his own supermarket in Syria but here he works in a restaurant as an accountant. She has three children. One daughter is 14 years old and she had asthma in Turkey because of the poor living conditions at home, they live in a basement. Her other daughter is ten and her son is seven years old. The youngest and eldest children are going to a TEC in Fatih but her 14 years old daughter goes to a public school in Topkapı. She also went to the TEC her siblings were going to but because of financial problems and as the family wanted her to learn Turkish, she was sent to public school. Linn is participating in silver crafts workshop in the community center to help the family's subsistence expenses. She is also learning Turkish there to find a job.

#### 12- RIM (mother)

Interview date is August 12, 2016. Rim (age: 43) is an intermediate school graduate from Damascus. When the war started her home was destroyed. She had to move from one area to another and came to Turkey with her two children and some neighbours one year ago. She was in Idleb when she fled from Syria. She has four children. Her 21 years old son was in the military and he managed to escape to Austria. The second 21 years old son is stuck in Idleb, with his handicapped father and they are trying to find a way to come to Turkey and join them. Her daughter is 16 and the youngest son is 11 years old. She came straight to Istanbul and worked for different people in a pedicure shop, in a restaurant and in a factory until she started working as a housekeeper at a hotel in Yusufpaşa. She works for twelve hours six days a week. Her 11 years old son goes to a Syrian school in Fatih free of charge.

#### 13- WAFAA (mother)

Interview date is September 9, 2016. Wafaa (age: 29) is from countryside of Damascus and came to Turkey one and a half year ago. She has two children, a nine years old daughter and a seven years old son. She graduated from primary school. She studied until the end of the seventh grade but did not want to continue, as she was not good at school. She did not work outside the home in Syria but she tried to work in a hairdresser for a short time here in Turkey. Her husband was a tailor but he passed away during the war. She tried to learn Turkish online but found it very difficult. The children were going to a TEC in *Kağıthane* the year before but they have decided to send them to a public school in *Kağıthane* the next year (2016-2017). However her son was not accepted as he had the pre-registration document but did not have his temporary protection ID yet. So the family sent him back to the Syrian school in *Kağıthane*.

#### 14- SEMAHE (mother)

Interview date is September 9, 2016. Semahe (age: 24) from Damascus came to Turkey one and a half year ago. She has two daughters aged eight and ten. She is an intermediate school graduate. She did not work outside the home in Syria or in Turkey. Her husband used to work as a repairman in Syria and now he works for a carpenter in Turkey. The children went to a TEC in *Kağıthane* last year but the family registered them to a public school in *Kağıthane* for the next academic year (2016-2017).

#### 15- ZEYNEP (mother)

Interview date is September 30, 2016. Zeynep (age: 35) is from Damascus and she has been living in Turkey for one year. She has two sons aged 15 and 12 and a daughter aged seven. She has studied Shariah at the university and has worked as a teacher both in Syria and in a TEC in Turkey. Her husband finished high school and

he works in a textile factory. In Syria he used to work in a factory as well, ironing and folding textile. All the children are going to TECs in Fatih.

#### 16- AYSHA (mother)

Interview date is October 30, 2016. Aysha (age: 42), is a Turcoman originally from Culan but she was born and lived in Damascus and studied at a teaching institute specialized in mathematics. She worked both in Damascus and in its suburb as a mathematics teacher. She has five children, four daughters and a son. They are five, six, 13, 18 and 20 years old. Her husband is a university graduate from trade and economics. He was an accountant in Syria and here he is working in the same area. When the war started, they moved to Kunetera, which is close to Damascus. Soon after, they decided to move to Turkey. They came to Istanbul directly. They have been in Turkey since three years and she has been working as a class teacher for the sixth grade in a TEC for the last two years. Her 20 years old daughter finished high school but she could not find a scholarship for the university. She has acquired one-year scholarship to learn Turkish in the University from TÖMER. Since her applications to the universities were not accepted she planned to study for the Higher Education Exam (HEE). Her 18 years old daughter finished high school in Turkey in a TEC in Fatih. She passed the equivalency exam with 91% average. She also did not have the opportunity go to the university because she did not get the diploma yet. The 13 years old daughter is at the eighth grade in a TEC in Balat. Six years old daughter had Down's syndrome, she is at home and she needs special education. The youngest is a five years old son.

#### 17- JOUDI (mother)

Interview date is November 11, 2016. Joudi (age: 42) from Aleppo came to Turkey legally from Beirut airport two and a half years ago with her husband and children.

She has two sons and a daughter. She graduated from an institute on arts for women. She was working in private kindergartens in Aleppo as an arts teacher. She also worked in a TEC in Turkey but she quit due to low salary. She has been working as a housewife here in Turkey. Her husband graduated from an electric-electronics institute. He was born and he studied in Kuwait. In Syria he was a sales manager, he was selling electronic toothbrush like oral-B. In Istanbul he sells Syrian bread to restaurants. Her two elder boys aged 16 and 17, couldn't continue school in Turkey as they had to work to help with the family's subsistence; the 16 year old as a waiter in a Syrian restaurant and the 17 year old as a waiter in a hotel. Her daughter is 13 years old and is at the eighth grade in a TEC.

#### 18- HAYAT (mother)

The interview date is November 11, 2016. Hayat (age: 26) is a Turcoman from Lazkiye. She came to Turkey two years ago in 2014. She is an intermediate school graduate. She has worked as a housewife in both Syria and Turkey. Her husband is not educated, is a metal worker and he worked in the same profession both in Syria and here. She has three children who are three, five and seven years old. The eldest goes to a public school, to the second grade. He went to a TEC last year for the first grade.

#### 19- RABIA (mother)

Interview date is November 6, 2016. Rabia (age:26) is a Turcoman from Latakia. She has been in Turkey with her family for the last two years. But her mother had been living in Turkey since five years and her siblings and her uncle also lives in Turkey. Before they migrated to Turkey, she had paid long visits to Turkey like for 6 months long, once. She is an intermediate school graduate. Her husband had been a master car repairer in Syria. Here he worked in a carpenter for a while and then he started to

work as a car repairer again. He receives minimum wage. She has three children. The eldest daughter goes to the second grade of a public school. She went to a TEC last year for the first grade but she wanted to be transferred to a Turkish public school herself. The others are a five years old daughter and a three-year-old son.

#### 20- MAYOR (mother)

Interview date is November 6, 2016. Mayor (age: 32) is from Aleppo. She quit school at the eighth grade. She came to Turkey with her family one and a half year ago. Her husband is a university graduate from Arabic language and literature and he has a licence to teach Arabic. He used to work as an Arabic teacher in Syria but now, here in Turkey he works in an industrial company, which produces stainless steel as a salesman. They have two children going to an imam hatip school. Her son is at the seventh and her daughter is at the fifth grade.

#### 21- ABDULSETTAR (father)

Interview date is 08.06.2016. The grocery shop owner Abdulsettar (age: 35) is from Rakka. The family came here six months ago. He has cancer. He had a surgery in Syria and two other surgeries in Turkey. His health situation was very soar and he complains about the inadequacy and slowness of the health services in Turkey. He is an intermediate school graduate. He had a sewing shop in Syria. He tried but could not find a relevant job. Some of his friends in Saudi Arabia and other countries offered him some money to rent the shop. The family lives in the fifteen-m<sup>2</sup> shop, which also has a small toilette inside. Sometimes he says he cannot pay the rent for the shop. He is concerned that the owner would kick them out. He is the father of three daughters aged four, eight and nine. The eldest girl was going to school but when ISIS came to Rakka, their daughters at school age stopped going to school and

they did not go to school in Turkey yet. Six and 9 year old girls sometimes attended Turkish language classes in the community center in Fatih.

#### 22- OMAR (father)

Interview date is August 9, 2016. Omar (age: 45) is from Damascus from Zabadani. He came to Turkey three years ago. He has a university degree from economics. He had his own supermarket in Syria but here he works in a restaurant as an accountant. His wife is an intermediate school graduate. She never worked outside the home in Syria or Turkey. They have three children. One daughter is 14 years old and she had asthma in Turkey because of the poor living conditions at home, they live in a basement. The other daughter is ten and the son is seven years old. The youngest and eldest children are going to a TEC in Fatih but her 14 years old daughter goes to a public school in Topkapi. He applied for a residence permit but was refused because things were on hold after the coup attempt.

#### 23- NADER (father)

Interview date is August 12, 2016. Nader (age: 36) from Aleppo came to Turkey in 2014. He studied until the eighth grade, so he is a primary school graduate. He was a restaurant manager in Syria and he is in the same business here. He has four children who are aged two, five, seven and 11. The eldest is a daughter and the seven year old is a son. They are both going to a TEC in Çapa, Istanbul.

#### 24- YUSSEF (father)

Interview date is August 12, 2016. Yussef (age: 27) from Aleppo came to Turkey in 2016. He is a university graduate. He studied Shariah. He followed a Turkish course in Turkey at A1 level. He works in Istanbul as a sweets shop manager. He has only one daughter who is going to a kindergarten in a TEC in Sultangazi who is supported by a Taiwani organization. Her brother's daughter and son who started fourth grade

are also living with them while their parents are in Syria. Also his cousin and their three children are living with them. They are two boys in the first grade and a girl in the first grade. All together they are ten people at home, six are children. All the children go to the same TEC.

#### 25- ABDULWAHED (father)

Interview date is August 26, 2016. Abdulwahed (age: 32) is from Damascus and he came to Turkey in 2015. He studied until eighth grade so he is a primary school graduate. He was a barber in Syria and he has a barber's shop here. His wife studied nursing at college and worked as a nurse in Syria. However she only worked inside the home in Turkey. Of his three children, the first two are from his previous marriage. They are one, nine and ten years old. The children went to a TEC in Avcilar for 20 days. He wanted to send them to a public school in Istanbul but they weren't accepted. He sent his family back to Syria eight months after they came so the children could go to school and get education.

#### 26- AMR (father)

Interview date is September 30, 2016. Amr (age: 35) is from Palmyra. After high school, he studied one year more in a vocational institute. He worked as a fireman in Syria but he works in a supermarket in Istanbul. His wife had university education in Syria. She is a graduate of teaching department. She used to work as a class teacher in Syria but here she only worked inside the home. They had three children who are two, six and eight years old. Elder ones are daughters and the 2 year old was a son. The 8 years old daughter had gone to a TEC in Gaziantep for 6 months but then they moved to Istanbul for the job in the supermarket. They were going to send their children to a school in Istanbul but were hesitant about whether to choose a TEC or a public school during the time of the interview.

**27- OTHMAN (father)**

Interview date was October 26, 2016. Othman (age: 40) from Damascus is in Istanbul since 2014 with his family. He is a high school graduate. He studied in the university for one year in English to Arabic translation. He used to be a taxi-driver in Syria but here he worked as a restaurant accountant. His wife worked as a housewife in both Syria and Turkey. They have one 7 years old daughter, going to a Syrian school in Esenler.

**28- BASIL (father)**

Interview date was October 26, 2016. Basil (age: 25) from Latakia came to Turkey in 2014. He is a primary school graduate. He used to work as a barber in Syria and he also works as a barber here. His wife is a university graduate. She used to work as a teacher in Syria but here she only worked inside the home. They have one seven years old daughter going to a public school in the first grade. She also went to a TEC last year for the first grade.

**29- AHMAD (father)**

Interview date is November 01, 2016. Ahmad (age: 52) from Aleppo came to Turkey in 2014. He studied until the eighth grade hence he is a primary school graduate. He is a chief cook at a restaurant in Yusufpaşa, he also worked as a cook in Syria. Her wife left school at fifth grade. She only worked inside the home both in Syria and here. They have five children. The youngest one a 12 year old daughter who went to a TEC for three years in Turkey but in 2016-2017 academic term, it was turned in to an international school and the family could afford it no more. Since they did not want to send her to a public school at that age and her mother was ill, they decided that she stays home and does not go to school. The other sons are over 18 and they all are working in restaurants in the kitchen or as waiters.

### 30- ZIYA (brother)

Interview date is November 1, 2016. Ziya (age: 20) from Aleppo has one younger and five elder brothers. He has been in Turkey since 2015. He is an intermediate school graduate he studied until the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. He works in a family coffee shop, which has seven branches in Istanbul with all his brothers except the youngest one and his father. He is not married. His youngest brother is 12 years old and is going to a TEC in Çapa neighbourhood of Fatih.

### 31- KAZIM (father)

Interview date is November 1, 2016. Kazım (age: 48) from Aleppo came to Turkey in 2014 with his family. He has a permanent residence as his grandmother is Turkish. His wife studied until the ninth grade but he is a primary school graduate. His youngest child is a 12 years old boy and is at the third grade in a public school.

### 32- NEBIL (father)

Interview date is November 4, 2016. Nabil (age: 37) from Damascus came to Turkey in 2012. He is a high school graduate. He studied at the university for the first year in the Electrics department. He was a barber in Syria but he works as an owner and operator of a coffee shop in Fatih in Istanbul. Her wife is also an intermediate school graduate. She only works inside the home. He went to a Turkish course at A1 level. He has three children. Seven years old boy goes to a TEC in Güngören.

### 33- ADHEM (father)

Interview date is November 4, 2016. Adhem (age: 32) from Damascus came to Turkey in 2012. He is an intermediate school graduate. He used to be a supermarket owner in Syria but he works as a cook in a restaurant in *Fatih* in Istanbul. His wife quit school at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She worked as a housewife in Syria and in Istanbul.

They have three children. Seven years old twins and 8-year-old son all go to a public school to the second grade.

#### 34- HUSSAM (father)

Hussam (age: 38) from Damascus came to Turkey in 2014. He left school at ninth grade so he is a primary school graduate. He owned a restaurant in Fatih, which he had opened with three other Syrian friends two years before. In Syria he was in a different business. He had a workshop repairing oriental handcrafts and a shop where they sold them. His wife was an intermediate school graduate and she only worked inside the home in Syria and now in Turkey. They have three children aged one, seven and eight. The seven years old boy goes to a TEC in Çapa and the eight year old boy goes to a public school. He has a temporary residence.

#### 35- AMJED (father)

Interview date is November 4, 2016. Amjed (age: 40) from Damascus came to Turkey in 2015. He quit school at the ninth grade. He was a restaurant manager in Syria and he owns a restaurant now in Fatih. His wife is a university graduate from the Business and Economics department. However she only worked as a housewife both in Syria and now in Turkey. His two sons both go to a public school. The five years old son is in the kindergarten and the six year old boy is in the first grade.

### 5.2 Factors influencing the overall living conditions in Istanbul

The overall living conditions of participant parents are provided in this chapter who suffer from poverty in the sense of deprivation of basic capabilities (Sen, 2000), lack of resources, services and employment in addition to the enduring trauma of war and migration. Children's wellbeing is at risk if their parents suffer from depression and unemployment and capacity for resilience and recovery increase if provided with

stable living conditions (Eklund et. al., 2013). This section aims at understanding the context the Syrian refugee parents and hence their children live in Istanbul, which is highly influential in the pursuit of education. The first section in this chapter focuses on migration, second on the status in Turkey, third on subsistence, fourth on housing, fifth on employment, sixth child labour, seventh health, eight social encounters in Istanbul, ninth learning Turkish and tenth section deals with emotions assigned to the refugee experience.

### 5.2.1 Coming to Turkey, Coming to Istanbul

Syrians come to Istanbul through networks. According to *network theory*, many difficulties are faced by the first comers to the destination country and the access of followers is easier through the information they receive through communities that migrated before (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 17), which is also explanatory for the migration motives of Syrian refugees in Istanbul as well (Kaya, 2016, p. 15). Sixteen of the participants shared their course of migration even if no inquiry on migration experience existed not to cause re-traumatization. In nine families, males have been the pioneers. It was the father, brother or an eldest son who came first and mother, children and other relatives followed. Only in two families females pioneered; a grandmother who had connections in Turkey and a mother, who escaped to Turkey with neighbours and children. Five participants shared coming altogether as a family and the rest did not provide information on migration.

Kazım (48) said he came one year earlier than his family to Istanbul and established a breakfast shop in Fındıkzade. Since he had permanent residence owing to his Turkish grandmother, he easily accessed Syria during first year. However then the situation worsened, an FSA bomb hit their home, and his mother's shoulders

were broken during the explosion and his family moved to Istanbul in 2014. Yasmin (53) said his eldest son came to Turkey two years ago and they followed him a year later: “The eldest finished three years of university, then he left Syria because of the military [service]. He went to live in Egypt and worked there a few years and then he came to work here. One year after we followed him.” Omar (45), a restaurant accountant in Yusufpaşa also came to Turkey following his brother after having tried building up a life in Egypt:

We first went to Egypt. Stayed there for a year and one month. I started my own job there. A Café. But then, because they made that coup of Morsi- Sissi, I had many problems and even they made problems to my kids. I had to leave and I left money and job and everything [there]. Then I went to Syria for four years in the freedom areas … in the areas out of control of the regime. Because of the bombing and planes I came here. I came here, directly to Istanbul. Because my brother was here… one and a half year in Egypt, four years in freedom areas and three years here. (Omar, 45)

Rim (43) escaped to Turkey with her two children and her handicapped husband and elder son was stuck in Idleb desperately looking for ways to come to Turkey:

I am from Damascus … When the war started my home was the first one that got destroyed. I had to move from an area to another *Al hamdulillah* [(Praise be to god)] this was God’s will … I have four children. I have two boys, one is 22 and the other 21. One was in the military and then after he … escaped to Austria. The second one is stuck in Idleb, the city where his father lives. He is not able to come join us here. He’s only there sitting and waiting to find a way to come to Turkey. He doesn’t have any help there. I ran away from Idleb with some neighbours. I was with my [other] son and daughter. My daughter is 16 years old and my son is 11 years old. It has been a year that I am living here in Turkey and I don’t have any help except God … The father was injured, my husband. He is handicapped in his arm area 95%. All the veins in his arm damaged. He is in Idleb with my 21 years old son. He can’t come either. (Rim, 43)

Rabia’s (22) mother moved to Turkey in 2011 and they moved to her house in 2014 when the things got very difficult. Her husband’s family was still in Syria.

For those who went to the border cities in southeast of Turkey, the labour networks were influential in coming to Istanbul. Amr (35) said his family first went to Gaziantep but later on, through labour networks he found a better job in Istanbul

in a supermarket with a better salary, and decided to move to Istanbul. Nader (36) also told that his family stayed in Gaziantep in first six months but then they chose to come to Istanbul because he found a better job. He said: “I was working there as a worker. But I have a friend who opened this restaurant and I manage this restaurant. I have good experience. So I moved here [in Istanbul].”

Bara (41) said many more Syrian people were planning to escape to Turkey during the interview (May 11, 2016) adding that she helped Syrians who wanted to come to Turkey so that they could get a *kimlik*, (temporary protection id) even with some ways of bribing the officers. She said: “Actually I help many Syrians, … I help them how to have *kimlik* by paying money. They have no choice”.

#### 5.2.2 Being a Syrian in Turkey: Social and legal status

Displeasure on the inferior social status and negative image of Syrians in Turkish society was shared recurrently among the participants. Bara (41) who is a Palestinian and who was making plans to resettle in Germany if possible shared her discontent with her status in Turkey. She said:

As a Palestinian … You know Palestinian people who live in Syria they were equal with Syrian people. They can go to school just like Syrian, even in universities. And the education in Syria is free for all the grades. Even at the university. And even after graduation for example doctors can open clinics. Their own clinics just like Syrians. But this doesn’t happen in Lebanon and this doesn’t happen in Turkey. (Bara, 41)

Making a comparison to the status of Palestinians’ in Syria, Bara (41) felt she was denied her basic rights in Turkey that she used to enjoy as a Palestinian in Syria. Emphasizing his permanent residence and asserting that himself is not a “refugee”, Kazim (48) expounded how being regarded as a refugee was unpleasant for him. He

explained how he fell into disfavour after the war among the businessmen in clothes trading that he previously worked with:

Before the war, I used to come here and I ... was working in clothes trading and I would buy some clothes from here and sell them in Syria. A lot of Turkish traders here ... they would beg me to come and work with them. Now it is different. Actually I have spoken to a few of the companies I was dealing with ... now they just look at us like "yeah Syrian refugees", or something. (Kazım, 48)

Amqed (40), a restaurant owner and operator in Fatih also thought Syrians were regarded as inferior. He invested two hundred fifty thousand dollars in his restaurant and thought he would have been more than welcomed in Dubai with such high investment he did not receive the least interest in Turkey. He said: "They have this bad image of Syrians. And we are not like this. They see Syrians as anyone from the street." He was charged by the municipality, for extending his restaurant's width more than permitted, however it was planned in the same width as the previous restaurant operating there. He thought if it was a Turkish owner there would be no problem, but since he is Syrian, they forced him to make the restaurant smaller. He thought this unpleasant official act towards him as a Syrian businessman was due to the negative image of Syrians had in Turkey. Omar, (45) also a restaurant manager in Fatih said he paid for everything in his restaurant, the bills, social security for all the workers, fee's for the tables outside and all but he did not receive the kind of treatment he deserved. He said "I pay a lot, a lot, a lot but there is no response like they just want me to pay. If you are Syrian, everything is hard for you." He recalled how refugees from Kuwait, Lebanon or Iraq were treated in equal terms in Syria before. He did not feel he had the same fair treatment here in Turkey. Alternatively Hüsam, (38) also a restaurant manager in Fatih was positive about the Syrian businessmen's status in Turkey. Underlining that work opportunities was better in Turkey compared to Egypt and Lebanon he said: "... here ... there's many help with

us Syrians ... For example here we pay the same taxes as Turkish people but in other countries we pay more than citizens."

Abdulwahed (32) said Syrians had a bad reputation for Turkish people, which were both due to racism among some Turkish, but also due to some "possible bad experience with Syrians" due to two main shortcomings of Syrians. One was Syrians' "thinking short-term". He thought they would say: "We are just going to come for a little bit, do whatever we want and go back... hence we could beg on the streets or might even steal". Other shortcoming was "thinking one could say anything anywhere". He said "Syrians don't know how to behave with people from outside ... They would talk anything. They mix everything together." For Abdulwahed (32) one needed the skill to disguise thoughts on cultural differences in a new country, which could best be acquired by travelling but Syrians lacked such insight. Rabia (22) also shared her discontentment concerning "the bad image of Syrians in Turkey." For her, people thought everyone begging on the streets would be Syrian:

... all those children working on the streets, they don't have to be Syrian. Look for instance ... people from Antakya also know Arabic. People from Siirt, from Mardin they know. Hence they make use of this opportunity and they say "I am Syrian" in Arabic and they earn a living by this. Yes there are a lot of them. I mean they say they are Syrian but you don't know where they are from. But they discredit the Syrians name. The state has to take the action on them. (Rabia, 22)

Alternatively, Amal (24) was happy for being treated better in Turkey. Saying that in Syria, she used to live in an old and traditional area where women weren't allowed to go out without a man she said "We felt ourselves as humans here." Even in the difficult conditions of subsistence that she had in Turkey, she felt more empowered in Turkey than she used be in Syria.

Even if they did not make direct associations, these reflections on the social status of Syrians are directly connected to their legal status in Turkey that is temporary protection status. Syrian refugees are entitled to a temporary protection status in Turkey according to the TPR issued in October 22, 2014 under article 61 to 95 of LFIP no 6458. Still, there is no legal clarity on how temporarily protected could receive a permanent legal status, except acknowledgement of citizenship for Syrians whose services are exceptionally worthwhile (Exceptional Citizenship for Syrians, November, July 15; Citizenship coming, 2017, February 23). Syrian nationals, as well as stateless persons and refugees from Syria are covered within the temporary protection regime enacted by the Government of Turkey (TPR, Art. 3(f)), which ought to provide non-refoulement, an unlimited stay, access to health, education, social assistance and labour market which are not available otherwise. Hence, having a *kimlik* or not, has been of critical importance for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Among all school age or preschool children within the scope of this study (no: 69), 12 did not have a *kimlik* hence, weren't temporarily protected. Seven of them weren't entitled to a *kimlik* as they entered Turkey from another country's borders rather than Syria and five others' application was stuck in the burdensome process of *kimlik* acquisition. For some parents the registration process had been quite long and weighty with unpleasant treatment within government offices especially in 2016. Not having a *kimlik* led being deprived from basic rights and services concerning health, education, housing and work.

Three mothers, Houda (41), Rukaya (35) and Joudi (42) came from Beirut airport with children and weren't entitled to a *kimlik*, enduring challenges in accession to services involving education and health. Houda (41) said when they

went to the police station in *Fatih*, they refused to give a *kimlik* but wherever she went like to a hospital or to a public school, they were asking for it. And she knew that it was possible to bribe the officers to get a *kimlik* but they did not have enough money for that. Joudi (42) said if the family had a *kimlik*, she would have directly sent her 13 years old daughter to a public school. She said they have applied for temporary protection with rent contract, electricity bills and everything but nothing happened. Rukaya (35) also suffered from lack of services due to lack of *kimlik*. She said, “... Of course we thank Erdogan, but what’s important for us is the jobs. ... until now they did not agree to give us the *kimlik*. They say we only give to people who came through smugglers.” (Rukaya, 35)

Another reason for not acquiring *kimlik* was the lengthy and weighty acquisition process. Othman (40), wanted to register his daughter to a Turkish school but she was refused as she and her mother lacked *kimlik*. During the time of the interview (October 10, 2016) it had already been one year since they have applied for it. He said:

Each time we go, we can’t receive it. Every appointment we go, they give us another new appointment. Two months later, then three months later...there is no reason. It is just like you are making someone like begging or something. They just want to treat us badly... (Othman, 40)

Abdulsettar (35) who had been in Turkey only for six months during the time of the interview (June 6, 2016) had cancer, yet he also had difficulties in registration. His children, wife and himself hadn’t acquired the *kimlik*:

The hospital does not allow you in except if you have *kimlik*. Okay, no problem. I go to the [place to apply for] *kimlik*; they give you a paper and tell you [to] come after one month. I come back after one month, and I live very far, so we go to see him to get our *kimlik* [after one month] ... again they ask us to come after one month. In Syria we used to see this [type of treatment], now again we must see this. And their translator is very bad ... He answers me what do I want from you and your *kimlik*, my job is only to give *randevu*. (appointment) I told him but [I have] an emergency, he answered me [like] this is not my business...why [do] I have to wait, our pictures and

fingerprints are already taken... I told him my fingerprints are done, please finish it, he had nobody in his office, it was not busy. Everything is ready, he only needs to retrieve it. And he still wants me to come after a month, and they have a very bad translator. (Abdulsettar, 35)

Abdulsettar (35) not only complained about the delay in the registration process for no reason but also about the substandard treatment he was subject to in the police station.

Treatment in official places during acquisition of temporary protection was a common challenge. Ahmad's (52) wife's gender was entered false in her *kimlik* due to which the hospitals did not accept her when she was sick. Ahmad applied to the police stations in Fatih, Eminönü and Şişli but procedures were though and the issue was not solved. Omar (45) also complained about bad treatment at official buildings. He said when his son was ill and needed surgery they were asked to transform the number in his son's *kimlik* from 98 to 99, which took four months. Even if his son had the operation finally, they quit going to Turkish hospitals.

Having a *kimlik* brings about access to basic rights such as health, education, social services and employment, which directly affects livelihood conditions. In total, fifty-six children had a *kimlik* and only one had a family residence due to his father's permanent residence.

Temporary protection status does not provide for a travel-permit abroad and if the bearers want to travel in Turkey, they first need to go to the police station they registered in. Having no access in public schools in Turkey principal's refusal and suffering from difficulties of subsistence Abdulwahed (32) decided sending his children back to Damascus for education in their previous school; but he suffered a lot as he couldn't go and visit them with his temporary protection status. Hüsam (38) said her wife, who did not visit her mother for the last two years was in a

depression. Likewise Zeynep (37) said the only thing that would make her want to have Turkish citizenship would be to go and visit her family in Syria and come back.

Permanent residence provided Syrians for a travel permit and Kazım (48) was the only participant who had a permanent residence as his grandmother was Turkish. However he complained that he had to facilitate a lot of things for the permanent residence. He had to pay 800 dollars every year and then, at the time of the interview two years in advance. He was exhausted being asked for money. Othman (40) also applied for a permanent residence but without justifications they told him he was not entitled for it. He was even not given an appointment. He said:

If you want to apply for permanent residence, if you went to a police station... they will say "no, you have to go back to Syria and come back to Istanbul with a passport, then you can apply to the permanent residence." But if you can pay the three thousand dollars to the officers... they can give you this residence. (Othman, 40)

He said "I don't have a problem to pay but it has to be by law, not bribing". Omar, (45) a restaurant manager in Yusufpaşa recently applied for a permanent residence but everything was on hold:

We appreciated this country [Turkey, that] this government received us. But now they are making the things very difficult. By the time it has been worse. For example, I went to apply for residence visa they said, no everything is stopped now. Even the work permit, I couldn't get it. (Omar, 45)

Nabil (37) on the other hand operated a coffee shop in *Fatih* but he had a tourist residence. He had been in Turkey for the last four years and he said he was trying to be legal in every way, not to have any fines or anything blacklisted.

### 5.2.3 Difficulties with Subsistence

All participants but four restaurant/shop owners among 35 shared limited financial situation within household suffering from high rents, difficulty in finding meaningful and fair employment, inadequate salaries and lack of support due to limited

availability. Monthly income was not asked not to infringe comfort and privacy. Still, some parents shared income levels and most emphasized difficulty with subsistence being short of covering educational expenses also. Syrian parents who participated in the study generally experienced downward class mobility due to migration.

Amal (24) who lived in an apartment's basement in Kağıthane told that they were hardly affording the rent with his husband's 320 TL/week wage through his job in a textile workshop. Houda's (41) brother, who worked as a translator in Istanbul afforded the house received 1200 TL monthly, their house rent was 750 TL. Adhem (32) who worked as a cook earned 1500 TL monthly where his rent was 1100 TL. Rabia (22) said her husband who was a master car repairman who got minimum wage (1300 TL) after nine months work for 800-900 TL. And their rent was 1000 TL. Only one family member was employed in all these households where at least four members lived in, so they were all living below the hunger threshold in Turkey, which was determined as 1417 TL monthly by December 2016 (Hunger Threshold, November 28, 2016).

Hayat (32), a Turcoman mother emphasized the costliness of living. She said if the house rents weren't very expensive one's life could go well. Rabia (22), also a Turcoman said subsistence was even harder for "the Syrians" [referring to Arabs] because knowing Turkish put them in a better position. Rukaya (35) said: "It's difficult to live here. It is expensive for Syrian people because the salary is not so good... There should be two workers in a family. My husband works all day and he can barely pay rent only. I need to work too." Linn (33) who lived in a *bodrum* (basement) with his husband and three children wanted to find a job to help with subsistence of the household and to find better place to live. Salam (24) also said:

“Life is nice here but we need to find a job to get money.” Salam’s housemate, Wafaa (29) said her father in law and Salam’s husband, were both employed in their household with nine persons but the two families with four children hardly survived every month. Basil, (25) a barber also shared enormity of rents and he had to work 12 hours everyday to afford living.

Abdulsettar (35) operated a small grocery shop in Çapa to which mainly Syrian or Iraqi customers came. Some of his friends lent him some money to open the shop and he was living in this ten metre square shop with his wife and three children. He had cancer. The family’s living conditions were drastically poor and Abdulsettar was concerned about being kicked out, being unable to pay the rent sometimes. He worked everyday till midnight and said he did not want to miss work even for one hour as he might earn something. He was disappointed about the indifference of people in Turkey to their poor conditions. He said:

Look at my situation. In Syria before the war, if there is someone in my situation, people would take him and his family in a house, even if it is a small one, but nobody [would] accept to leave a person in my situation like this. People have no mercy. (Abdulsettar, 35)

He had heard from his friends that situation was better in border cities. He said for instance in *Urfa*, the support was better through *cemaat*’s. (Religious sects) Even the government was more supportive in *Urfa*, he thought. Sunduz (30) also said that in other cities other than Istanbul, she heard that there were payments for the students and in kind donations for the Syrians by the government. She said she expected that it happened in Istanbul also.

Amal (24) registered in the municipality for help but until the interview (February 31, 2016) she received no monetary help but just some in-kind donations like monthly food packages. Marwa (24) was also in quest for support, she asked

about whether it was true that when they registered in *Kaymakam*, (the local governor) they could receive support. Abdulwahed (32) who was a barber in Syria and who was operating a barber's shop in Avcılar said: "I had a lot of money when I first came [in 2014]. I lost all of my money. I suffered a lot. We became poor, we were not poor." He told about an application they had made for the municipality for support, which was accepted after eight months when his family returned to Syria. He said he refused the support, which was a monthly food package as his family was no longer in Turkey but added: "Whatever they give is not enough for five people. It is enough only for one person. On paper they write, we will give you a basket of nutrition but the basket is only a plate." Due to difficulty in subsistence, his children were back in Syria, going to a school in Damascus during the time of the interview on August 26, 2016.

#### 5.2.4 Housing problems

Unaffordability of rents, crowded houses and inferiority of housing facilities was a common matter of suffering mentioned by the participant parents. Only four interviews with Abdulsettar (35), Amal (24), Linn (33) and Houda (41) were held at their home, others were held in the community center and work places, still some parents shared their housing conditions in detail.

Abdulsettar's (35) family, involving three daughters, himself and his wife lived in a three meter square part of a probably threefold bigger grocery shop. They only had a washbasin, a toilet and a sofa. This part of the shop was separated with a curtain. All family slept on the sofa. It had been six months they were living in this shop. Amal (24) lived in a single room basement with her husband and two children where the walls and the ceiling were leaking and there were lots of channels passing

through the ceilings. Probably the place was not planned for living but was turned into a house later on. The house had a separate room, a bathroom and a kitchen but all of them were in poor conditions. Linn (33) was worried about the *bodrum* (basement) they were living in with three children and husband as one of her daughter (14) got asthma because of humidity and lack of sunlight. She wanted to find a job to find a better place to live for her daughter. Houda's (41) house where she lived with her two children and brother was on the first floor. The house rent was 750 TL. And monthly income was 1200 TL. The conditions of the house were better than the other three as it took daylight, was better with ventilation and had a kitchen and a bathroom and two other rooms. However the windows of the living room were very low which was not safe for children and Houda's (41) four years old son fell down the balcony after which he had to have two surgical operations from his brain in the following months after the interview.

Joudi (42) said as a family of five members, they lived in a very tiny flat because they only could afford it. Basil (25) who worked as a barber said the house rent was very expensive and that he had to work 12 hours everyday to afford living. Rukaya (35) also said her husband worked everyday and could barely pay the rent only. Rabia (22) said the house rents, especially in the European side was very high and one wouldn't be able to rent a house with a single room for one thousand two hundred liras. And she explained that Syrians had no other chance but to live two or three families together in order to be able to pay the rent and subsist at the same time. Hayat (26) also complained about the unaffordability of rents and Rim (43) said it was her neighbors from Syria that helped her to rent a house when they first came to Turkey. Nabil (37) explained the enormity of rents was making Syrians to suffer both ways:

... When we first came here, our home rent was 700 TL in Fatih, now it is 1200 tl. Syrian people coming here elevated the rent price. We made this, but we have no choice. They [Turkish people] think about us like people who came, increased prices on them, took their rights, caused them problems. But we suffered a lot in return, we got very tired, we lost a lot of money. I have so many debts. We don't want them to give us more of anything, just treat us right. (Nebil, 37)

### 5.2.5 Possibilities of employment

Scarcity of employment possibilities was a common complaint. In 27 of the families among 35, only one family member was working. In eight families more than one member of the family was employed. Only in two families, father and mother were both employed and mothers were teachers. In total, 44 male members and only 5 female members were employed in 35 families where 30 of the fathers but only 3 of the mothers were employed. There were four single mother families but only in one of them the mother was employed as a housekeeper in a hotel. Table 9 summarizes the frequencies of employment with respect to sector

Table 9. Frequency of Employment with Respect to Sector Among Employed Members of Household

Sector	Frequency
Services	14 (2 barbers, 1 housekeeper, 5 restaurant managers, 2 accountants, 2 cooks, 2 waiters)
Retail	12 (9 coffee-shop owners and operators, 1 breakfast shop owner and operator, 1 <i>bakkal</i> , 1 supermarket worker)
Textile	12 workers
Repairing/carpenter/metal-working	5 workers
Sales	3 workers
Translation	2 translators
Education	2 teachers
Total	49

Along scarcity, participants were short of meaningful employment relevant to their background and experiences. Rukaya (35) noted the situation of professional Syrians almost all of whom were facing an educational mismatch working at inferior jobs at shops, restaurants etc. with lower salaries than Turkish and no social security. Marwa

(42) also shared two lawyers and two engineers participated in the crafts workshop in the community center to get a small contribution for their household income. Yasmin (53) said she studied three years of law in the university and worked as an elementary school teacher for 35 years. Yet she was disappointed that teachers without a degree weren't accepted to teach in Turkish schools.

Among the women in research households, only three mothers and two daughters were employed. Zeynep (37) studied *shariah* in the university, worked for five years as an elementary school teacher in Damascus and since two years she was working as a class teacher in a TEC. Aysha (42) was a maths teacher who worked in and outside Damascus for nineteen years and was teaching maths in a TEC since two years. Rim (43), a single mother, worked as a housekeeper in a hotel in Yusufpaşa, she did not engage in paid work before in Syria. She said: "I am now for my two children a mother, a father, a brother and a sister. I am everything to them. I work for 12 hours everyday." Bara's (41) daughter worked as a saleswoman selling English courses and Kazim's (48) daughter worked as a Turkish to Arabic translator since she studied Turkish literature in the university. Additionally, there were women employed for some time but quit during the time of the interview. Wafaa (29) worked in a hairdresser for sometime. Amal (24) worked for two months as a bus guide in a school for a TEC but quit due to shortage of salaries. Sunduz (30) used to work as an *ortacı* (middleman) in a textile workshop but her 14 years old son replaced her when she became sick and the doctors told her that her health doesn't allow her to work anymore. Joudi (42), graduated from a two years institute of arts for women, was an art teacher in private kindergartens in Syria. In Istanbul also, she worked as an art teacher in some TECs but she quit because they reduced her salary. Two months ago, she said she heard that there would be a course for Syrian teachers

in order to distribute them to work in Turkish public schools, which she couldn't apply because she lacked a *kimlik* as they came from Beirut. She said, "It was a very good job opportunity, but it is gone." She participated in the crafts workshop making handcrafts to support family subsistence even if it was just a little.

Despite the low level of employment among mothers in the families of the research participants (three in 35), there were mothers who were trying to learn Turkish to find a job. Rukaya (35) was learning both Turkish and English in the community center. She used to work as a primary school teacher in Syria. But she had a trading diploma from the university and wasn't allowed to work as a teacher with this diploma in Turkey. Hence, she wanted to learn Turkish so that she could find a job in trading. Linn (33) was learning Turkish both to communicate with people and also to find a job "to help his husband".

In all families except two<sup>33</sup>, male members of the families, fathers, sons, brothers or fathers in law were employed. Linn (33)'s husband was a graduate from a trading institute of two years and used to own a supermarket in Damascus. She told that at first in Turkey, he was cleaning tables in a restaurant in Fatih but the owner trusted him and made him the accountant and the manager of the restaurant later on. He and his brothers were operating the restaurant. Abdulsettar (35) operated a *bakkal* (a small grocery shop) in Çapa to which mainly Syrian or Iraqi customers came. He was originally a tailor in Syria and he owned a sewing shop there. He looked for a job in his field when he came to Turkey 6 months ago but since he had cancer and had to visit the hospital occasionally, nobody agreed to give him a job. Some of his friends lent him some money to open the shop. He was working for everyday till midnight in tough conditions:

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<sup>33</sup> In one of them the mother was employed as a housekeeper in a hotel, in the other the daughter was employed as a translator. Both were single mother families.

My working conditions doesn't give me time to anything, I finish my work till midnight. I can't leave my work... If I leave the shop for one hour or two, sometimes I make 30 TL. In an hour. (Abdulsettar, 35)

Amr (35) who worked as a fireman in Palmyra for fifteen years lived in Gaziantep for a year when he first came to Turkey with his family. He then moved to Istanbul as he found chances for a better salary as a salesman in a Turkish supermarket where working conditions were difficult. He worked 12 hours everyday except for a half-day off on Fridays. With the time he spent for transportation, it was even 14 hours.

He said:

It is a hard life here. But we have no choice. Not optional... We were forced to come here. And we can't live like Turkish people because they were systematic or used to live in this system or life-style. To work [for a] long time. And so, it's impossible for us to live like them. But we have no choice. We have to handle this problem. And whenever we have the opportunity to go home, we will go home. Yes. Because everywhere in the world, you can work for few hours, you can live your life more. We are free people. Turkish people are trained at a young age to sleep only two or three hours [a day]. [In] all countries in the world [people] work from six to eight hours. Only here, people work [for] 12 hours. This is not a life. Only sleep and work. (Amr, 35)

There were two barbers: Abdulwahed (32) and Basil (25). Basil (25), operated a barbershop, mentioned that he was working about fifteen hours every day. He said: “

I can't go and hang out, any sightseeing. I don't know any places in Istanbul.”

Ahmad (52) was a chief cook in a restaurant in Yusufpaşa and he was in the same profession before in Syria. Adhem (32) also had been working as a cook in a restaurant in Fatih for the last three years. In Syria, in Damascus he owned a supermarket and was operating it himself. Since he was working for 12 hours everyday and he only had two days off every month, he said he knew nothing about Turkey. His salary was one thousand five hundred liras monthly.

Yossef (27) was the manager of a sweetshop in Yusufpaşa; in Syria he was studying *shariah* (Islamic law) in the university and worked part-time in clothes trading. Nader (27) worked as a restaurant manager in Yusufpaşa, he was a worker in

Gaziantep during the first 6 months of his stay, but he moved to Istanbul for his current job. He was also a restaurant manager in Syria, Aleppo before. Omar (54) worked 12 to 15 hours everyday in the restaurant that he worked as an accountant. Hussam (38) owned a restaurant in Fatih, which he opened with three other Syrian friends two years before. In Syria he was in a different business. He had a workshop, which repaired oriental handcrafts and a shop where they sold them. Hussam had a work permit and residence visa. Amjed (40) came to Istanbul from Damascus and he had recently opened a restaurant in Fatih during the time of the interview. He had a work permit and residence visa. He owned a restaurant also in Damascus in Battuma, the ancient neighbourhood but it was closed now.

Ziya (20) operated the Yusufpaşa branch of the coffee shops his family owned. The family had six more branches in Istanbul and one in Aleppo, Jameliya in Syria and all the branches were in operation during the time of the interview which he operated together with his six brothers (November 1, 2016). The family had been in the coffee shop business for the last sixty years. He was working for about fourteen or fifteen hours everyday. He had no weekdays off. He said he used to work long hours in Syria also but not as long as Turkey. It was twelve hours work in Syria. Nabil (37) was also operating a coffee shop in Fatih. He used to be a barber in Damascus. Kazım (48) who had a breakfast shop in Fındıkzade operated the shop himself. Before the war, he was a clothes trader and he was travelling every week between Turkey and Syria. The family also used to own a similar shop in Syria. He had a work permit and a permanent residence. Table 10 summarizes the situation of employment of households within the research.

Table 10. Employment of Syrian Households

No.	# of households	# of children	# of employed	Employed member	Employment in Turkey	Previous Employment in Syria
1	4	2	1	father	Works in the textile sector	Unknown
2	3	1	1	daughter	Sells language courses	Wasn't working
3	5	3	1	father	Repairmen	Unknown
4	4	2	1	brother	Translator	Computer engineer
5	6	4	1	father	Works in the textile sector	Unknown
6	4	2	1	father	Works in the textile sector	Unknown
7	4	2	1	son	Worker in tailor shop	Owned a clothes shop
8	5	1	1	son	Works in the textile sector	Unknown
9	5	3	2	father, son	Works as a middleman in the textile sector (both father and son)	Studying, father's previous job unknown
10	3	1	1	son	Works in the textile sector	Unknown
11	5	3	1	father	works in a restaurant as an accountant	Owned a supermarket in Syria
12	3	2	1	mother	Housekeeping in a hotel	Housewife
13	9	4	2	father, father in l.	Works in a carpenter (father and father in law)	Unknown, repairman
14	5	3	2	father, mother	Prmry sch teacher (Mother), works in a factory (Father)	Prmry sch teacher (Mother), ironing textile (Father)
15	7	4	2	father, mother	Prmry sch teacher (mother), accountant (father)	Math teacher (mother), accountant (father)
16	5	3	3	father, 2 sons	Sells bakery (father), works as waiters (sons)	Medical products trade/sales manager
17	5	3	1	father	Metal worker	Metal worker
18	5	3	1	father	Car repairman	Car repairman
19	5	3	1	father	Sells stainless steels	Arabic teacher
20	5	3	1	father	Small market operator	Tailor
21	6	4	1	father	Restaurant manager	Restaurant manager
22	9	5	1	father	Sweets shop manager	Working part-time and continuing with university
23	4	2	1	father	Barber	Barber
24	6	3	1	father	Works in a supermarket	Fireman
25	5	1	1	father	Restaurant accountant	Taxi-driver
26	4	2	1	father	Barber	Barber
27	7	1	4	father, 3 sons	Father (Cook), Works in textile sector (sons)	Cook
28	9	7	7	father, 6 sons	Works in family's coffee shop (father and sons)	Works in family's coffee shop
29	5	1	2	father, daughtr	Shop owner & seller (father), translator (daughter)	Shop owner & seller
30	6	3	1	father	Shop owner & seller	Barber
31	5	3	1	father	Cook	Supermarket owner
32	5	3	1	father	Restaurant manager	Shop owner & seller
33	5	3	1	father	Restaurant Manager	Restaurant Manager

### 5.2.6 Child Labour

Within the research number of working children was four in 69. Two 17 year olds, one 16 year old and one 14 year old were working who were all boys. Two brothers who were sixteen and seventeen worked as waiters one in a restaurant and the other in a hotel in Fatih. The other 17 year old worked in the textile sector, printing emblems on clothes. Fourteen years old boy also worked in the textile sector as an *ortacı* (middleman). Even if minimum age for employment is 15 according to Turkish law<sup>34</sup>, all these children are engaged in child labour as it interferes with their education and involves harmful work conditions. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), child labour is “... Work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.” (n.d.) Work which, “by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children” are counted within the “worst forms of child labor” which urgently and primarily requires elimination according to ILO Convention No 182 (ILO, 1999). The government must protect children from work that might harm their rights to health, development, education and play (UNICEF, n.d.).

Sunduz (30) had three children and eldest was 14 who worked as an *ortacı* (middleman) in a textile workshop. He had gone to school for four years before in Syria. After his mother got sick and the doctors said she cannot work anymore and

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<sup>34</sup> The minimum age for full-time employment is 15 in Turkey according to the labor law and those children who have completed compulsory schooling and age 14 can work in easy jobs on condition that it does not harm their physical, mental, social and moral development and that they continue to attend school, the work that the child is engaged can't interfere with his education. (Turkish Labour Law, Art. 71)

he replaced her mother. Sunduz (30) said: "... [He] really wants to finish his studies, every time he sees the students after they finish school, he tells me mom, I really want to finish... Inopportunely we lack the financial resources to send him to school, he has to work for the subsistence of the family."

Marwa's (35) seventeen years old son also worked in the textile sector. He was printing emblems on textile for six days for 12 hours everyday. He had been working in the same job since he was sixteen. He used to go to school in Syria but he had no opportunity to go to school in Turkey due to lack of finances. His boss said, if he learnt Turkish, his salary would be better off but he did not have any time left to study Turkish due to hard working conditions, which definitely interfered with his rights.

Joudi's (42) two elder sons were 16 and 17 who were also employed to contribute to family subsistence. 16 year old was working in a Syrian restaurant and 17 year old was working in a Turkish hotel, both as waiters. She said, "They used to go to school in Syria, here they also wanted to continue but they couldn't because of our situation, 'they need to help their father.'"

#### 5.2.7 Health conditions of family members

Health problems were a common revelation among the participants. Sometimes the inferior conditions of living caused illness among the members of the families, there were illnesses, injuries or disabilities due to war. At other times, health problems were in the form of chronic illnesses or disabilities from which the participants also suffered in Syria.

Linn (33) shared her worries about her fourteen years old girl who got asthma because they had to live in a *bodrum* with very high humidity. Hala's (40) body got

burnt severly due to an explosion in her house in Aleppo in 2015. She said: “There was no medicine in Syria, or health care or anything, so I had to come here”.

However she couldn’t finish her treatment due to financial reasons. Abdulsettar (35) who was a father of three had cancer when he came to Turkey. He had two surgeries before in Syria and another with difficulties in Turkey:

I went to visit the [hospital] once the treatment wasn’t good because they didn’t have any translators. My friend left his job just to be with me, to help me. When we reached there, they asked me to call one number. I told them I am a sick man. I can die you ask me to call this number 182. I had so many problems regarding medical care... My health situation was very bad if you know what I mean, it must be done in 2 months. 6 months is a lot... I had cancer. If it spreads in my body, it is a very big problem. For example, if I had a broken arm or leg, it is ok no problem, I can wait. But for cancer you must stay in the hospital 24 hours. In Syria even during wartime, I was in the hospital under supervision until I was healed, this situation must be done in two months or three. (Abdulsettar, 35)

Abdulsettar’s health was better during the time of the interview (June 8, 2016) but the two months treatment took six months. He also shared a health problem of his eldest daughter (9) who was wetting herself every night but she lacked a *kimlik* and wasn’t entitled to a health service. Since they were all living in the corner of a small grocery shop, this problem affected the whole family as they all slept together on a sofa. They did not know how to deal with this situation and where to apply for since language turned into an even greater barrier concerning psychological health services<sup>35</sup>.

Language barrier with health care providers have been an important problem for the refugees<sup>36</sup>. Sunduz’s (30) eight years old son had Thalassemia and he required a special operation. However Sunduz was not sure if they could get any health service from Turkish public hospitals. Someone said: “It is possible to have

<sup>35</sup> Syrian health clinic numbers were found and shared with the family so that they could get psychological counseling for their daughter. However soon after they moved from the grocery shop and contact with the family was lost to follow if the child received psychological counseling or not.

<sup>36</sup> The work permit for foreign health professionals has attempted to alleviate this problem however due to slow implementation, problem preserved.

the surgery but you need connections for this.” However they were unsure whether their son was entitled to have this operation or not. Sunduz also told about her own sickness and how doctors prohibited her working in the textile sector as an *ortacı* where she was replaced with her 14 years old son.

The substandard level of health services was a common complaint. Rabia (22) said health system was better in Syria because there, the doctors could understand the problem just by examination. She said: “In Turkey when you go to a doctor, they ask for tests, tests, tests. And after that they say, I couldn't understand, go to this hospital.”

Inability in accessing to health services due to protracted registration processes is another problem. Omar (45) said when his son was ill and needed surgery they went to a state hospital where they were asked to transform the number in his son’s *kimlik* that starts with 98 to another one that starts with 99, however this took four months. He said finally he had the surgery and the treatment towards the child in the hospital was good but the people arranging and controlling these things in the official buildings were problematic. He said we aren’t going to Turkish hospitals any more. Othman (40) also said, he took her daughter to emergency on the day before the interview (October 26, 2016) but they did not accept them as they did not have *kimlik* yet. He said: “Even the simplest rights they don’t give us.” Ahmad’s (52) wife was also sick and was about to have a surgical operation. However her gender was written as “male” in her *kimlik* mistakenly. Even if this seemed as a small mistake, it caused a lot of troubles during accession to health services. During the time of the interview, even if her situation required an operation she wasn’t accepted in the state hospitals. Ahmad was trying to solve this problem within bureaucracy.

### 5.2.8 Social contact: Personal and official encounters

Contact theory suggests that the increase in personal contact increases the likelihood that prejudiced attitudes would decrease towards a particular group (McLaren, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However Syrian parents preferred to socialize in their own community and personal contact with Turkish were limited. A few parents shared positive neighbourhood with Turkish people but neighbourhood encounters were not always pleasant. The distance between Syrian and Turkish people and absence of contact was a common commentary.

Linn (33) told that she used to say greetings to the neighbours in the beginning but since they never replied she quit. The only woman who visited her in the apartment was the one cleaning the stairs. She gave an example of an incident that made her feel very unwelcome:

We are living in the *bodrum* so there is no place to hang the clothes. So the neighbours gave us the garden for hanging our clothes. Once my son used to play with the bicycle while I was hanging the clothes, then they [the neighbours] got angry and after that they started telling me “Here is not Syria, here is Turkey!” only within 10 minutes conversation. So I stopped hanging the clothes in the garden so they don’t get annoyed with my son. Then I started hanging them by the door. I don’t have a place to hang the clothes. The garden belongs to the neighbours they provided it to me after a month. I try to hang them inside, they say no it’s not good for the building, outside they spray some dust on the clothes, not intentionally of course. It’s my only son and he is young, only he plays outside while I hang and I’m alone with him. So only in 10 minutes he plays outside, they get angry and they say here is not Syria. (Linn, 33)

Such conversation made Linn (33) feel insulted and excluded. Kazım (48) also mentioned a problem within neighbourhood in Topkapı. One of the neighbours’ son spoke to his son in a very bad manner and the reaction of the mother of the bullying child was adverse. He said:

He was telling him like, “Hey I am Turkish, and you are Syrian. I can kick you. I can beat you. I can stab you, but you can do nothing to me.” So he just

went to the street and he saw this kid and he said: "If you want to act like this, I can bring the police now" So the mother of this boy said, "Hey you are Syrian you are sitting in my neighbourhood and you can't get the police for us.", and they wanted to lock our kids. I told them if you are respectful, nobody will disturb you. Our voices are never loud in our building. So it was like a little problem in the beginning but it is fixed now. (Kazım, 48)

With the emphasis that they are Syrian, Kazım's encounter with his neighbours was excluding and degrading as the neighbour did not regard Kazım in equal terms claiming he had no right to make a complaint to the Turkish police. The way Kazım tells the story reveals that the tension increased during the encounter and seemingly it was covered up rather than being resolved.

Zeynep (37) thought Turkish neighbours seemed not comfortable with Syrians: "They don't even open the door when they see us. May be they are afraid of us." However she also added that in the next building next door there was a woman who liked her daughter. Rabia (22) who is a Turcoman also underlined a distance between Syrians and Turkish:

I am a person who likes to talk and get closer... But among the Turks there is some, I mean, distance. Of course I understand. There are a hundred thousand nationalities. You may not know who is good, who is bad. But they are too distant. Even between them. But my neighbours are fine. God be pleased. We say *merhaba* (hello) to each other. I like it for instance. When you say neighbour, it should be closer than your relatives. Because your mother, father, they are away. But your neighbours are close. (Rabia, 22)

On the other hand, Abdulwahed (32) said he never had any problem within neighbourhood and everyone treated kind to his family. He said:

Of course in the beginning, because it is the first time they see Syrians, they weren't used to it. They were maybe a little scared, you know. But slowly slowly it is normal there. They are actually very good to us. I've had friends who say that Turkish people don't treat them properly but me honestly, I never had any problem. (Abdulwahed, 32)

However Abdulwahed (32) was aware that some people actually did not like Syrians. He said that when citizenship for Syrians was acknowledged, some Turkish came to him and said: "Ah it is good if they only give to you and not the others. Other

Syrians we don't want." Like Abdulwahed, Adhem (32) also said, "There is some group of Turkish people who don't like the Arabs". Nabil (37) also said there were some Turkish people who did not like Syrians and some others who liked them. He said some Turkish people suspected Syrians of increasing rents in Istanbul however high rents made Syrians suffer a lot as well.

Aysha (42) who was a Turcoman said her neighbours were very kind to her daughter and one of her daughters had a Turkish friend. Still she (42) said "They give us good respect but we don't have much interaction in the neighbourhood". Wafaa (29) said she did not communicate with Turkish people at all. Nader (36) said he did not have much interaction with Turkish people. He was operating a restaurant in Yusufpaşa and he said: "Only 15% of my clients are Turkish and I don't get to meet any Turkish neighbours or anything else." Ahmad (52) said only Turkish person that he knew was the Turkish owner of the house they were living in. Ziya (20) said he and his brothers had no connection with neighbours at all since they were all the time at work. He sometimes met some Turkish people who came to the coffee shop but his interaction was limited since he did not speak Turkish. He mentioned a negative encounter, which did not influence his positive impression about Turkey:

I have a good feeling, not bad. But there's some negatives, for example, a Turkish man comes and shouts or behaves badly, you can't answer him or I feel you can't shout at him or beat him up. Or if he did something wrong, for example once a drunk man came here, took the chair and wanted to hit with it. I did not allow him. I kicked him out of the shop. He took the ... coffee mug and broke it. I could not do much to him. But I am not annoyed that it is a bad country, no it is the opposite, it's a nice country and people are good. You feel they are educated and they are understanding, even our neighbours are good. (Ziya, 20)

Othman (40) said he went out for work at 6 and went back very late so he hadn't a chance to interact with the neighbours at all. But his wife and his parents, they would

see them and just say greetings, *salam* (hi) and *merhaba* (hello). That was all. Sometimes there were even people who wouldn't answer if you said greetings to them. However one of his neighbours who was from Mardin asked for Arabic lessons from Othman's wife for her kids and she accepted this. Othman's daughter sometimes went to the street to play with the Turkish kids but since she did not understand the language, she got bored and came back. Hussam (38) said they got used to the environment through time: "At first it was very hard, we felt like we were strangers. But now we have so many friends, and they come visit us and all. In eid ... even Turkish friends they come." Amr (35) mentioned very positive relationship in the neighbourhood. His two daughters and her wife were most often at home since the children were not yet enrolled in school due to imprecision of the situation of the TECs. He said they played with the son of their neighbour sometimes and one of the neighbours and her wife had built friendship:

There is a woman. Our neighbour. She is so kind. She is always visiting my wife. She doesn't speak Arabic. They are relatives, may be three brothers, in our building. And so the other wives I mean, they speak little Arabic, because they are learning Quran. And somehow, they are good all of them, but this lady is better. She spends too much time at our home, when I am out, I am working. All of them are kind. They cook and they come and share with us sometimes. It is like normal neighbourhood. (Amr, 35)

Joudi (42) also had very positive experience with Turkish people. She felt like as if she was home. She said:

All the Turkish people I encountered in my life were good, I never had a bad experience personally... Downstairs neighbours and next door neighbours, they are very good. They are very old women and men. And my daughter, she always likes to talk to them. [There are] some teachers also [in the apartment]. We never bothered anyone and no one ever bothered us. (Joudi, 42)

Hayat (26) who is a Turcoman also mentioned good friendship with neighbours. She said they even could not move to a cheaper place because they had such good neighbours:

May God be pleased. They [my neighbours] are very very good. I am very happy. They are like my family ... They don't ever want us to leave and go to somewhere else. My house is expensive. Even if it is expensive I can't leave my neighbours. For instance we weren't alone in the house. My sister in law and us were in the same house. Then they moved out. It is very expensive now. But my neighbours are very sad that we will leave. Our children are also very close. Hence we can't leave and move somewhere else. (Hayat, 26)

Salam (24) thought the treatment of Turkish people everywhere was very kind: "We received very good treatment in the market shops, bus drivers... and also in the police station where you apply for the *kimlik*." Along with neighbourhood encounters, Syrian parents shared encounters in the government offices, which were generally not as pleasant as Salam's (24) experience in the government offices.

Syrian parents shared they were discouraged with constant procrastination as well as negative attitude in the government offices. Abdulsettar (35) was frustrated about the unpleasant dealing by the translator in Fatih police station where they applied for *kimlik*:

... Their translator is very bad ... He answers me [like] "What do I want from you and your *kimlik*, my job is only to give *randevu*. (appointment)" I told him but ... [I have] an emergency, he answered me [like] "this is not my business" ... they have a very bad translator. (Abdulsettar, 35)

The treatment Abdulsettar had been subject to in a status of emergency concerning his cancer was very disappointing during registration for temporary protection. Omar also (45) said, as we aren't present here with the refugee status, we have bad treatment at official buildings. Othman (40) said "After the coup attempt... They started acting with us even more bad." Nabil (37) also mentioned that the officers were hard on Syrians most of the time in the government offices making things hard on them. He emphasized the two way attitude towards Syrians. He said: "Some people say 'Ah you are Syrian, go away!' and some say 'Ah you are Syrian, come I will help'. He said, "Some people love us, some people hate us."

Another practice, shared by two Syrian refugee parents was bribery. Wafaa (41) shared that it was possible to acquire a *kimlik* with bribery for 250 TL. but her family could not afford it. Explaining that bribery was spread out everywhere in Syria even in the hospitals, Rabia (22) shared her surprise that she saw that it worked with the police in Turkey. She gave an example on how a police asked for a bribe from her family but how he pitied and left them as he learnt that they were Turcomans going to the doctor for her child's illness.

#### 5.2.9 Learning Turkish

Around half of Syrian parents, mostly men within the study were incapable to invest in learning Turkish. Number of those who made some attempt in learning Turkish was 19. Fifteen of those were women and four were men. Following a course in a community or language center, studying online or with phone applications, interacting with Turkish people and watching TV were shared as means for learning language. However number of parents who could communicate in Turkish even if not very fluently was only four. Abdulwahed (32) had lots of interaction with Turkish people, Nabil (37) studied in a course and with a phone application regularly and Rabia (22) and Hayat (26) were Turcomans and they told that they had learnt by watching television.

Among Arabic families, at least one child's learning Turkish was encouraged so that s/he could translate for the family in public spaces. All the little translators within the research were daughters. Amal (24) said her seven years old daughter helped her as a translator. As Linn's (33) daughter was better with Turkish, she also became a translator for the whole family in public spaces. Ahmad's (52) daughter who was 12 years old learnt Turkish from some Turcoman neighbours. She did not

know how to read and write but her Turkish was enough to serve as a translator during public encounters. One of the reasons Othman (40) wanted to send his daughter to a Turkish school was also that no one in his family was able to speak Turkish yet and he wanted her to learn Turkish.

Linn (33) learnt Turkish to communicate and to find a job to earn for a better house for her daughter's asthma. Rukaya (35) learnt Turkish in the community center so she could find a job in trading, which was her major from Aleppo University. Yasmin (53) also went to a Turkish course in the elementary level for the possibility of finding a job to help with subsistence. Lujeyn (26) studied Turkish in the community center in order to be able to find a job and to integrate.

Hala (40) took Turkish lessons with her children in two different community centers<sup>37</sup> to "... break the ice of the language to get along with the people of the country." Her children did better in a public school after having improved their Turkish in the community center. Abdulwahed (33) who was a barber and who learnt Turkish through daily interaction with Turkish said learning Turkish meant having more friends and more relationships. He was among the two male participants who was most fluent with Turkish. Wafaa (29) also said she wanted to learn Turkish to communicate with Turkish people. Bara (41) learnt Turkish in the community center, "... because I live here [in Turkey] and I will need it if I go to a doctor or whatsoever."

Othman's (40) wife studied Turkish in a free language center in Esenler, designed for women by the Syrian community; where she passed A1 and A2 beginner's levels. Hussam's (38) wife studied Turkish by attending Turkish courses provided by the TEC during summer, however he said it was difficult for her as all

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<sup>37</sup> Ad-dar Center of Association of Solidarity with Asylum-seekers and Migrants and SPI Community Center

her life she was speaking Arabic. When Bara (41) compared with English and German, Turkish was the most difficult for her to learn due to her inability to practice. She said: “Because I don’t use. I don’t go anywhere. Just go to my home to [the Community Center] And I don’t use any words.” Wafaa (29) tried learning Turkish on the internet but it was very difficult to learn the vocabulary and she soon quit.

When asked about whether she was thinking of learning Turkish, Zeynep (37) replied “*lazım*” (necessary) but, not yet. She was a teacher employed in a TEC and was among the 12.500 teachers the Turkish government chose to assign in public schools, so probably now she felt the need for learning Turkish much more than before. Also chosen among the 12.500 teachers, Aysha (42) said she already knew some Turkish as a Turcoman but she learnt more in Turkey. She followed a Turkish course given at the TEC, which did not work out, yet she learnt Turkish from the television through cartoon films, which was very easy for Turcomans.

Hayat (26) who was also a Turcoman said that learning how to read and write in Turkish was very easy. She said she learnt it by herself mostly from the television. Rabia (22) who was also a Turcoman said her Turkish was very good but her husband had difficulties at first in learning Turkish:

Our Turkish [as Turcomans] is a little bit different. I mean when you say Turcoman language, different words and terms are in use. When he [my husband] first came [to Turkey] he had difficulties in speaking with Turkish [people]. I speak well but my husband doesn't know. In Syria all our televisions were Turkish channels. We were living in Syria, speaking Turcoman but we watched Turkish serials, films. But the men didn't know such things because they were at work always. My husband, when he came here he wanted to work in a car repairer but he couldn't speak like them. He didn't know the names of the tools. Hence he didn't have courage. Then he worked in something else. (Rabia, 22)

Similar to Rabia’s husband’s situation in Syria, the men among the research had a hard time finding time to study Turkish even if they wanted to learn. Omar (45) said

he had no time to learn Turkish because he was working between 12 to 15 hours everyday in the restaurant. Abdulsettar (35) said it was impossible for him to learn Turkish as his working conditions did not give him the time to. His grocery shop operated till midnight. Marwa's (42) 17 years old son who was an *ortacı* in a textile workshop wanted to learn Turkish but he had no time for it; he was working for 12 hours for six days a week. Nader (36) said he did not have time to learn Turkish and his clients in the restaurant that he managed were Arabs mostly. Similarly, Othman (40) said he had no time to learn Turkish as he worked long hours in the restaurant where there were only Syrian clients. Adhem (32) also was very busy to learn Turkish. He was working as a cook in a restaurant in Fatih 12 hours everyday. But he said his wife was trying to learn Turkish. Among the women, only Joudi (42) said she wanted to learn Turkish but she did not have time. She said she would start Turkish lessons in the meantime.

Yussef (27) had finished A1 Turkish language course. He wanted to do A2 but he said he currently had no time. Nabil (37) who was among the two most fluent male participants in Turkish said he learnt from an internet website named “Turkey is the heaven of the earth” which was in Arabic and teaching Turkish. He also went to a language course in İSMEK<sup>38</sup> with which he shared his discontent as the teacher was only speaking Turkish and did not know how to pass the information properly. When talking about how he managed to learn Turkish despite difficult working conditions he said:

The most important thing is desire. If you have strong will, you can find any way to learn. I have a desire to learn Turkish so when I was on the way to home in a tramway or metro, I read a book. Or I opened the website and put my earphones to my ears and listened to the lessons. But the problem is, it was 20 years ago that I learnt something. It is too hard now to learn anything new. Especially if it is like learning a new language. (Nabil, 37)

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<sup>38</sup> Ismek is he Lifelong Learning Center of Istanbul Municipality. An adult learning center functioning in Istanbul.

Even if he expressed himself well in Turkish, Nabil (37) said learning Turkish did not change much in his life because he was most of the time with Arabs. He used Turkish only in the government offices.

#### 5.2.10 Emotions

Being a refugee is an innately emotional process. But it should be kept in mind that when they are used to produce essentializing labels that categorize migrants as certain types of subjects, emotions become particularly harmful (Anwaruddin, 2017). Four emotions (gratitude, despair, grief and safety) were extensively shared by the participants parents within their narratives. Hence it was decided that the overall living conditions of participant parents would be lacking without mentioning the emotions that seemed to dominate their narratives. This section involves the prevalent emotions the participants shared with the interviewer keeping away from the “trauma approach” which frames refugees as weak, vulnerable and pathologic, disguising political and personal oppressions and poor official policies (Pinson et al., 2010).

##### 5.2.10.1 Gratitude

Participant parents shared their gratitude for Turkey. Amal (24) said: “Thank you very much for doing this. At least Turkey opened the border for Syrians. And they hosted us. They are treating us like Turkish. We felt ourselves as humans in here.” Amr (35) also shared his gratitude with the Turkish government: “I am thankful for this government because they received us here. I genuinely thank them.”

One of the participants of the study, Linn (33) told about an opportunity to meet president Tayyip Erdogan by coincidence. She was a speaker for Syrian

refugees in the Humanitarian Summit and she told about her encounter with Tayyip Erdoğan:

In the conference, they were 8000 people from different nationalities. And we were going out. Then the bodyguards started to say “Stop, stop”. We didn’t know why. Suddenly he [Turkish president] showed up with important people with them. I saw him in the staircase he was going down, and the door opened he was there, I said I want to take a picture with him, and there was an old Arab man there he helped me take a picture with him. I got so happy, and I told him we [Syrian people] love you very much, he said we love you too. We told him thank you for letting us come to your country. (Linn, 33)

Lin (33) was very proud that she had the opportunity to share her gratitude with the president of Turkey. Likewise Ahmad (52) shared an anecdote that he met with the former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in Fatih and had taken photos with him.

Omar (45) also said “We appreciated this country [Turkey]. This government received us.”

Rim (43) shared her gratitude and said, “ I saw Erdoğan helped many Syrian people. And even our president did not do anything for us.” Rukaya (35) also said: “Of course we thank Erdoğan, Turkey is the only country that opened their doors to us.” Yasmin (53) said that she was grateful for the Turkish government and that she was comfortable in Turkey despite suffering from problems related to subsistence or education. Salam (24) also shared her gratitude for the government that they received the Syrian people. Rabia (22) said “Thank God, look for instance up until now the other states did not look after anybody. But may God bless Turkey. Up until now they did not say [go back] to anybody.”

Gratitude was a most common emotion among Syrians shared during the interviews. Syrians’ gratitude for Turkey is mentioned in other studies as well (International Crisis Report, 2016, Nov. 30).

### 5.2.10.2 Despair

Repeatedly, the participant parents within the study shared despair about the future.

Twenty seven among 35 parents were desperate about future. They used concepts such as “lost”, “finished”, “nothing” and “gone” for their future.

Some emphasized their future was desperate as they actually did not know what would come next and how they would subsist. Sunduz (30) said she saw nothing when she thought about the future. Yussef (27) also said he did not know anything about the future. Abdulsettar (35) also said he did not see anything in the future for himself and for his family saying he even did not have enough money to pay the rent sometimes. He was concerned that the owner would take them out.

Rukaya (35) also thought there was no future here in Turkey. She told about how it was impossible to live and subsist in Turkey with only one parent working in a family:

It is difficult to live here it is like expensive for Syrian people because the salary is not so good. It is not enough to you know just my husband works. So it is not enough. It should be two workers in a family. So I should find a job or something ... My husband works all day and he can barely pay rent only. I need to work too. (Rukaya, 35)

Rukaya said they were desperate in Turkey, hence they wanted to find a way to go to Germany even if they knew many people who went there and who dream of coming back.

Abdulwahed (32) also thought about going to Europe with smugglers as he was desperate about the future for her children in Turkey. The family hardly subsisted in Turkey and also they could not enroll their children to a school as public schools did not accept and they could not afford a TEC. In such conditions, Abdulwahed shared how he thought about sending his children to Europe through the Mediterranean by smugglers:

I wanted to send them to Europe first, but then it didn't work out. I was gonna send them through the boat and, whatever. I knew during that time, I knew a way that was safer. That, there were more chances. Yeah but, at first I said, if they arrive ... because I have some relatives in Holland [that could help]...then I would be very happy. But if they don't, then probably I would be very sad and mad and may be I would die after them. But, but, I thought may be if they die, it is better than even living the way they are living right now because they might be just living, but they are not really living." (Abdulwahed, 32)

Sometimes the despair concerning future was due to not knowing whether they would go back to Syria and in what conditions. Reflecting on the future Linn (33) said: "We are just ... lost. We have lost any stability, yeah we wish to go back home, even if we go back home, our house is lost." Nader (36) also said: "Nobody knows our future. There's nothing to build about future, to think about it. We don't know even will we stay here or we will go to another country or we will go back to Syria." Similarly Amr (35) was also desparate about the near future as he could not foresee where his family would live in. He said "I don't know. Only God knows this thing. And the government decides this. If they want to give us here ... we will stay here. If they want to send us somewhere to home, of course we will go. So it is the government's decision. (Amr, 35) Zeynep also said she felt ambiguous. She said: "We don't know [if] suddenly we will go back to Syria [or] we don't know if suddenly we are going to go to another country." Hence the some parents shared the situation of temporariness led to despair among them.

Sometimes, those participants whose family members were separated and trying to build up a future in different countries were also desperate. Some family members fighting or being stuck in Syria were also a source of despair. Marwa (42) said she did not see anything in the future. Even for his son who was 21 and that was in Germany she was desperate because he did not get the residence there yet. And she was also much worried about her 22 years old son who was in Syria fighting with

freedom fighters there. Rim (43) said her 21 years old son was stuck in Idleb together with his father who was handicapped. They lived under bombing areas and they were looking for but could not find ways to come to Turkey. She was desperate about their situation.

When they talked about the future of their children the parents seemed to expect more than their own but the fragility of their future vision continued. Amal (24) reflected in similar terms: “There is no future. Our future is lost. There is no future. We are looking for a good future for our children. For us it is too late and it finished.” Kazım (48) also said he did not care about his own future but he just wanted to make sure that his children’s future be good.

However, some other parents shared total despair about their children’s future as well. Omar (45) said: “Next generation, God help them, their future is finished. May God help them.” His brother Othman (40) said, “I swear the god I don’t know anything about my daughter’s future but I always try to give support like financial or emotional support. I try my best.” Lujeyn (26) also said she saw nothing in the future for her brother who was nine years old. She gave no reasons. Zeynep (37) said her children’s future was also lost due to the government’s decision to close the TECs and include Syrian students in Turkish schools. She was concerned that her children might become school dropouts due to this decision. Aysha (42) told her children were also hopeless like herself due to ambiguousness concerning their future. She said:

The oldest one (18) wants to study information technology. But the other [three have] no [dreams] because they don’t have too much hope. The second one (17) had dreams but when she saw her eldest sister [who is a high school graduate but is not accepted to the university] she kind of lost hope. The third one (13) doesn’t speak about it at all. They stopped dreaming … In Syria, the kids themselves, they had hope, they wanted to be something in the future. But here they say, even if they finish high school, ‘Where will I go? What will I do? May be I will not be anything.’ (Aysha, 42)

Cana (38) had similar concerns about higher education of her children in Turkey. She had an 18 years old daughter who was graduated from high school. Also she had another daughter at the eleventh, another at the eight and another son in the ninth grade. She said in Syria she could expect something about the future of her children but in here, she could not.

In Syria anyone who finished school could go to the university. Of course it depended on the degrees. But here there are many tests, many procedures to go to the university. It's very difficult because of that... My children are top students. But I don't know what will be their future here." (Cana, 38)

Yasmin (53) shared how desperate her son was after having such a successful baccalaureate (83%) and having been accepted to the engineering department of Aleppo University in Syria. After he came to Turkey, he had made nearly 20 applications to the universities all around Turkey but received a refusal from nearly all of them. She said, her son absolutely wanted to study but they did not have the finances to provide for him. Her eldest son had finished three years in the university earlier but had to escape from Syria because he had to join the military. He went to live in Egypt and worked there a few years before Turkey. Now he was the only person employed in the family. She burst into tears while telling that how much his second son who was accepted to the Aleppo University was suffering from depression for having lost all his future:

I just don't want him to lose his future, my eldest has lost it because of these problems, I don't want this one too. Rent is so expensive, my eldest is alone spending on five people. His siblings want to study. We have nothing. If [only] a university accepted him, I don't know whom I can speak with for help. (Yasmin, 53)

She was desperately searching ways to help her son to be accepted by a university in Turkey. Joudi (42) also shared that she did not see any future for her two sons aged 16 and 17 who were at that moment working in "a bad job like being a waiter." She

rather wanted them to continue their studies but the family lacked the opportunity for that. She said “there is no future for us here.”

#### 5.2.10.3 Grief

Another emotion, which was recurrent for Syrian refugees, was grief.

Discrimination towards their children caused excessive pain among the Syrian parents. Linn (33) shared how painful she felt when he went to see her daughter in the year-end ceremony. None of the other students wanted to stand next to her and she was left all alone in the corner. None of the kids liked her and she felt very bad. She justified this situation saying: “We don't know what are the conversation the little children hear at home.” However her daughter's being subject to discrimination and exclusion in school was a huge source of grief for her. She burst into tears while she shared how other students in the school said “Why are you here? Go to your country!” to her daughter. And she thought that it was the parents who thought them to say these things.

When she was asked about her thoughts about the future, Hala (40) also cried and she said, “I just remembered my son. He was beaten in the school [by a gang of other students] just because he was a Syrian. And he drew a Syrian flag on the wall and he asked me to picture him with that flag. He stood next to that flag and said: ‘If I were in Syria no one would hit me.’” This instance of discrimination and bullying also led to excessive anguish for her.

Nebil's (37) daughter who was seven years old had gone to a Turkish private kindergarten for two years when she was between 4 and 5 years old. She had been subject to discrimination by peers in that kindergarten and this led to a lot of grief within the family. Nebil said: “This is something that really hurt us...Her interaction

with Turkish children caused her depression. She used to come back home everyday crying.” (Nabil, 37)

Having lost everything in Syria and having become refugees in Turkey was obviously a source of grief Syrian refugees had to cope with. When he was asked how it felt to be a Syrian in Turkey, Othman (40) replied that he felt: “Bad, bad, bad, bad!”. He said: “I can’t accept this situation like I am outside my country. Because I used to live in very good conditions in Syria and now I am like—I can’t. So I feel so bad.” Both being away from home country and having lost favourable conditions that the family had in Syria had been painful for Othman.

Another source of grief was being away from one’s family members who were left in Syria. Hussam (38) also said her wife was in depression as she could not visit her family in person for the last two and a half years. Now only he had a work permit but his wife was under temporary protection and did not have a travel permit. He said: “Everyday I go back and find my wife crying. And when I look at her mobile I see she was talking with her parents.” Rabia also told about how not being able to go to Syria was painful for them. She told about how they envied Turkey before the war and how living in Turkey now has become an obligation for them. She said,

We said, if only we could go to Turkey, live in Turkey ... Before people came here only for education. But now what is hard on us today is that being here has become an obligation. If we had such a possibility, an opportunity to go and come back, it wouldn't be that hard. I was never sad that I was here before, because I had the hope to go back. I would go back I mean. But now, since the hopes are abolished, when there is no hope, one becomes sad. What happened for instance? We had a house, a car. We had everything. Now you have to start from zero. It is difficult. (Rabia, 22)

She emphasized the difficulty of not being allowed to travel to Syria freely and having to start their lives all over her in Turkey.

#### 5.2.10.4 Safety

Participant parents shared feelings of safety concerning their lives in Istanbul, as well as feelings of insecurity and precariousness.

Some parents emphasized the school as a place that can give children a sense of safety and everyday life. Houda (41) said being able to go to school in Turkey made her daughter feel safe. She said “In Syria during war time, she went to school may be one time a week and she used to cry a lot because she wanted to go to school.” Ahmad’s (52) 12 years old daughter was very sad when she was taken out of TEC due to financial constraints and felt insecure as she had the same experience of trying to learn something on the laptop in Aleppo. Likewise, Abdulwahed’s (32) children who could not access school in Turkey felt lonely and unsafe in Turkey. He said when he sent his family back Damascus so that his children could go to their previous schools they felt safe, “ Now at least they see their friends, their family ... For example living in Avcılar they felt very lonely. But in Syria, even with the war, they feel safety and they feel at home. So they are happy.” In both cases the importance of the school’s role in promoting safety is emphasized which is also highlighted by several studies in the literature (Ecklund et al., 2013; Matthews, 2008).

Some Syrian parents emphasized that they felt safe in Turkey after a lengthy time in Syria full of worries about safety of themselves and their children. Ahmad (52) said it was safe in Turkey. He said: “I come from a place where there is no food, no electricity. So I am happy. I feel safe here.” Mayor (32) also said as a Syrian living in Turkey she felt safe. She added, “*Inshallah* (if Allah wills it) we will have a good and safe future in Turkey”.

Some parents shared that their feelings of safety were somehow damaged after the coup attempt on July 15, 2016. Especially in the interviews held after the coup attempt some participant parents shared their concerns. Omar (45) said if the coup happened the Syrians would be expelled back to Syria. When he elaborated, he said: “You know the situation is very bad for the Syrian people because the objection in Turkey is against the Syrian people. To give citizenship, to give a work-permit, even to stay here. So if the government changed with the objection one they would have expelled us.” Rim (43) also said “.... I expect [the government] will help us and the president ... we did pray for him and he will do many good things for us. And at that day when the coup attempt happened I cried a lot, I was very sad and concerned.” When sharing his gratitude for Turkey, Amr (35) said, “And if our situation stays like this with no problems, that's okay for us. At least they welcomed us, they received us.” His words also provide that he has some concern about whether Syrians' acceptance in Turkey would be permanent or not. Nabil (37) also shared his concerns that Turkish government might send them back if the war in Syria was over. “I think *inshallah* the educational future is good here ... But that depends what will happen next, for example, if the war stops in Syria, maybe the Turks will say go back to your country.” Amjed (40) even said “I don't want the Turkish government to kick us out of Turkey” to the question on expectations from Turkey. Hence, it reveals that concerns about temporariness went hand in hand with feelings of safety for the Syrian refugees.

Another source of concern, which damaged feelings of safety was constantly worrying about subsistence in Istanbul. Bara (41) lived with her daughter and son in Fatih and she said she expected to go to Germany as two other children were already in Germany. She said: “I see the best solution is to go to Germany and get all my

family there. In German, it is possible we all live together in one house and we will feel safe, our bills and rent will be paid until we settle. There is no help for anything.”

Rabia (22) and Hayat (26) said they did not let their children to go out and play on the street freely since they did not trust in the safety of the streets. Rabia said: “ My daughter has Turkish friends but I don't send her to the neighbourhood. I can't trust. Our neighbour upstairs has a daughter. They don't feel safe, neither do I.” Rim (43) on the other hand experienced a terrifying assault where several men in a car tried to kidnap her son in Fatih, which totally impaired her feelings of safety for the time being. She shared feeling genuinely unsafe. She told about this incident like:

Now I have a phobia. Gangsters. It was in Fatih … We were sitting by the beach and a group with covered faces, which looked like women came and they asked me to take a photo by their phone and two guys tried to call my son. They said, come play with us. But he didn't go. My neighbour realized [that those who asked for a picture] were men not women, she was sitting with my daughter … We screamed and they walked and stole my handbag … I started running after them to get my handbag. And they started beating me by the car. I opened the door of the car and there were about six to seven men inside. I got injured in my legs for about a month. Because of that as I have only these two children here … Their responsibility is with me. If anything happens to them, I don't have anybody to help me.” Rim (43)

Hence, after this terrifying incident, Rim's (43) feelings of safety were severely damaged. She would take her 11 years old son to school herself everyday and would not let her 16 year old daughter to go out of the house at all.

In short, though some parents shared that they felt safe in Turkey, concerns about safety were more significant among what the participant parents have shared within this study. Some participants mentioned their uncertainty increased concerning the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey especially after the coup attempt. Some others shared that concerns about monthly subsistence or insecurity for themselves and for their children in Istanbul made them feel unsafe in Istanbul.

However, the majority of the participants did not share feelings or concerns about safety within this study.

### 5.3 Meaning of education

Education of their children was important for most parents who participated in this research. They generally prioritized their children's education in their lives, they thought being educated was important and they tried their best to keep their children learning. They attached a variety of positive concepts to education. These involved power, dignity, independence, future, self-fulfilment and hope.

Hala (40) was among those parents who expressed the value of education for her. She first came to Istanbul so that she could get treatment as her house had a bomb explosion and she was severely burnt. However, soon after she prioritized education of her children rather than her health. She said:

There was no medicine in Syria, or health care or anything, so I had to come here. But I couldn't take the full treatment here because I was to pay for that as well. But I focused on my children. On their education. Most important thing for me are my children... And I've set my priorities to my children's education (Hala, 40)

For Linn (33) and Omar (45) education has been very important also. She said they expected their kids to be educated and go far in life:

This was my goal when I left Syria, ... to educate my children and make them independent. Because we don't know what this life has hidden for us ... We are happy to see that she is getting the best grades even in Turkish language, we have hope she can go far, for us studying is the most important thing. For me and for my husband, education is a red line, we really want our kids to be educated and go far in life. (Linn, 33)

Amr (33) and his family came to Turkey for their children's education:

Actually, the goal to coming here was the education for my kids. My daughter was going to a preschool ... ISIS closed all schools ... actually it was the end of the studying year and she was waiting to have her diploma. But ISIS came to our city, she couldn't and we moved for Rakka, there is no

school, nothing at all. So I brought my family to here. It was the most important thing for me, education. So I brought my family- (Amr, 35)

Cana (38) had four children all of whom were going to the TEC in Çapa. Reflecting on the future, she said the first thing she was thinking about was to keep her children learning, to enable them continue with education. She was a university graduate herself and she wanted to send her children to the university in the future.

Yasmin (53) also had four children where eldest son who was 22 worked alone to cover the expenses of the whole family. The younger son was a high school graduate and he had been accepted to the engineering department in Aleppo University, but he wasn't accepted to any of the universities in Turkey and the family was very much concerned that he would have to quit his studies. They were eagerly trying to find a way that a university would accept him. His eldest son also had to leave Syria because of the military duty before he finished his university after 3 years of studies. She was very concerned that her second son would also have to quit studies due to this migration. She said: "I just don't want him to loose his future, the eldest has lost it because of these problems, I don't want this one too... If a university accepts him, I don't know whom I can speak with for help."

Linn (33) valued being independent and for her education was the means to achieve independence. She said: "If my children continue to ... if they have a good education they can depend on themselves. We don't know with this time, we cannot always be there for them." Amal also hoped that her children had a good education, which would bring a good life for them. Her husband was uneducated and she emphasised her husband's ignorance when explaining the importance of education. For Amal (24), education would bring "power" and "dignity" which she felt her husband did not possess:

I hope they have a good education and certificates and they have a good life. Not the same lives that we lived ... I hope they have a good future in education. And they live in power and dignity. And they don't turn like their father ignorant. (Amal, 25)

Adhem (32) also could not go far in education and he said that education was very important for him. He explained: "I will never let them leave the school like I did. I now know how the education is very important for my kids and for all. I will never make the same mistake. Until the university, it is important."

Hayat (26) who was a Turcoman whose husband was uneducated said she and her husband, valued education a lot. She said, "For instance my husband works day and night, just for our children to learn, just for our children to have education. Hence the most important thing in our lives is education now." She said they even decided not to go to Hatay because they paid importance for their education. They regarded Istanbul was better with educational opportunities in public schools and they had more room for studying in Istanbul since they would stay at home more.

Wafaa (29) who had two children who were 7 and 8 and who were registered recently in a public school also valued education. She said the kids would be organized and they would learn the system: "Of course the kids would learn how to talk and understand. An educated person is different." She hoped her children would study in the future because she wanted them to become "important persons". For her, education would bring "power" and "respect".

Houda (41) also regarded that an educated person would be better than an uneducated person. When asked about what would education change in her daughter's life she said:

I don't know about my daughter, what can affect her or whether she can change something within the family. But I wish that she has higher education. Of course and educated person is much better, I hope she will be one of the top students and get higher education (Houda, 41)

When talking about what education brought to the life of her daughter currently she emphasized that it was “safety” what education changed in the life of her daughter. In the conditions of war, disruption in her education brought feelings of insecurity and anxiety and coming to Turkey and being involved in a TEC, which had a familiar environment led her feel “safe” once again.

For Aysha who had four school age children where the eldest one finished high school but could not settle in a university, education meant “hope”. In response to the questions about future Aysha emphasized the despair she had for herself and for her children. She said her children had hopes before when they used to study in Syria but here they had lost hope. They stopped dreaming when they saw that their eldest sister who was very successful in her studies was not able to go to the university. Aysha told that her daughters said: “Even if I finish high school where will I go? What will I do? May be I will not be anything at all.” She emphasized that education stood for “hope”. She said “If I knew my children could continue studying, that they can have education, they can have something in the future, they can be something in the future. This is the only thing. … I would feel hope.”

Abdulwahed (32) said he generally did not like the schooling system as it always brought the children back in the past instead of the future. He thought what the education system provided for the children currently was unimportant and unjoyful for the children:

… generally children don't like school. They like to play. So it is like obviously it is not a big thing for them to go to school … All the educational system is very wrong. If they could change it and make it in a different way that the children would enjoy schooling. If they would actually they remove everything that is not important, focus on the important things that everyone needs to learn and after that do, like if they want to go in medicine then, you know they could do more math. If I can be the minister of education, I would totally change the system. Throw everything that is not important away.  
(Abdulwahed, 32)

He thought that education ought to mean “self-fulfilment” but in the current form, it was far away. He gave an example from Europe where children would be taught morals until the age of 10 after when they were taught mathematics and stuff like this. And by the age of fifteen one would choose what s/he wanted to do in life and study what s/he wanted. During the time of the interview, Abdulwahed had sent his children back to Syria so that they went back to the same school they used to go before. However he was not happy because he thought that now they would probably be taught about Beşşar Esad more but less on other useful things. But he said, he had no choice.

#### 5.4 Reflections on the past: Education and schools in Syria

Participants to the study shared reflections on the educational experiences of themselves and their children in Syria as well as their thoughts on the Syrian education system. This section involves these reflections and thoughts. In the first section participants’ reflections on education and schools in Syria before and during the war are explored. In the second section the experience of loss of school years due to war and its affects on the educational histories are explored.

##### 5.4.1 Reflections on education and schools in Syria

Education system in Syria was generally highly appreciated by the participant parents. In comparison to what their children received for education in Turkey, they were much more satisfied with the education level, content, methods, process and results in Syria. The figures of Syrian education system before the war also were positive but they are devastated with war. In 2009, 94 percent of Syrian children attended compulsory education of nine years (primary and lower secondary

education) while by June 2016 only 60 percent of children attended education, and 2.1 million children and adolescents were left out of school (UNHCR, 2016, p. 11).

Reasons for the appreciation of the Syrian education system by the parents are numerous. Common remarks involved education's being totally free from the preschool to university; the state's, administrators', teachers and parents' putting more worth and effort in education; exclusive curriculum, subjects and the schools; teachers' putting highest effort in children's learning; close follow absenteeism and a high-quality English, science and maths, education in Syria. However some parents also emphasized that after the war, the education in Syria deteriorated. One of the parents criticized that the Syrian education system had been more and more focused on war and politics leaving aside the other subjects. In fact his criticism was towards all the education systems that they focused more on politics but less on life skills. Some parents also criticized other aspects of the Syrian education system. One was use of physical punishment as a tool in education in Syria. Teacher's treatment towards children was underlined many times as better in Turkey. Other criticisms towards Syrian education system involved crowded classrooms and discrimination among students with respect to socio-economic status.

Parents emphasized that education in Syria was totally free including preschool and also the university education in comparison with Turkey. Secondly, they said in Syria the state put more effort with its teachers, its curriculum and everything. Hala (40) whose three children were studying in a public primary school in Turkey said:

Generally, in Syria, the education was very good, it insures the students from kindergarten to doctorate paid by the country. Education was very strong. Every country has its own way of education. Maybe from my sight, I am from Syria, I see it better there but now I am here, like I said, every country has its way. I might be "bias" or "wrong ". The subjects are very good and the country put a lot of effort and care in education. (Hala, 40)

Aysha (42) whose three children studied in a TEC also said education was good in Syria as the teachers and the administrators cared more about education there. She added “even the parents cared more about education in Syria”. Cana (38) who sent her children to a TEC also thought so, as the teachers in Syria took time to explain everything properly even after the war started. Rukaya (35) whose son was going to the same TEC with Cana’s children regarded education as very good when she was in Syria. She justified this situation with teacher’s giving more care, more information and more homeworks in Syria:

My son was hardworking he was always number one in his class. Here I registered him in a TEC but the education there is not so good. It’s a big difference from here and there. There was more care. More writing. [There is] not enough information here. For example [in] the school textbook, they have barely wrote anything on it on mid year. Studies were better there. (Rukaya, 35)

Hussam (38) whose one son went to a public school and the other to a TEC also thought education in Syria was better. He justified this idea by the fact that absenteeism was followed by the teachers in Syria. He said:

Education in Syria is much better than here. In Syria they give more interest. I remember that when I was in school, if I didn’t go to school for one day, I needed some medical report to explain why I was absent. But here in Turkish public schools or in Syrian TECs they don’t give a damn about it. If you were absent for two days, three days, no one cares. (Hussam, 38)

Omar (45) whose one daughter went to a public primary school and the other two to a TEC also said that the education in Syria was much better. He exemplified using her daughter’s learning pace of English in Syria and in here:

One hundred and eighty degrees difference. The education in Syria was very good. And the education here is very bad. My younger daughter, she was in an English school from the first grade, by the time she was in third grade her English was fluent. She had to stop at fourth grade. The girl was fluent in English in Syria in the first three years. Now she’s forgetting all her English [in the TEC]... (Omar, 45)

Adhem (32) whose children were in a public primary school in Turkey said education in Syria was better because when he was at the second grade he had already memorized the multiplication table in Syria. However here in Turkey, his children were studying it in the second grade but he did not think that they now knew it.

Kazım (48) whose son was a Turkish secondary school also praised education in Syria. He said science education was better in Syria. It was followed by the teachers if the children did their homework and if they had time to study at home. He thought Syrians were very creative, sometimes more when compared to Turkish people. The reason was that education was better in Syria. He exemplified like: “When you have a broken electronical machine, here in Turkey they go just throw it away. But in Syria no, we just fix it by ourselves. People are a little ignorant here. Syrians think more.”

Rabia (22) also said she thought that Syria’s education system was better. She justified her opinion depending on her observations about Turkish people like Kazım (48). She said:

For instance Turkish people can only pay attention to one thing at a time. They can’t focus on something else. In our place for instance you can work with this, that and everything at the same time. People have such a capacity. I think this must be about the quality of education. (Rabia, 22)

Amr (35) whose daughter went to a TEC at primary school age in Gaziantep for 6 months also said Syria had a good education system. He said the schools were better than here and the diploma received from a Syrian school would be more useful. He also added that one learnt better if he studied in his home country in a safe environment. He said: “On the other side, to learn [in Syria] is better than here because you feel comfortable in your country, in your home town. But here, you can learn but you don’t feel comfortable.”

Some parents emphasized that even if education was very good before the war, it somehow deteriorated as the war began. Before the war, education in Syria was better according to Lujeyn (26), teachers were doing better than the teachers in the TECs around here. Abdulsettar (35) said before ISIS came to his hometown Rakka, public education had been very good in Syria but after them, it had been bad. Marwa (42) said education in Syria was better and free for all but in the last few years it got worse. Abdulwahed (32) who could not find the opportunity to settle his children in a Turkish public school and who sent them back to their previous school in Damascus said: "Before the war and everything, it was very good. Especially for, like if you wanna be [something] in the medicine field, engineering, or, all these science staff. But now, because of the war, it is all about you know Beşşar." He said he was criticising the education systems' focus on war and politics. He raised this point as:

...now at school, they will probably teach them about Beşşar and about his father. And how great they are and instead, may be that's gonna be the 90% of schooling and then else is gonna be, 10% about reading and writing. And for example math they could teach them something in a very simple way but they will make it very big. So the kids can not focus on this but focus on Beşşar. So [before the war] everyone did what they want, it was easy and very supportive but now it's not the same it is all about war and politics. Yeah. That's why it is not good anymore. (Abdulwahed, 32)

In his elaborations, Abdulwahed (32) mentioned that he criticised all the education systems in general. He said all these education systems, schools in Syria, Turkish public schools, TECs in Turkey, even in Europe, they bring the children in the past instead of the future. He expanded:

For example they are teaching about Abdulwahedaddin Ayyubi. Yeah. For me this is not important. Why they don't teach something about like, Einstein. Something more -- how to create a phone or even how to make a washing machine. (LG) He says for me even that is more important. But... they started teaching about the war in Syria. You know the freedom fighters, em. They were teaching about one man who fought and, come on these people are not for me important. I believe this problem is not only in Syria but even in

Turkey and Europe and everywhere in the world. Why do we need to learn about Abdulwahedadin who went to war, and died or not? (Abdulwahed, 32)

Alternatively, Zeynep (26) thought education in Syria was better because it wasn't "ideological" like it was here in the TECs. Her four children were studying in TECs and herself was also a teacher in TEC. However she thought that it was real education in Syria, not business like here. The schools would belong to the education ministry unlike TECs and the managers would not be following their own ideology by themselves.

Amal (24) criticised the education system in Syria due to use of physical punishment and crowding of the classrooms. She raised these points as:

The education is better here. a lot of better. They treat children nicely. When we were in Syria, When al Assad was in charge we were like 50 to 60 Syrians per class. Here there is only like ten or fifteen kids at the class. Yeah it is obvious.... It is a public school here. It is much better than schools in Syria although they are for free. Seventeen students per class. That's it. We were like 50 students in Aleppo's schools. Regardless on they used to insult us and to beat us. (Amal, 24)

Othman (40) also said, the content of education was good in Syria but the teacher's treatment was not proper. The reason was their use of physical punishment. Ziya (20) also said physical punishment was in use as an educational tool in Syria. He himself experienced some physical punishment with a stick and also by slapping several times.

In addition, Ziya (20) also mentioned discrimination by the teachers among students was common in Syria. He said: "Teachers would put more interest in you if your parents were in the government or in the army, if you were rich." From what he heard from his 12 years old brother, the treatment was equal in Turkey.

#### 5.4.2 Loss of school years due to war, and its effects on education

Most children of the parents who participated in the study experienced some loss of years of study during war in Syria and after migration to Turkey. Some parents said that their children did not have any loss as they directly started to school in a TEC after coming to Turkey. Not being able to go to school and loosing school years was a massive source of frustration for the children and the parents. Going back to school after some time brought about feelings of safety on the one hand but there was also the difficulty of going back to school and studies after loss of years on the other. A few parents mentioned an opportunity to catch up with lost school years in a TEC during summer however even if they caught up with lost school years in TECs, the difficulties with certification and equivalency to continue to the university was a challenge ahead.

Abdulsettar (35) whose daughters were aged 6 and 9 during the time of the interview used to go to school before ISIS came to their city in 2014, since then they quit school. They came to Turkey by the beginning of 2016 and they were still not going to school during the time of the interview (June 8, 2016), hence they had lost two years of studies already and it was vague when they would start again as the family had severe financial problems and their father had cancer. Nader (36) said her two elder children were going to school and the two younger were at home. His son was in first grade and that was his first year, he was late by a year. His daughter was late by three years. She was supposed to be in grade 6 now but she was in grade three.

However there were also parents who said their children did not experience any loss of school years at all since they directly started a TEC in Turkey. Cana (38) who was from Deraa said her four children did not have any loss of school years as

they directly started a Syrian school in Fatih as soon as they came to Turkey. In Syria during the war, they only lost a week or two, only for when there was a fighting or, when they were surrendering.

Loss of school years in Syria during the war caused a lot of frustration among the children as well as their parents. Hala's (40) eldest son was at the first grade when their home had an explosion in Syria. He was 9 and had lost three years in the time between. Hala explained how she felt hopeless under war as her children were loosing years of study:

He was supposed to go to second grade but we couldn't, after [that] third grade and we couldn't. Those two years we stayed there [in Aleppo] under war. We were stuck there. And we got exposed to an explosion. Two years of their life was gone useless. I couldn't do anything for them because of the war. (Hala, 40)

Houda (41) explained how being under war and staying forcibly away from school made her daughter feel unsafe and what going back to school in Turkey in a TEC changed in her life:

Because since she was in Syria under war [she couldn't go to school at all], she [now] likes to go to school and going to school makes her feel safe. When she's at home, she's not doing anything. When she goes to school, she increases her memory, her intelligence. In Syria during war, she went to school maybe one time a week, and she used to cry a lot because she wanted to go to school. (Houda, 41)

Ahmad (52) also said his 12 years old daughter lost one year as she could not go to school during war in Aleppo, Syria. Then she tried to learn things on the laptop and she suffered a lot from this intermission in her education. During the time of the interview (November 1, 2016) the TEC she had been going to was turned into an international school and the family could not afford the payment of the school anymore. It cost 1000 dollars every year. Hence they decided to take her from school as her mother was also sick and required care. Ahmad emphasized that she was in

depression because she was again at home trying to learn things on the laptop as if she was in Syria during the war.

Another important challenge with loss of school years was to convince the children who got used to not going to school to go back to their studies in another country in another education system. Marwa (42) from Aleppo told about how difficult it had been to convince his 10 years old son who was going to an imam hatip school to go back to school after loosing two years of studies: “First year there were, problems because one day there was a protest, another day another problem. He lost two school years. Now he doesn't want to go to school. I hardly convince him to go to school.”

Aysha's (42) children had lost two years of school due to financial difficulties in their first few years in Turkey. They came to Turkey in 2013 and they had four children who were school age, however the family decided to send their eldest daughter (who was aged 16 then) to a TEC as the family could afford only one of them. During the time of the interview (September 30, 2016) her eldest daughter had finished high school and could not go to any university yet while the others were going to school then, except the youngest one who was preschool age but had a down syndrome. All her daughters lost many years of studies but she found ways for her children to catch up with the lost years through summer schools provided by TECs.

##### 5.5 Reflections on the present: Education and schools in Istanbul

All children in Turkey have the right to benefit from free basic education, which is mandatory for 12 years including primary, secondary and high school. The temporary protection regime includes educational services where Syrian refugees have the right to be registered at public schools or TECs for the purpose of basic

education in Turkey. However, as Pinson & Arnot suggests (2007), education of people with different immigration status raises challenges for the education system. The challenge of enhancing educational access of Syrian children endures, as the rate of enrollment in schools has been 58% by the end of 2016 (MoNE Turkey, 2016, November 4). In addition, Turkish government has made the decision to include Syrian students in public schools and close TECs by 2019 while the children are no longer accepted in the first, fifth and ninth grades as a rule of transition. This section brings together the reflections of Syrian parents on their children's educational experiences in Turkey. The first section involves the dilemma Syrian parents experience concerning the school choice for their children in Turkey. Second section involves the experience of public schools and the third section involves the experiences in TECs.

#### 5.5.1 Dilemma of School Choice

Government ensures that education is available for all school-age children according to the "availability" criteria within 4 A's of education suggested by Tomasevski (2001, p. 12). Enabling enrolment in public schools and legalization of urban TECs by Circular 2014/21 has been an important decision regarding availability of schools for Syrian refugee children in Turkey. However TECs were not easily accessible as most of them were charged, and their diploma was not certified. Public schools conversely involved a language barrier, which made educational inclusion a challenging task for a Syrian refugee child. Hence most parents faced the dilemma of choosing a school for their children. The dilemma continued even after Turkish government decided that all Syrian children would be enrolled in public schools

while all TECs would have been closed within three years by the beginning of 2019-2020 academic term.

Among 69 children within this study's scope, who are school age or at preschool, 26 were registered in TECs, 23 in public schools and 20 did not go to school at all. School accession and type of school accessed with respect to school age is shown in Table 11.

Table 11. School Accession and Type of School by School Age

School Accession and Type of School by School age	Preschool age	Primary school age	Secondary school age	High school age	Total
Public school	2	16	5	0	23
TEC	0	11	12	3	26
Doesn't go to school	6	7	2	5	20
Total	8	34	19	8	69

However, 7 of the parents whose children went to public schools and 1 of those who had no access gave the reason for their choice as unaffordability of TECs.

Alternatively two parents wanted to send their children to a public school but weren't accepted as they lacked *kimlik* and two others parents who were enrolled in TEC considered a public school next term.

Despite a majority of Syrian parents in this study chose TECs for their children, they faced a continuous dilemma of choosing between public schools and TECs that continued long after the choice, as the educational experiences sometimes led them to think that the other type of school would have been more appropriate. Many factors exist that nourish this dilemma of school choice, which seemed to intensify with the implementation of the decision of inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish schools.

A good number of Syrian parents chose TECs for their children despite certain disadvantages such as a high cost and unofficial certification. Cana (38) said:

“We did not know the situation in public schools and there were Syrian schools, so we sent [our children] there directly.” Aysha (42) said she sent her daughters to TECs, as it was “better than staying without school”. She did not mention public schools as a choice at all. A common concern was that their children would loose or would not be able to develop proficiency in Arabic and they would endure problems because they did not understand the language of education in public schools. Familiar environment in TECs was appealing that it provided for friendship and feelings of normalcy for them. Linn (33) said she sent her youngest son to a TEC first so that he could first learn Arabic, then she would send her to a public school. Nabil (37) also said they sent their daughter to a Syrian school as they did not want her to forget Arabic language. Nader (36) said: “I did not choose a public school, because they first have to learn Arabic. I don't want them to learn Turkish first, and then Arabic.” Zeynep (37) said the children themselves did not want to go to public schools as they knew no Turkish. Amr (35) said:

My daughter will suffer at this school because the teachers are Turkish and the curriculum is Turkish. So when she comes back home, we don't know Turkish, we don't know how to help her, so we can't. I don't want because of that. (Amr, 35)

Amr (35) was hesitant about what was going to happen to the TECs in the future. During the time of the interview (September 30, 2016) his two daughters who were 6 and 8 years old were out of school and waiting, in order to see which TECs would be available to send their children. They did not consider public schools an alternative. Aysha (42) said she hesitated to send her third daughter to a public school even if her daughter was speaking some Turkish as they were Turcomans. By the beginning of the academic term, she was hesitant, she hadn't made her decision yet. Zeynep (37) shared her disappointment about the decision to close the TECs and include Syrian students in Turkish educational system.

Nebil (37) alternatively said, he decided to send his daughter who was seven years old to the TEC the coming year so that he could give her “one more year of language learning”, both for Arabic and for Turkish. He thought Syrian children ought to be taught Arabic first and that they needed to learn Turkish well before they were included in Turkish schools. His daughter had been subject to discrimination by Turkish peers in a private kindergarten and he said, “I don't want on her first two years to cause her depression. I am trying to enhance her Turkish, so that if she goes to a Turkish school it won't be hard on her.”

Ahmad (52) said despite his daughter spoke some Turkish and she was the translator for the family in public encounters, they did not think of sending her to a public school. She continued a TEC until fourth grade till last year but in the coming year, the family could not afford the TEC and decided her to quit school and look after her sick mother at home. Ahmad thought she was late to have started at the public school, as she was 12 years old. At her age he said, the teachers would not spend much time to teach Turkish to her and without Turkish, the public school would be of no use as she would not understand the lessons. He said: “If she was at the [public] school before, from the beginning of the school, first grade or second grade it would be easier. Now it is too hard.”

Yussef (27) said that he did not choose a public school for his daughter as he preferred a conservative environment. He said: “I am afraid it is too open for my children. Syrian schools too sometimes, but it can't be as bad as Turkish school. It is my personal choice.”

Syrian parents sent their children to public schools so that they learnt Turkish. In Syrian Arab families in particular, children would be the only person speaking Turkish in the family and would help as a translator during public

encounters. A second major reason was that public schools were free. A few parents also emphasized even if they regarded their stay in Turkey as temporary in the beginning now, they felt that the situation in Syria would not get better soon. Possibility of their permanence in Turkey led them to send their children to a public school. Some parents said that they heard that education was better in Turkish schools and that the diploma was formally recognized. The curriculum's being closer to the European curriculum was appealing for some parents. Obviously, the decision of the Turkish government to close the TECs, have been encouraging for the parents to send their children to public schools. Some parents underlined that they chose a public school to enable their integration in Turkey. Role of education in integration is emphasized in many studies and by transnational organisations (Bačáková, 2011; Mosselson, 2007; Rah, Shangmin, & Thu Suong Thi, 2009; Szente, Hoot & Taylor, 2006; UNESCO, 2005; UNHCR, 2012).

Hala (40) said she could not send her three children to a TEC because it was costly, one thousand dollars for each, she sent them to a public school. Amal (24) also said she did not even think of sending her daughter to a TEC but to a public school due to cost and also as she wanted her to learn Turkish. Linn's (33) fourteen years old daughter was taken from a TEC to a public school in the mid-year due to financial problems and to enable that somebody learns Turkish in the family. However, Linn's (33) daughter did not want to go to the public school next-year due to some discrimination and bullying experience from male students. She said to her mother that she wanted to be back at the TEC. However the family preferred a public school:

I would like to send her to public school again but she wants to go back to ... [the TEC]. Because of this...[incidence of bullying] because of this treatment, but we are trying to convince her because, she will go to another school ... So I am trying to convince her, may be the treatment will be better

in a different school. And I would love to send her again to a public school. Her Turkish is getting better and now she makes translation for us when we want to go to buy something. (Linn, 33)

As Linn's (33) daughter was better with Turkish, she became a translator for the whole family during their interaction in all the public spaces. This agency the children gained at home from going to public schools and learning Turkish was common especially for those children and families whose mother tongue was Arabic. When explaining what her daughter's going to a public school changed for the family's life, Linn (33) reflected:

I first saw that my daughter can speak Turkish very well. And...when someone who speaks Turkish came to our home, someone we don't understand came home, we ask our daughter to make translation for us. This is the change. (Linn, 33)

Amal (24) also told about how her seven year old daughter would make the translations in public spaces for the family and how her learning Turkish contributed to learning Turkish of their own:

My daughter sometimes helps me she works as a translator for me. It makes it easier for us to learn Turkish... I'm sick I can not do anything, so I usually take my little daughter to [the hospital] to translate it ... Thanks for Abu Basil Kazım [a Turcoman neighbour] because he [helped us to] register her at school. For now she speaks good Turkish. Especially at the first grade. She is becoming better and better. (Amal, 33)

Othman (40) also said he wanted to send his daughter to a Turkish school because he saw the need for integration and he wanted her to learn Turkish. He emphasized that no one in his family was able to speak Turkish yet. Rabia's (22) daughter even helped her Syrian friends for translation at school. Rabia said: "One day she came and told me that she was serving as a translator for his Arab friends." Learning Turkish definitely enhanced children's agency at home and at school.

Hussam (38) also said he enrolled his son who used to go to a TEC last year to a public school as they have now recognized that the situation in Syria will get

longer and may be they will never go back to Syria. Marwa (29) said she had many reasons to send her children to a public school. The first reason was that she wanted them to learn Turkish since they are living in Turkey and she heard that education and teaching in Turkish schools were better than that of TECs. Salam (24) said since they did not know when they would go back home, she wanted them to learn Turkish and as they heard that Turkish education was better, they decided to send them to a public school.

Abdulwahed (32) consciously chose a public school in Avcılar for his children but the administrator did not accept them but suggested them to go to the TEC operating in the same building in the afternoon. He then found another public school, which accepted them, but this time he could not afford transportation costs. He said:

Of course I wanted them to go to a public school at first, I did not want a TEC. Because I saw the kids that go to the public schools... for example the man I used to work for, he has children, and obviously they are going to a public school since they are Turkish. I see they are more educated. I started teaching them Turkish at home, every day two hours. And can you believe it, they learnt very fast. I wanted to send my children to the same school but they didn't agree to take them. There was one that agreed but it is too far. The bus was four hundred lira, it was too expensive for me to pay eight hundred for two children. (Abdulwahed, 32)

Assumption of temporariness of Syrians in Turkey by the administrator was the reason for inaccession in the first public school and financial difficulties was the reason in the second one. He sent his children back to Damascus eight months later as he could not find any opportunity to send them to any public schools in Turkey.

Rukaya (35) who sent her 6 years old daughter and 10 years old son to a TEC heard that Turkish schools were better by education and she was wondering if it was better for her children to go to a Turkish school. She said: "Turkish schools are closer to the European curriculum. They say it is more easy and [there are] less

home-works but better education. But what is important for us is that our children learn Turkish language.” She thought that it would be good for them to learn Turkish, but at the same time she was concerned that she could lose proficiency in Arabic and if they were back in Syria in three years, this would be a big problem. She was very confused about the decision on the schools. She heard that there existed some discrimination from the students and the teachers in public schools however she downplayed it: “Even in the streets generally there’s discrimination, not only in schools.” Discrimination was not the problem she would think first when deciding about whether to send her children to a Turkish school.

Ziya (20) said they attempted enrolling his younger brother (age: 12) to a public school but could not due to lack of *kimlik*. Then they decided to send him to a TEC rather than a public school because they thought he would at least learn some basics of Turkish before he would go to a public school next year. He also thought education in public schools was better as it resembled education in Europe.

Basil (25) decided to send her daughter to a Turkish public school as well as he heard that all TECs would be closed in the mean-time:

So my girl was, last year she was in TEC. But it was very expensive like, I worked so hard to get money for the TEC. And after she graduated from the first grade, I heard from the news that the Turkish government wants to close the schools, TECs. We chose one [public] school close to our home. And they accepted her directly to the second grade. We are happy with them the director helped us so much. They are good people. (Basil, 25)

However, his daughter suffered hard as she could not speak Turkish and was subject to exclusion by the other students in school. It was her second month. Basil (25) was also suffering from this situation but still he thought it was the right decision:

She is suffering so much from this issue. She does not understand anything from the Turkish. She understands little things that I taught her in the past. Her mom also taught her some little things. But even her mom doesn’t know Turkish at all. She opens google for five to six hours every day to make translation of her daughter’s lessons. She translates from English to Arabic so

she can teach her little. Sometimes she directly translates from Turkish to Arabic. The mother is suffering and my daughter too. And me too I am suffering a bit because I chose this. The mother didn't want [to send her to a public school] from the start. I said no, it is better she learns now, she is young, than later when she's old. (Basil, 25)

Basil (25) was determinant that his child ought to go to a public school in order to integrate with the Turkish society even if she was suffering at first:

I always treat my child like a friend, a friend of mine. So I treat her well, I know that she is very sensitive. So whatever she wants, I do to her, but except this transfer, I will not transfer her to a TEC, I want her to get involved in the Turkish society, very very soon. (Basil, 25)

Linn's (33) other daughter going to a TEC was happy with her school and did not want to change to a public school as she heard a bad reputation about the public schools:

She is very happy at the TEC. And since she heard many problems from the other students, she doesn't like to go, she hates to go to a public school. She heard about three students who were Turcomans from Syria. Other students treated them very badly. For example they took their sandwiches and threw it in the garbage. They took her cola can and threw in the garbage. And this was the eldest age. Many bad things, so my daughter, and her friends, now they hate these public schools and they insist to stay in TECs even if we [the parents] want them to go to the public school as the public schools are recognized, TECs aren't. But if the Turcoman [Syrians] have bad treatment, imagine us. (Linn, 33)

Here Linn (33) also notes the importance of recognition of public schools' certification.

Rabia (22) had an 8 years old daughter and she had an alternative experience. She told that they had sent their daughter when she was seven years old to a TEC last year. However during mid-year their daughter told them she did not like "that Arabic school" and that her Turkish was better. Rabia told that she forgot Arabic and she did not like Arabs much. She said:

I don't know why. But she doesn't love them. She is better with Turkish here. At least ... she loves Arabs but not that much. She eats with the Turkish, goes to them, speaks, makes friends with them ... She watches [Turkish] cartoon films. She got close with Turkish. Forgot Arabic very fast. Now when she

speaks with an [Arabic] child it is very difficult for her. Hence she doesn't want to be in touch with Arabs. Hence she said 'Mom, I don't want to go to an Arabic school.' She asked to me 'Where are we?' I said 'We are in Turkey' She said ' Hence I will learn in Turkish. Why do you educate me in Arabic?' Now she goes to a public school in Çapa. (Rabia, 22)

In this case it was the child who took the initiative to choose her school. And the family followed her decision despite concerns about forgetting Arabic.

Hayat (26) said she sent her son to public school because of the educational inclusion decision of the Turkish government. People in the community center told her that next year there would be no more TECs at all. She said: "Actually I wanted to send him to a TEC so that he would be proficient with Arabic. May be until fifth or sixth grade. Because Turkish is very easy." Othman (40) also said they wanted to enrol their daughter to a public school due to the decision of inclusion of Syrian students in Turkish schools but she was refused as she did not have a *kimlik*.

Among the secondary school age children within the scope of the study, three out of 19 of them were going to an *imam hatip* school, which are secondary level religious education schools in Turkey. Only 2 were studying in a public school and 12 were in a TEC. Marwa (42) said she first wanted to send his son to an elementary TEC but they accepted him as an intermediate level student. Then they decided to send him to an *imam hatip* school as he could get Arabic and religion classes there.

Mayur (32) said they decided to send their two children, daughter at fifth grade and son at seventh grade to a public school in 2016-2017 academic term because they lacked the finances for the TEC no more and they wanted them to have an approved certification since they were getting older. Another reason was that they wanted them to learn Turkish. During the time of the interview (November 6, 2016) it was by the end of their second month in an *imam hatip* school. The reasons for

choosing *imam hatip* school were, the lessons of religion, Quran and Arabic. They thought their children would feel like in the same society, in the same atmosphere.

The continuous dilemma of Syrian parents concerning school choice in Turkey for their children calls for measures to enhance acceptability of education in public schools (Tomasevski, 2001, p. 12).

#### 5.5.2 Justifications for not sending children to school

Among the 35 participants of the study, only five of the parents mentioned that they did not send their children to schools for a variety of reasons. Total number of children who were preschool (age: 5) or school age (from 6 to 18) but who did not have access to schools was 20 among the 61 school age children of the participants. Four of these children were working as the family needed money for subsistence and sixteen of them were staying home instead of school. Abdulsettar's (35) daughters who were 6 and 9, Aysha's (42) 8 year old son, Sunduz's two sons who were 8 and 10, Ahmad's (52) 12 year old daughter, Bara's (40) 15 year old son, Rim's (43) 16 year old daughter stayed at home instead of school. Sunduz's (30) 14 years old and Marwa's 17 years old sons were working in a textile workshop. Joudi's (42) 16 and 17 year old sons were also working, younger one in a Syrian restaurant and the elder one in a Turkish hotel. The reasons for not going to school are provided below in Table 12.

A frequent justification was financial difficulties. Families directed their children to stay at home or to work for the subsistence of the household due to shortage of income. Health problems of the family members went hand in hand as the children who were taken from school would be assigned to look after the household member at home who suffered from health problems. Ahmad (52) said

they had sent their daughter to a TEC in *Fatih* starting from the second grade until fourth. Their daughter and themselves were very satisfied with the education in TEC however it was turned into an international school by the start of the 2016-2017 academic term and its cost increased to one thousand dollars per year which the family could not afford. And also Ahmad's wife was sick and was about to have a surgery and hence they decided not to send their twelve years old daughter to any school at all so that she would stay home and look after her mother. However, Ahmad also shared that her daughter was depressed about quitting school and having left with a laptop to learn things at home. This situation was traumatic for her since it was the same thing she experienced in Aleppo during loss of time with school due to war. He said "I wish she can finish her studies and do what she wants to be in her life. However, we have big obstacles with finances."

Table 12. Reasons for not going to School for School Age Children

Reasons for not going to school (age: 6 to 18)	Frequency
Due to lack of finances*	6
Engaged in child labor	4
Can not send due to disability**	1
Due to ambiguity concerning situation of TECs	2
Waiting to go to Germany	1
Total	14

\*Parents did not consider public schools even if they were free

\*\*Child had down syndrome and parents did not know about opportunities for education of disabled children in Turkey

Father's health problems in addition to difficulties with subsistence led to Abdulsettar's (35) children not to go to school. He said he could not send children to school due to financial difficulties even if he wanted to. It had been only six months the family was in Turkey and he had a cancer treatment and a surgery during this period. The family did not have a house but they were living in a part of a ten meter square grocery shop that he was operating. He said he could not afford schools

because he needed to pay money for the transportation even in the public schools. So it was unaffordable for the family to send children to school.

Sunduz (30) said she could not send her children to a TEC due to financial problems. Her story of not sending children to school also involved adversities concerning her and her children's health. She had three children who were aged 8, 10 and 14. Eight years old child was suffering from thalassemia and Sunduz said, "I wanted to send him to the TEC in *Çapa* but they ask for too much money." 10 years old son went to Turkish school for one year but since he was a guest student as he lacked *kimlik*, he hardly learnt anything and the family decided to take him from school. He was also staying at home during the time of the interview. Sunduz had started working with his husband in a textile workshop as an *ortacı* when she first came to Istanbul in 2014, but soon she became sick and was replaced by her 14 year old son who was still working there during the time of the interview (July 7, 2016).

Another justification for not sending children school was concerns about safety. Rim (43) said her 16 years old daughter was not going to school. She said: "I don't send her because I worry so much for her. She's sitting at home since we came here. I am too scared to send her." She was worried a lot about both of his children, but her son who was 10 years old was enrolled in a TEC in *Fatih*. The reason for her fear was a terrifying assault herself and her children had been subject to in Fatih. She explained that when herself, her children and her neighbours were sitting by the beach, some women with covered faces approached to her and wanted her to take pictures of them. At the same time, they asked her son to play with them, which she soon understood were attempting to kidnap her son. When she realized that they weren't women but men she started shouting but the men stole her handbag and they escaped. During the stealing they also injured her leg, she could not walk for a month

after the incident. Hence Rim (43) had a terrifying experience in her vulnerable conditions as a refugee single mother in Turkey. However the reason her 16 year old daughter did not go to school was not only worries about safety but also lack of finances to send two children at the same time and prioritizing her son who was both younger and was a male.

Sometimes parents had to choose between their children due to lack of finances to send all their children to school. Aysha (42) who had five children two of whom was school age during the time interview (October 30, 2016) said: "...first year we had financial problems. We could send [only] one child to school. So we decided the oldest one goes ... Because ... she is in the final year in the school. So all of us we decided this. We gave priority to the eldest one." The eldest daughter had finished high school during the time of the interview (October 30, 2016) and the thirteen years old one was going to intermediate school. Nader (36) had four children two of whom were going to a TEC, however he said he wouldn't be able to send all four children to the school at the same time. He said: "If the younger kids would get older at the other's age of school, may be those older certifies to leave the school... I don't have enough money to send four children at school unless I start to beg or work extra hours. I need to sacrifice two of them."

Turkey's assumptions of temporariness for Syrian refugees at first and regarding of TECs as a first choice for their children to study had become an obstacle to access education for Abdulwahed's (32) children. He said even if he chose a public school which was close to his home, his children were not accepted there but was driven towards a TEC operating in the same building. However he did not want to send children to a TEC and also he could not afford sending them to another public school, which was quite far away and costly with transportation even if it

accepted to enrol his children. He said in such conditions, he had to send his children back to Syria, Damascus for education.

Expectations to migrate to Europe soon coupled with health problems with his mother led to Bara's (41) fifteen years old son to stay out of school. Bara (41) wanted to send her son who was fifteen to Germany as his brother was also there, they were waiting for acceptance and as she herself had some health problems, her son did not go to school at all and took care of her during this term.

Lack of information on education of disabled children in Turkey led to Aysha's (42) six years old daughter who had a down syndrome to stay out of school. She was staying at home as the family had no information at all whether they could enrol her in school or not in Turkey. Concerning education of disabled children, especially after 2005 mainstreaming education has become the main policy. However the reports provide that still the number of disabled children who access education through mainstreaming education are limited and lack of knowledge, skills and competencies exist in school personnel to work with children who require special education (ERI, 2014, p.10).

Four of the children among the scope of the study were engaged in child labour, as their parents said that they had to help with family subsistence. Sunduz's (30) 14 years old son was working as an *ortacı* in a textile workshop. He had gone to school for four years before in Syria. She explained that when they first came to Turkey it was herself working as an *ortacı* but after that she got sick and the doctors said "you can't work anymore" and hence she was replaced with her fourteen years old son. Still she said: "My eldest son really wants to finish his studies, every time he sees the students after they finish school, he tells me mom, I really want to finish."

Inopportunely the family lacked the financial resources to send him to school, and the 14 years old son was working for the subsistence of the family.

Marwa's (35) 17 years old son was working in the textile sector as well. He was printing emblems on textile and was working for six days for 12 hours everyday. Marwa's family came to Turkey in 2014 and his son had been working in the same job since he was sixteen. His working conditions were definitely against child rights. He used to go to school in Syria but he had no chance to go to school in Turkey. His boss said, if he learnt Turkish, his salary would be better off but he did not have any time left for himself to study Turkish due to hard working conditions.

Joudi's (42) two sons who were 16 and 17 years old were both working as waiters during the time of the interview (November 4, 2016) one in a hotel and the other one in a Syrian restaurant. Joudi said, "They had studied before in Syria, they wanted to continue but they could not because of our situation, they needed to help their father." She also added that the boys did not have any expectation or hope in Turkey.

### 5.5.3 Public Schools: Quest for inclusion and permanence

Experiences of 23 children in public schools have been shared within the study among which three of them enrolled in an *imam hatip* school. Additionally, there were two other children who were enrolled in a public school before but one was going to a TEC and the other quit school during the time of the interview. Hence experiences of 25 children in public schools in Turkey through the perspectives of their parents were collected and discussed under this heading. First section involved experiences concerning registration and acceptance to school. The difficulties concerning covering school expenses are presented in the second section as a

common problem raised by many parents even though the public schools were free. Third section provides thoughts and assertions on the level and content of education as well as success level of Syrian refugee students in public schools. The fourth section focuses on education in Turkish for Syrian refugee children as a major challenge to learn in a language other than the mother tongue. The fifth section deals with the disregarding, discrimination and exclusion by peers in public schools. The focus is on the teachers' and administrators' role within education of Syrian refugee children in the sixth section.

#### 5.5.3.1 Registration and acceptance to public school

Registration process to the public schools for Syrian refugees became easier as temporariness approach slowly left its place to policies of permanence and integration. Before 2016, the school administrators were advised to send the refugee children to TECs in the first instance as they were expected to go back to their countries soon as was in the case of Abdulwahed's (32) children who were not accepted to the public school in 2015 as there was also a TEC operating in the same building. However especially after 2016, Syrian children were driven towards public schools as the government's decision was towards closing TECs in total until 2019. Hence, number of children who enrolled in public schools increased considerably after 2016. There have been a 50% increase in schooling between July 2016 and January 2017 but still 40 % of children were left out of school according to UNICEF (2017 January).

Most parents did not have any problems concerning registration to the public schools. Basil (25) who registered his daughter by the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic term had no problems at all:

We heard from the news that the Turkish government wants to close the schools Turkish TECs. We chose one school close to our home. And they accepted her directly to third grade. We are happy with them, the director helped us so much, they are good people ... Because all the family has a *kimlik*. We didn't face any troubles with the registration to the public school. (Basil, 25)

Kazım (48) who had permanent residence in Turkey told that he did not have any problems in registration of his 12 years old son to a public school in Pazartekke:

My son came here in the fourth grade. We translated his diploma and I registered him in a public school. We had acceptance from the education ministry. And they took him in. The principle of the school was really positive with us. Very respectful. She put together all his papers. And thanks to God, he is very happy. He passed to fifth grade and then they moved him to a different school in the sixth grade. (Kazım, 48)

Still when they wanted to transfer his son from the school in Topkapı to another in Çapa in the sixth grade, Kazım said the school administrator refused to make the transfer as their residence was in Topkapı. However he told that they insisted and managed to convinced the administrator to make this transfer. Rabia (22) also said they did not have any difficulty in registration thanks to the teachers who helped a lot. Hussam (38) said his son also had no problems in registration to the public school because his son had a *kimlik* but many of his friends could not register their kids due to lack of *kimlik*. Salam (24) also said they did not have any problems during registration and the treatment in government offices was very nice but Waffaa's (29) 7 years old boy was not accepted because he did not have a *kimlik*.

Not having a *kimlik* was still a major difficulty for those families who were to enrol their children to public schools even after 2016-2017 academic term when the integration policies gained pace. Having a *kimlik* or not shows whether the child is formally under temporary protection or not and if the child is not temporarily protected, the schools may only accept Syrian children as “guest” students. Reasons for not having a *kimlik* might either be the protraction in the process of *kimlik*

acquisition or the child's not being entitled to temporary protection due to family's coming from a third country. Houda's (41) family's situation could exemplify for this. Since she they came from Beirut, her daughter could not get a *kimlik* and was accepted as a "guest student" in a public school. Guest students are neither provided books freely, nor are they qualified for a diploma. Guest students are not qualified as a student in reality. Due to not having a *kimlik*, Sunduz's 10 years old son was also a guest student in a public school where he did not have the books, did not do the exams and hence learnt very little. He wasn't able to start school in Syria due to war and he started from grade one in a public school in Istanbul. However since he had hardly any chance to learn anything in the guest student conditions, the family decided not to send him to school and he quit going to school after one year.

Joudi's (42) daughter who was 13 years old was also not accepted to a public school as the family was not entitled to temporary protection and they could not acquire *kimlik* due to coming from a third country. She said if the family had a *kimlik*, she would have directly sent her 13 years old daughter to a public school. Othman (40) wanted to register his daughter to a Turkish school but she was also refused for not having acquired a *kimlik* yet. His wife was trying to register her daughter to another public school but they also refused as their home was far away. He said they had chosen this school because it was close to a community center and after the school her daughter would have a chance to go and attend Turkish courses in the center. For Turkish citizens, the children ought to be registered to the school the education ministry determines based on residence information within Central Population Registration System (MERNİS) by the beginning of every academic term. In the same manner the Syrian refugees ought to register their children to the nearest public school. Not knowing this was a necessity by law, he regarded this as a

“silly excuse”. He was concerned that he would have to change the location of his house to send his daughter to that school and he said he was feeling very intimidated with such treatment.

When the temporariness assumption was dominant especially in the earlier years of the crisis, school administrators rather oriented Syrian students to TECs even if they wanted to go to public schools. This previous tendency towards the TECs is certainly to the opposite of the inclusive approach in 2016, which drives children towards public schools. However Abdulwahed’s (32) experience by the end of 2015 resembles the earlier approach. His children were refused by the public school administrator and he said:

Schools here, they don't agree to take the Syrian kids. And in Avcılar, people don't really like Syrians. The principal will find a reason. ... They don't agree to register until you have a *kimlik* and once you get it even then, they cause you problems. On paper, when you search, when you read “Oh you have *kimlik* that's enough you know”. On paper it seems like this is a solution but in real life this isn't. When you read the law you say “Ah Syrians have a lot of rights” but in real life it is not the case. (Abdulwahed, 32)

Abdulwahed shared that despite his insistence on the public school, the school administrator wanted him to register his children to the TEC operating in the same building. Abdulwahed (32) was one of the parents who had fluent Turkish among the research group and he shared his dialogue in Turkish with the school administrator:

I want my children here [in the public school] ... He says: “No no, in the evening.” I said: “They are all Syrian. I don't want. ... [I want them to go] with Turkish.” He said: “No, no. In the evening there is Syrians.” I said: “Okey, no problem. I don't want.” Unfortunately he said: “In the evening. Come in the evening.” (Abdulwahed, 32)

Abdulwahed’s children were not accepted in the Turkish school as there was a TEC in the same school. And the public school administrator did not cooperate at all. Since he could not provide education in a public school and refrained from sending

his children to a TEC, he finally sent his children back in Syria to their previous school in Damascus.

Sometimes parents shared they encountered some difficulties with registration to school as they applied for it during mid-term. Linn(33) explained how the person responsible from registration to the public school refused to register them at first as they went for registration during mid year. She said:

The one who is responsible about registration said: "She can't join us now because we have limited number of students she has to come at the beginning of the year." ... Then my daughter started to cry. And at that time, the manager assistant just came and she said: "Why is she crying?" They explained to her. And then she said: "No, we can accept her, make her the registration and she will come." (Linn, 33)

Especially after 2016 when inclusion processes have accelerated registration of Syrian refugee students to public schools have become easier. Still, those Syrian refugee children who lack *kimlik* due to procrastinated registration or coming from a third country are faced with a major challenge because they are not accepted in schools.

#### 5.5.3.2 Difficulty in covering school expenses

Despite the public schools are free, school administrators are used to ask parents for small amount of payments either for salaries of the cleaning or security personnel or for some extra books, materials and school trips in Turkey. The payments are sometimes in small amounts to be paid monthly or in the form of a larger amount every term. Sometimes the schools expected both. However, such payments were not affordable for the Syrian families who shared that they often had to make a visit and communicate their difficulty in subsistence and ask for exemption.

Bara (24) said the public school is free but sometimes we have to make a small payment for some kind of celebration for children at the beginning of the year.

However she emphasized that she paid as much as the Turkish parents paid. Marwa on the other hand could not afford the payments asked from the school and had to speak to the teachers about the family's financial situation. She was grateful for the teachers' support. She said:

I will not deny what they have done for us. The school is very good and the Turkish teachers really helped them. Sometimes we need to pay some money, some school trips, activities, they would understand that they are Syrians, they treat them equally to the other Turkish students without making me pay more than I can afford. (Marwa, 40)

Hayat (32) said the public school expected them to pay 10 TL every month for the personnel and 50 TL every term. However she said, they could not afford this payment and she wanted to see the administrator for that reason:

I was going to see the administrator. They know our situation. We have taken him out of the Syrian school (TEC) due to financial reasons. I said I would give the 10 TL. fee every month. However but the other one, I can't afford, I won't be able to pay it. But I couldn't see the administrator. Hence I couldn't say it. (Hayat, 32)

She also said she wanted to enrol her 5 year old daughter to the preschool but they asked for 130 TL. every month which they could not afford. Hence, she could not send her. Amjad (40) sent his son to a kindergarden but he complained about paying 110 TL. every month.

Since the public schools were totally free from preschool to university in Syria, having to pay for preschool education and for variant expenses in higher levels was something Syrian parents did not expect and caused them difficulties within their difficult situation with subsistence.

#### 5.5.3.3 Educational attainment in public schools

Syrian parents generally had difficulty in evaluating education in public schools as they did not understand the language of education. Hence, most of them were

indifferent about the education given in public schools but some of them rated it as good.

Wafaa (41) said she did not know whether public schools' education was good or not. She said: "May be the Turkish schools are good but if my daughter could understand." Hussam (38) also said he did not know if education in the public school was good or not as he did not understand the language. Marwa (42) said she could not say anything about the level of education in the *imam hatip* school as she did not understand the language of education, neither did her son. Mayor (32) also said her children were enrolled in the *imam hatip* school very recently and she did not know yet if it was good or not; they were facing difficulties with language and socialization only.

Since the parents did not understand the language of education sometimes they assessed the public schools with respect to the treatment by the teachers. And when they were not content with the teacher's treatment, they rated education as poor. Basil (25) said the public school her daughter went was not a perfect school but wasn't very bad also. His assessment with the teacher of her daughter was similar. He said: "The class teacher is good with her but he can't find time to give her special attention." He thought her daughter required special attention as she was the only Syrian student in the class. Amjed (40) was not happy with the level of education his sons received in the public school in Turkey. He said a better teacher was exchanged with an inferior one, which did not pay attention and teach to his children. He said his children went to schools in Dubai and also in Damascus, which were very good. But here, they did not teach children about how to behave polite, he said.

However some Syrian refugee parents whose children went to public schools were content with the education that their children got due to variant reasons.

Something important to note was that all the parents who rated education in Turkish schools as good were among those whose children had been going to public schools for more than one year. Bara (24) was happy with the level of education in the public school. She emphasised the few number of students per class her 8 years old daughter's class had 17 students only. She was trying to help her daughter with mathematics and Turkish. Kazım (48) said: "They take good care of the children. Their education is good too. The school has a lot of activities". Rabia (22) said she was also very content with the education given in the public school. She said the teachers taught everything to her eight years old daughter and she did not have to help her at all. Adhem (32) said something important and good about education in the public school was that public schools had many technological means. He said: "In Syria for the kids to learn the alphabet, like "rabbit", we have to draw it on the board ... here you can just push one button and a photo of it will shown the letter "r" will be shown."

Something common about those parents who sent their children to public schools was that they noted that their children were very good at their lessons as soon as they learnt Turkish and they also learnt Turkish very fast. For her seven years old daughter Amal (24) said: "She is very good. She is a very well student. There is no difference between her and the Turkish. She has no problem, even if it's a public school." Rabia (22) also emphasized the success of her 8 years old daughter in a public school. She said: "Reading, writing she has solved everything [in her first year] *mashallah* (God has willed it)." Adhem (32) also said his daughters who were twins who are 7 years old were very smart and successful at the Turkish school. One month before the interview date (November 4, 2016) they were the second among the whole class. They were very good at reading, writing and even with homeworks.

Hayat's (26) son told that her seven year old son once came to her and said: 'Mom, I have become the prime minister!'. When she understood that he was chosen as the class head by the teacher, she said she was proud of her child while she laughed at the word she used, Hayat said.

For her 11 years old daughter Linn (33) said: "My daughter is very hard-working, very clever so she has the best marks." Rukaya (35) also said "I hear that the Syrian students are top students in Turkish schools now, that is what I have been hearing, I've heard two Syrian students got right 75 % and entered the 5th grade."

Omar (45) had a similar experience. Her daughter who was 11 and was studying in a public secondary school had been the second in her class despite the discrimination she had been subject to by her peers. Omar regarded the success of her daughter as a reason for discrimination by her peers also. Kazim (48) said his son who was 12 learnt Turkish in three months when he started school when he was 9 and he always got the full marks in the class by the help of his elder sister who was a graduate of Turkish literature from the university. Similar to Omar he said: "He always gets full marks like 90 over 100 in science. The Turkish get jealous from him sometimes, because he is Syrian and he has higher grades. (Kazım, 48).

Syrian parents were generally indifferent about public schools because they said they could not evaluate the level of education since they did not know the language of education. However, those who rated them as good had various reasons. Their children had been in public schools more than one year as a common aspect. However one of them emphasized low number of children in classrooms, two of them emphasized taking good care of children, another emphasized good number of activities and another emphasized efficient use of technology. What was common among many Syrian parents was that they had an impression that Syrian students

were very successful in public schools and that they learnt Turkish very fast. Some even regarded that the discrimination towards Syrian students by peers in public schools was a reaction to high level of success by Syrian students.

#### 5.5.3.4 Education in Turkish as a foreign language

Due to non-proficiency in Turkish, Syrian refugee children faced difficulties in understanding lessons, communication with teachers and peers. Familiar language of instruction is a basic condition for acceptability of education (Tomasevski, 2011 p. 13). Besides, research shows that “it takes 5 to 7 years of optimal academic instruction to develop academic second language skills” for immigrant children during when actual skills and knowledge can be masked (Cummins, 1991; as cited in Orozco & Orozco, 2011, p. 67).

Not knowing Turkish and not understanding lessons made them feel lower than their friends. Parents also suffered feeling inadequate in helping with their children. However there were some who did not face such a great challenge even at the start. Being younger by age was an advantage for language learning. Additionally, good contact with peers as well as attentive and encouraging teachers were a good advantage. Parents underlined, children got help with studies from Turkish proficient relatives, homework clubs in the community center or after school support courses. Going to a public preschool was helpful for fluency in Turkish and getting used to the environment before starting school.

Salam (24) said her children were very happy and anxious at the same time for strating a public school. The same day they had been to the school in the morning and were treated nicely by the administrator and the teacher. Salam said they were pretending to speak Turkish by the words they have learnt from the television

because they were excited to learn. However, most children in public schools had difficulties due to language of learning. Hala (40) said her three children who were 7, 8 and 9 years old had lots of difficulties at the start as they could not speak Turkish:

At first it was very hard due to the language and the students with them have a different culture. The teachers are Turkish and the director also. It was very difficult at first. ... The problem was with the language. Now they are better at Turkish so they can follow. (Hala, 40)

During the time of the interview Hala's children had finished their first year at a public school and were fluent enough to follow the lessons in Turkish and get along with their peers. Houda (41) said on the other hand her 11 years old daughter who started to go to a public school at mid-year had problems due to language. Suffering from discrimination she did not want to go to the public school but to return to the TEC next year. Basil (25) shared his 7 years old daughter seriously suffered from not knowing Turkish: "She can't understand anything. She is suffering because of the language. She can't speak Turkish but she is now learning, *yavaş yavaş*, (slowly) ... So, as a percentage [she can learn] about thirty or twenty percent she is learning." Basil (25) firmly expected his daughter to get used to the public school environment by learning Turkish as fast as three months time. However, it was her second month in the first grade of the primary school and she still knew no Turkish.

Basil (25) was one of the many parents who shared feelings of inadequacy due to inability to help with children's studies at home. His wife who was a teacher suffered in helping with her daughter's homework without knowing Turkish. She used "google translate" to translate the Turkish into Arabic but this would take five to six hours everyday which was very difficult and impractical. Nabil's (37) relative's daughter started a public school in Güngören in 2016-2017 academic term facing difficulties with Turkish. Her teachers were very supportive but her mother and father weren't educated and they did not speak Turkish so they had trouble

supporting her lessons. Nabil (37) said, “The main problem of Syrians here, a lot of parents, they don't know how to speak Turkish so they can't help with their children's homework. This is the main problem.” Hussam (38) also said they were suffering a lot because their seven year old son who went to a public primary school did not understand Turkish and Hussam and his wife could not help him also since they did not speak Turkish. He said:

He [my son] can't understand his homework. We want to get a private teacher that can speak Arabic and Turkish to help him. Me and my wife, we can speak little Turkish. But we can't read and write. I can speak little Turkish because of my work [in the restaurant] but reading and writing I don't know. And I need to give correct education to my child. (Hussam, 38)

Hussam also said they had registered his son in an institute which helped him with his home works and now he understood more. This cost 120 TL monthly. Besides he added that his son's school administrator said that he would suffer a lot in the first 6 months but then he would survive.

Not being able to use Turkish in the daily language at school made children feel lower than their friends. Mayor (32) said her daughter who started the fifth grade at an *imam hatip* school after a TEC suffered from the language of education. She was having quarrels even with Syrian students because she expected them to translate to her when she did not understand but got angry when they refused. She said she was feeling lower than the rest and excluded. However, Mayor said she felt gratitude for the community center that they would provide homework clubs to help with her lessons and to teach her Turkish. She thought this helped a lot for her learning. Marwa's (42) 10 years old son also went to an *imam hatip* school. Many teachers got angry with him because he did not understand Turkish. Hence, her son was not happy in school and having been separated from school for the last two years due to war and migration, she was hardly convincing him to go to school everyday.

Despite fewer in number, there were parents whose children faced less difficulty in learning Turkish at public schools. Amal (24) whose daughter was in the first grade of a primary Turkish school said her daughter's Turkish was very good and her level of understanding was same as other Turkish children. The reason for her competency in Turkish was that she followed preschool education in the same public school. School administrator took initiative to accept her without payment and for that reason, she learnt Turkish in her first year in school and was ready to understand lessons in the first grade. Kazım (52) also said that his 12 years old son had very high grades in the public school and no problem with learning at all. It was his third year during the time of the interview but it took only three months for him to learn the language where he entered school from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However his elder sister was a university graduate from the department of Turkish literature and helped with his lessons. Another parent sharing that his three second grade children did not face difficulties with Turkish language in a public school was Adhem (32). He explained this situation likewise: "They speak Turkish properly ... They are the only Arabic students within class. So the Turkish students always speak with them Turkish and now they understand them and learnt [Turkish]." Their fast pace learning was recognized by their teacher who was very supportive. Hence for Adhem, getting along with the friends well as well as encouragement by an attentive teacher were what helped her children to get used to learning in Turkish. Rabia (22) who is a Turcoman also said her daughter had no problems with learning Turkish, her relatives helped with her homework and her teacher was very helpful.

#### 5.5.3.5 Disregarding, discrimination and exclusion by peers

The parents who participated in this study shared that discrimination and exclusion against Syrians students was experienced in public schools at all levels except high school. None of the high school students went to a public school hence experience in high school was absent. The discriminatory experiences seemed to become more persistent as the as the children got elder. As well as age, lack of proficiency in Turkish and lack of support from the school administrator and the teachers intensified the discriminatory experiences. Hence it was very important that the teachers or the school administrators took initiative against discrimination in schools. The time spent within the school by the child seemed to be in negative relation to her suffering from discrimination. The instances shared by the parents involved saying names and bad words, using discriminatory clauses like “go back to Syria”, exclusion in play, bullying by throwing lunch in the garbage and physical violence. In addition to the children, parents also suffered because their means for preventing discrimination in school was limited and they were short of helping their children to cope with discrimination. Three of them mentioned visiting the school administrators and communicating with the teachers but they occasionally were disregarded. And even if the school administrators were supportive, they were short of changing the discriminatory behaviour sometimes. Some parents thought that the discriminatory attitude was due to jealousy towards success of the Syrian children in the classroom and the other thought that Turkish parents injected discriminatory attitude to their children. One parent also shared that the public school's bad reputation concerning discriminatory attitude against Syrian children made it difficult for them to convince their children to go to a Turkish school.

Nebil's (37) daughter's experience showed that discrimination happened even at the preschool level. His daughter who was seven years old and was going to the second grade during the time of the interview had gone to a private kindergarten in Istanbul for two years when she was between 4 and 5 years old where she had been subject to discrimination by peers. He said, "This is something that really hurt us. My daughter is very active, and very smart, she was first in her class. Her interaction with Turkish children caused her depression. She used to come back home everyday crying." When he elaborated more about the reasons for this discrimination he underlined three aspects. There was socio-economic, ethnic and academic difference between his daughter and the rest of the children in the kindergarten and these differences would cause them to get jealous and exclude her. He said:

I will tell you honestly, the children with her are children from higher class families, not normal children. As you know, it is a private school. So they saw a new girl in the class and she is Syrian and she was smarter than them and the teacher liked her more ... [the teacher] treated her nicely because she was smart. So they used to get jealous. I think this is the reason. (Nebil, 37)

He also added that he had heard that in general, Turkish children weren't accepting the Syrians. He had even heard some parents forbidding their children to play with the Syrian children.

Parents also shared some discriminatory experience Syrian children have lived at primary school age by their own or by other children. Even if he did not share specific discriminatory experiences with his two sons who were in a public school one in preschool and the other in the primary level, Amjad (40) also said "In schools, students don't treat Syrian kids properly, they don't regard Syrians are equal to Turkish. And until I don't feel that my son is treated equally to other Turkish students, I can't see a future here."

Basil's (25) daughter who was seven years old was also suffering from exclusion in her second month in a public school. He explained how he tried to help her daughter cope with the discriminatory attitude in the public school and how himself tried to help her in her struggle:

She's also suffering from the school because the Turkish children don't want to play with her because she doesn't understand them. They tell her you don't understand us. She started speaking to them little Turkish when it is time to play, or in the school yard. she tries to get close to them and talk to them. At first nobody was talking to her at all. She was a reject. So I started to give her candies every day, and told her give it to the children in your class so they would want to speak to you slowly. So every few days I give her, and she gives them. But until now they don't want to play with her. She goes to them, she is very social but they don't accept her. It's a hard situation we are suffering very much from this. But we are being patient. Now or later it has to happen, so it is better now. (Basil, 25)

Basil's daughter went to a TEC the year before and she was constantly asking his father to take her back to the TEC. But Basil was firm in his decision that she would go to the public school depending on the Turkish government's decision to close the TECs and include Syrian children in Turkish schools. He referred to this situation when he said "Now or later, it has to happen, so it is better now." Hence Basil expected her daughter to feel as a part of the school as soon as possible. He said he even banned her daughter to play with the other Syrian children in the school during breaks so that he gets in touch with her Turkish peers faster. However the challenge still preserved by the end of the second month of her daughter in the public school.

Hayat (26) said her seven years old son could not get along much with Turkish children in his classroom. She said his Turkish peers did not involve him in their groups much. His best friend was an Iraqi in the same class and they were very good friends. "However she couldn't make friends with the Turkish, especially the boys", she said. Hayat's son had good command of the Turkish language because they were a Turcoman family but still he had difficulties in making friends with the

Turkish children. Hayat also told about other discriminatory behaviour against Syrian and other foreign children in the school. She mentioned that she paid many visits to the school administrator, and the principal said “We can’t do much. We just can tell the children that they don’t hit each other.” even in those events that Turkish children beat the foreign children. However she also told that her son’s teacher said, “I would take care, no worries.” for if anything like this happened in his class.

Linn’s (33) 11 years old daughter also suffered from discrimination by peers in a public school. She was at fourth grade when she experienced exclusion in class:

She is not happy. I visited her at school when there was a ceremony for graduation. I noticed that the other students, the Turkish students don’t like her. My daughter was the first in school in the second semester, but none of the kids liked her or played with her, I felt very bad. The teachers really love her but we don’t know what conversation the little children hear at home. We want her to stay in the public school but she doesn’t want, she wants to go back to … [a TEC] Those students just, they say, “Why are you here…Go to your country”… And I think it is the parents who taught them to say … You know those kids can’t say such things. Someone taught them. (Linn, 33)

Linn held parents of the Turkish children responsible for discrimination at schools rather than the children themselves. However she did not put responsibility on the teachers so far. When asked about how the teachers interfered in the issue she said: “A religion teacher talked with Turkish kids…about the situation in Syria. She said may be one day we will be in the same situation and we will go there … But one of the students said: “We don’t go to an Arabian country, we would go to Europe.” …” She again emphasized that she believed that it was the parents who taught them these things. Concerning discrimination, she believed that the teachers did their best and they tried to talk to the parents of the children who have discriminatory attitude but it wasn’t possible for them to force people to change their minds. She said “There was one boy who was disturbing her a lot and we called his parent and spoke to them but

nothing changed.” Omar (45) who was the husband of Linn told their 11 years old daughter’s experience in the public schools likewise:

She got discriminated a lot. [The] first word they told her is “go back to your country, you should not be here”. She didn’t want to go there anymore even if she wanted to learn Turkish. I can’t force her to go back there even if I would have liked it [the public school] much more... They even hit her. (Omar, 45)

Despite Omar (45) wanted his daughter to continue with the public school like his wife, he refrained from forcibly sending her against her will. Linn and Omar’s eldest daughter aged 14 who was then studying at a TEC was totally against going to a public school as she heard bad things about public schools both from her sister and from others:

Since she heard many problems from the other students, she doesn’t like to go, she hates to go to public school. They heard about 3 Turcoman students from Syria. They had a very bad treatment from the students. For example some boy took her sandwich and threw it in the garbage. They took her cola can and throw it in the garbage. And this is the eldest age ... so my daughter, and her friends, now they hate these public schools and they want to stay [in TECs] even if the parents want them to go to the public schools as the public schools are recognized but TECs aren’t. If the Turcomans have bad treatment, imagine us. (Linn, 33)

For elder students, discrimination was a bigger challenge as the language barrier and cultural differences were more significant in the higher grades.

Houda (41) who took her 11 years old daughter from a public school back to a TEC explained the discriminatory experience her daughter lived in the public school likewise:

Yes, when she went [back] to the TEC, she was very relaxed. Because ... [in the public school] the children didn’t like her, they wouldn’t speak to her, they don’t play with her. And the teacher would always shout at her ... We suffered a lot, from teachers, from the school, from the students, everything. Yes even the teachers were very bad. Now she is going to a TEC and it is amazing. She became very happy and she started having very good grades. In that school, they treat the Syrian students in a different way not like the Turkish students. My daughter felt very different, like a stranger (Houda, 41)

Houda's daughters experience was negative not only with the peers but also with the teachers. She said not only her daughter but they have all experienced the discriminatory attitude from the public school as a Syrian family.

Abdulwahed (32) operated a Syrian barber's shop in Avcılar and he also told about a discriminatory experience one of his clients shared. He said:

He [his client] has a daughter, and ... she was going to a public school and she did not understand Turkish. She didn't know Turkish. And she became friends with some girls but she couldn't really talk to them. And after when she learned Turkish, she understood that those girls were not actually her friends but they were actually making fun of her. And they would call her names and everything. And she stopped going to school, she didn't want to go anymore. Because of that she is not going to school anymore actually.... And she's very sad ... So discrimination is the problem of everything right now. Like, the kids don't even wanna go to school because of that.

(Abdulwahed, 32)

Discriminatory attitude and behaviour was more painstaking when it was coupled with lack of proficiency in knowledge and unfortunately this was a common case.

Abdulwahed regarded discrimination as a most important problem for Syrian refugee children, which even disabled their access to school.

Knowing Turkish enhanced communication and helped decrease discriminatory attitude. Mayor's (32) two children were going to an *imam hatip* school. Her 12 years old daughter was facing problems with Turkish girls as they did not accept her like a friend. Her 10 years old son was better with relations with his friends as he already knew some of them from the street and he was speaking some Turkish so that they could understand each other. The reason for the family to have chosen the *imam hatip* school was the Arabic and Quran lessons the school provided for. They thought the children would feel like they were in the same society and atmosphere however, this did not seem to be the case yet after first two months of the school as the children still did not feel themselves as part of the school.

Hala (40) on the other hand thought that discriminatory attitude from Turkish students was an exception rather than a rule. She said: “[There are] little problems between students. Normal ones, not something serious. On the contrary, [some] Turkish students are very understanding, maybe a few of them might give some racist looks but most of them were very nice and understanding”. However she also shared an experience of bullying which her eldest son who was 9 years old encountered in the public school, which involved discriminatory attitude from schoolmates:

One time, my eldest son ... he is very shy, [the students] they all got angry with him at school. They took him in a corner and beat him up ... some Turkish students just because he is Syrian. His siblings came back to school saying mom please come help, mom he didn't do anything, only they told him you are here, you are Syrian *adebsiz* (unashamed). And they were beating him up. I did not understand anything. His father went the next day to the principal office, told them everything, they called his [the other child's] parent. And they fixed the problem. This should not be repeated. So what that he is Syrian? He is a human in the end regardless of his citizenship. (Hala, 40)

Despite Hala said that the problem was fixed after her husband visited the school, it was unclear how the situation was fixed and how his son managed this trauma. On the same day, he drew a Syrian flag on the wall of their house and wanted Hala to take a picture of him there. He said “If I were in Syria no one would hit me.” Hala (40) burst into tears when she shared this experience. However, she was content with how her son's teacher took care of the situation. She said that her son had an excellent teacher with good humanity who showed him that he was on equal terms with Turkish students and life was beautiful here in Turkey.

#### 5.5.3.6 Supportive Treatment by the Teachers

Syrian refugee parents who participated in the study emphasized teacher's support in their children's learning and inclusion in public schools. Some of them

also were thankful to them because they supported them against discrimination by peers, against socioeconomic difficulties and for not using physical punishment against their children. Less frequently teachers were criticized for not giving enough support and care for the learning and TECsion of the children, due to discriminatory behaviour against children and due to difficulty in communication. None of the school administrations took any measure to overcome the language barrier during parents meetings but most Syrian refugee parents told that they followed the parents meetings and got help from friends and relatives who spoke Turkish in order to understand what the teachers shared. Some parents emphasized that they went to the parents meetings to support their daughter even if they knew that they would not understand anything.

Some parents tried to make use of them to the most to support their children's learning. Hala (40) said she appreciated the efforts of the Turkish teachers because they encouraged her children a lot to learn and for their inclusion especially when her children were very new in the school. She said:

At first it was very hard due to the language and the students with them have a different culture. The teachers were Turkish and the director also. It was very difficult at first ... Slowly slowly, thanks to God, their education result is very good at the public school. I will not deny what they [the teachers] have done for us. The school is very good and the Turkish teachers really helped them. (Hala, 40)

Adhem (32) said the teacher of her three children in the second grade was very good, she even visited them at home the year before when the children were in the first grade. She realized that his children were becoming good with the Turkish language and she wanted to encourage their learning. Hayat (26) said her son was very happy with his teacher and she also had good communication with her. Kazım (48) said his son had good relationship with his teachers and they were supportive with his learning. Mayor (32) was also happy with the way the teachers treated her children,

so were the children, she said. Hussam (38) also had positive impression about teachers and in the public schools. He said the treatment with the Syrian children was well and supportive. He said: “The teacher gives chocolates for encouragement in learning” concerning her son in the first grade.

Some parents felt grateful for the teachers because they supported their children against discrimination by peers. Linn (33) was grateful for her daughter’s teachers that they tried their best and they tried both to talk to the children and also to their parents but underlined that it wasn’t possible to change minds forcibly. Despite efforts by teachers, discriminatory attitude and behaviours generally preserved. Hala’s (40) eldest son was subject to bullying by Turkish peers at the school. She was very happy how the Turkish teacher interfered with the situation:

My son [who was bullied by Turkish peers] has an excellent teacher. I hope that all the Turkish teachers are just like that … Because they treat nicely and that they encourage them to feel that they are just like Turkish pupils and how life is life beautiful here. Yes many have very good humanity. (Hala, 40)

Her husband also visited the school administrator, who called the parents of the bullying children to settle the issue; however the teacher’s continuous support within classroom meant more for her son than the warning given to the parents by the school administrator.

Sometimes the teachers supported Syrian children taking the Syrian families’ socio-economic difficulties into consideration. Linn (33) exemplified the kindness of the teachers at school that they would keep her daughter’s milk even if she did not go to school that day.

Hala (40) also emphasized that teacher’s even helped with the extra payments to the school like school trips or extra books and materials. She was grateful that she wasn’t forced to pay more than she could afford.

One of the participant mothers appreciated teachers in Turkey for not using physical punishment. Amal (24) said she was thankful to Turkish teachers that they did not use physical punishment at schools, which was contrary to her own experience in Syria where she said, “Teachers used to insult us and to beat us. Besides the beating and the disrespect they give to the student.”

Despite the appreciation of treatment of most teachers, some were criticized for not showing enough care for the children. Basil (25) criticized that even if the teacher of her daughter was kind to her, he did not have enough time to deal with her personally. To learn Turkish fast, Basil’s daughter needed special care and the teacher said he did not have time to show that special care.

The class teacher, he is good with her. But he but he can’t find time to give her special attention. He has a lot, about forty kids in class. And because there is only one Syrian kid in the whole class. The main problem is my daughter she can’t read like the Turkish words, letters. Like they are not separated. She wants them to be separated. But the teacher in the public school does not have time for her … I asked once to the teacher, ‘Can you just write the words separately so she can understand what homework she has for tomorrow” and he said, “I can’t because the whole class is Turkish.” (Basil, 25)

Basil thought her daughter’s teacher was not that supportive to support her learning and inclusion. Amjad’s (40) 5 and 6 years old sons were going to a public school, one to the kindergarten and the other to the first grade. He said they had a good teacher before but somehow she was removed with another one. He said: “There was a very good teacher but they exchanged her with another one who probably had connections.” His discontent with the new teacher was due to the fact that she did not pay attention to them and teach them anything but just left them freely in the school garden with no interest. He said he would not make any complaints about the teacher but wait for a month and if nothing changes, he would change the school.

Even if it was rare, teachers had discriminatory attitude occasionally. Houda (41) whose 11 years old daughter suffered from discrimination from peers in a public school was also discriminated and treated badly by the teachers. She said:

We suffered a lot, from teachers, from the school, from the students, everything. Yes even the teachers were very bad... I think that teachers, especially that teacher, she is a very bad teacher. ... she treat [sic] her very badly. My daughter is not used to this kind of treatment. We came here and suffered so much (Houda, 42)

Another discriminatory attitude was from a school administrator and teachers in an *imam hatip* school. Despite he had the *kimlik* and was formally registered, Marwa's (42) 10 years old son was regarded as a "guest" within the *imam hatip* school. The school administrator said: "Now he is just like a guest at this school, I will see his success in learning Turkish and then I can say if he can continue or not." In the same school the teacher's treatment towards her son was also not good. Marwa said "He doesn't like the school because many teachers just come and get angry with him because he doesn't understand Turkish." Hence the school administration treated him as if he was in a sort of temporary status within school until he proved that he can learn Turkish and adjust himself to the school and on the other hand his teachers were not supporting him in his learning and adjustment. Marwa shared difficulty in convincing his son to go to school everyday as his links with education was also weakened due to loss of two years of education during war and migration.

Difficulty in communicating with the teacher was another problem underlined by the parents. Basil (25) and his wife also had problems in communicating with the teacher as they did not speak Turkish. They sometimes prepared a question to ask and sent it to the teacher's whatsapp group after translation. Then they would translate the answers when the teacher replied. Basil thought the teacher was a nice person but he did not have time for every child,

neither did he have time to prepare something special for Basil's daughter. Adhem (32) also mentioned a whatsapp group, which brought teacher and parents together where the teacher made daily posts on the homework and about which children behaved badly.

Most Syrian parents who participated in the study tried to follow the parents meetings even if they did not understand anything. Hala (40) said she attended to the parent meetings. She said "I would never know may be my daughter or son may have a problem. I need to go and know." She said some Turcoman or some Syrian parent who could speak Turkish would help for translation. Adhem (32) also said his three children's teacher held parent to teacher meetings every Thursday. His wife had a friend from Algeria who knew how to speak Turkish and Arabic and who helped his wife as she did not speak Turkish. Basil (25) also said he went to all the parent meetings in school even if he knew that he would never understand any word. He said, "I go there because I want to give support to my daughter like 'I'm your dad and I'm here with you.' " Mayor (32) said herself and her husband did not participate in the parents meetings but they sent one of her husband's Turkish friends for their children.

#### 5.5.4 TECs: Magnetism of cultural familiarity and friendship

In Istanbul, there were 64 TECs during 2016-2017 academic term after the implementation of the decision of Turkey to transfer all Syrian students to the Turkish education system in at most three coming years (MoNE Turkey, 2016, September 6; Number of Syrians in Istanbul, 2017, April 28).

Parents in this study shared their experiences with nine different TECs. Number of children who had an educational experience in a TEC was 33 within the

research. Fifteen of the children had experience in the same TEC, which was close to the community center in Çapa and which was told to belong to the Freedom Fighters. The situation of this TEC was ambiguous by the beginning of the 2016-2017 term but by mid November 2016, decision was to keep it open for one more year. Other than that, four children had experience in a TEC in Balat, four in Fatih, four in Kağıthane, two in Avcılar, one in Sultangazi, one in Göngören, one in Esenler and one in Gaziantep. The TEC in Fatih, which was quite expensive and was generally regarded as superior in education level turned into an “international school” by the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic term.

Participant parents shared children’s contentment with TECs, just a few of them rather preferred Turkish public schools. Zeynep (37) said her children were happy in TECs because they thought they are continuing school like their schoolmates in Syria. Aysha (42) also shared that their children were much better in TECs rather than staying at home. She did not mention public schools as a choice. Linn (33) on the other hand explained how rumours on bad reputation of public schools on discrimination led Syrian students against public schools and for TECs:

She is very happy at the TEC. And since she heard many problems from the other students, she doesn’t like to go, she hates to go to public school... Many bad things, so my daughter, and her friends, now they hate these public schools and they encourage them [the others] to stay [in TECs] even if the parents want them to go to the public school. [Because] public schools are recognized, TECs aren’t. (Linn, 33)

Like Linn (33), there were also some other parents in the research who also reflected that their children were very happy despite their parents were unhappy with the TECs. This happened with children experiencing difficulties with language and discrimination in public schools in particular. Even if their parents expected them to continue with public schools they seemed to insist on going to a TEC, as they felt more comfortable, built more friendships, learnt better and became more successful

in an environment where they could use their language and in a culture, which they were accustomed to:

... everyday she tells me, "Please dad, take me back to the TEC ... everyday, every single day she asks me to go back to the TEC. I want to go back to the TEC because I want to be the first, the best in the class. Here in Turkish it can't be like this. (Basil, 25)

Hussam's (38) daughter was seven years old and who also started a public school in 2016-2017 academic term was very slowly getting used to the school and making some friends after three months. He said he did not like to go to the school alone as he did not understand the people and may be less after three months but he was still saying that he wanted to go back to the TEC.

When he was asked about how did going to a TEC change his daughter's life, Omar (45) answered that the thing which changed her life was the friendship, not the school but the level of education was like, nothing. Joudi (42) also said her daughter who was 13 was happy in the TEC because she had a lot of friends.

On the other hand, sometimes children's contentment with the TECs were accompanied with positive views by their parents as well:

The teaching was very, very good. And my daughter was excellent at that school. The teachers were very caring, especially with my daughter. So she was very successful ... when my daughter was going to school, she could not stand missing one day of school ... And, even my daughter, she didn't like holidays or weekends. She just wanted to go to school everyday. (Amr, 35)

Houda (41) sent her 11 years old daughter to a public school but her daughter experienced discrimination hence as soon as they found financial means to pay for the school, they just took her back to a TEC. She said, "Yes, when she went [back] to the TEC, she was very relaxed ... Now she is going to a TEC and it is amazing. She became very happy. And she started having very good grades." Hence, most often the children themselves and sometimes their parents also selected TECs as they

provided for a more familiar environment of learning in the mother tongue where children would feel belonging and safety.

#### 5.5.4.1 High cost of TECs

Cost of TECs was differential but all required some payment either for education, transportation or for both. Some provided scholarships also. Only Amr (35) whose daughter went to a TEC in *Gaziantep* and Yussef (27) whose daughter went to a TEC in *Sultangazi* told that schools were free but they had to pay for transportation. This situation interferes with the “accessibility” criteria suggested by Tomasevski (2001), which requires that compulsory education is free and accessible to all.

Hala (40) and Amal (25) said they did not choose a TEC because it was costly. Hala (40) mentioned she would need 1000 dollars for each child yearly, which she could never afford. Nader (36) said the TEC took even more than 1000 dollars a year from them. Houda’s (41) friend sponsored her daughter’s education paying 100 dollars monthly. Ahmad (52) told that the TEC in Fatih cost 1000 dollars a year since it was turned into an international school, which they could no longer afford to pay. However Rim (43) said the same school provided scholarship for his son and did not ask for money. The TEC in *Çapa* required 1600 TL every year according to Lujeyn (26) and Joudi (42). A hundred lira was for the transportation and a hundred was for education every month. But Joudi said they weren’t provided with receipts in return. According to Hussam (38), the same TEC cost 150 TL monthly. Sometimes TECs employed differential prices. Marwa (29) said the TEC in *Kağithane* required 500 lira for each child yearly and also 60 TL transportation cost monthly. Cana (38)’s four children were sponsored by a relative, all went to the TEC in *Çapa*. Nabil (37) said they paid 150 liras monthly to the TEC in *Güngören* but

there was no arrangement for transportation. The only problem about the school was its cost according to Nabil. Yussef (27) said education was free in the TEC in *Sultangazi* but they paid 75 lira for transportation every month. Amr (35) said the TEC his daughter enrolled in Gaziantep was free but there was a 70 lira transportation cost monthly. Zeynep (38) said she had to pay 900 lira for every year for each child in the TEC in *Balat*. The TEC in *Esenler* also required 100 TL monthly. There was no transportation. Nader (36) had four children two of whom went to a TEC, however he did not expect all of them to continue their education in the future due to lack of finances. He said: "If the younger kids would get older at the other's age of school, may be those older certifies to leave the school... I don't have enough money to send four children at school unless I start to beg or work extra hours. I need to sacrifice two of them."

Cost of transportation was also a matter of concern especially in TECs. Rim (43) said: "I have to go there and drop them and take them back every day, 4 trips going and coming back twice. I worry about my son." Salam (24) said despite TEC was good by education and had a lot of activities, the problem was its being far and costly. So the family chose a Turkish school, which was free and very close. Othman (40) also said they had to transfer their daughter from a TEC in *Topkapi* which was very far to another one close to their house in *Esenler*. TEC in Topkapı 3 kilometres away had no transportation and his daughter had to walk, which soon turned in to back aches. The school fee was only 100 TL. monthly, not too costly, but due to lack of transportation, they enrolled her to another TEC in *Esenler* close to home.

#### 5.5.4.2 Level and content of education in TECs

The level and content of education in TECs appeared highly differential as each was operated by a different management and was sponsored by a different association or

foundation. In this study, TECs were generally criticized by the parents and were regarded as inferior when compared to the level of education system in Syria. Erdoğan (2017) also provided for the low quality of education in TECs.

The TEC in *Çapa* was greatly and the one in *Balat* to a lesser extent was criticized by the parents as they rated profits more than learning and the directors thought in business terms rather than educational. It was frequent that the participants were unable to afford the costs of the TECs. Cana (38) said: “We were not able to pay the fees at first and they wanted to kick our children out but then some people agreed to sponsor us.” Aysha (42) said TECs cared about money only. In comparison to schools in Syria she said: “In Syria [education is] better because they care more about education unlike [TECs in] turkey where they care about media, making photos and marketing the school.” Nader (36) also thought that Syrian schools here were just for making money. They did not care about education:

The school is more like a business [place] not an educational place. My son is in first grade and he was not able to learn any letters. It was all playing and fun like visiting aquarium. It is a place to make money only. [TEC in *Çapa*] was better but there is too many students, it is very crowded they have no space. (Nader, 36)

Making comments about the TEC in *Çapa*, Lujeyn (26) said that education wasn't good and they did not care about students at all. She explained that despite the fact that the education level was very bad, they had to send her nine years old brother to that school because it was the TEC with the lowest payment in whole Istanbul. Omar (45) used the expression “better than nothing” for this TEC. Hussam (38) criticized the TEC his elder son went to before he started to a public school in the seventh grade. They were neither giving books to the children, nor following their attendance. He said once his son was absent for four days and no one called them and asked where his son was. He also criticized the school for thinking in business

terms: "They did not let him enter the class until I made the first payment." His son who went to this TEC was in a public school during the time of the interview.

(November 4, 2016)

Joudi (42) said her impression with the content of education in the TEC in Çapa was not very bad or not very good but she said the children received lessons on everything like maths, Arabic, biology and geography there. However she said it is not good because she expected teachers to give children more homework and more care. Nader (36) also had discontent concerning the content of education. He said:

There is no Quran teaching, which is the base of Arabic language. They don't teach them about life morals, like respect of parents or anybody. I was looking at my daughters books, it was a joke... (Nader, 36)

Abdulwahed (32) also criticized the content of education in the TEC that his children went for a very short time. He said that books were very bad. When asked about what was bad in the books, he explained a situation, which was not only the problem of the TECs but of education in nearly all countries. What he criticized was that teaching to little kids was mostly about wars lived in the past and about fighting. He said:

Generally I don't like the schooling system. They always bring them back in the past instead of er the future. For example [in the TEC] they were teaching about Selahaddin Ayyubi. Yeah. For me this is not important. Why they don't teach something about like, Einstein. Something more -- how to create a phone or even how to make a washing machine ... But also, they started teaching about the war in Syria. You know the freedom fighters, em. They were teaching about one man who fought and come on these people are not for me important. I believe this problem is not only in Syria but even in Turkey and Europe and everywhere in the world. Why do we need to learn about Abdulwaheddin who went to war, and died or not? For example in Europe right now they are trying to make a new education system. And it's basically till the age of 10 they teach only er, for example morals, basically things like that. And then after, they start teaching numbers and stuff like this. And by the age of fifteen you choose what do you wanna do in your life. And then you just study what you want. He likes this type of system. So yeah, that's the reason why he ... criticized the books. There were books about these people or this guy in Freedom Fighters. (Abdulwahed, 32)

Adhem (32) said he did not send his children to TECs both because TECs were expensive and he thought that pupils who went there did not learn anything. He said: "People are going, but they are not learning anything. The problems that the children faced in Syria are brought into the school."

Despite they did not give specific comment on the content of education, three of the parents were generally content about the education given in the TECs. Hussam (38) said he was happy with this TEC in Çapa that his six and a half year old child went to. He said his son learnt a lot there, even in the summer he used to take Turkish lessons. Yussef (27) said generally the level of education was good in the TEC in Sultangazi that his daughter was going to and it was always better than staying home. He added: "The students are benefiting from the school, they are learning". He emphasized that the school was very new and when they started a new school, they did their best in every school. He said: "Then later may be it will go down." Amr (35) was very much content with the education his daughter received in the TEC in Gaziantep. He said, "In Gaziantep it was excellent school- when my daughter was going to school, she could not stand missing one day of school." Nader (36) also had an impression that education in TECs was better in the cities next to the Syrian border. He said: "The government offered many things for the Syrian children at schools, but not in Istanbul. In Gaziantep, Mersin, Hatay, education is better. Istanbul is just like a different country.

Even if they chose TECs for their children as a school, parents generally criticized TECs due to low level of education and that their administrators thought in business terms rather than educational. When they were asked about their comments on the content of education, some parents complained that children did not learn anything, some complained that the education TECs brought the problems in Syria to

school, some emphasized lack of books, homework and attendance follow-up. A few parents were contented with the education provided in the TECs. One of them had sent his child to a TEC in Gaziantep for six months and he thought the educational opportunities were better in the border cities. The other one thought the good level of education was due to the fact that the TEC started operation recently. He thought things might go down as time went by.

#### 5.5.4.3 Reflections on competency of teachers in TECs

Some parents criticized the teachers in the TECs due to lack of competencies and arbitrary recruitment. Professional requirements of teachers are a primary condition for the acceptability of education (Tomasevski, 2001, p. 14) Parents complained that teachers were selected with nepotism and administrators were interested more in making money than education. Omar (45) said:

The teachers aren't professionals. And they are just running the school to make it a school. But they don't care about education. And, they don't choose the best teachers. It is according to, if they know someone... [they bring him/her] that way, yeah. (Omar, 45)

Nader (36) also complained about lack of competence of teachers. He said, "You know they know somebody, they choose it. Relatives, friends... something like that.... Most teachers are from Humus...". This was the reason for the low quality of education in TECS for him.

TECs' teachers were also criticized for not making enough effort to encourage learning. Cana (38) said the teachers in TECs were not as faithful as those in Syria. They did not make their best to teach in the perfect way. Lujeyn (26) also thought that the teachers in tTECs did not put much effort in education.

On the other hand some parents were happy with teachers in TECs. Yussef (27) mentioned good teachers in the TEC that his daughter and nephews went to

which were his relatives. Amr (35) was also content with the teachers in the TEC in Gaziantep. Salam (24) said when her children were in the TEC, she was in contact with the teacher everyday through a whatsapp group established for all the students' parents. Anyone who had a problem could reach the teacher for any question she said. Othman (40) told they communicated with the teacher in TEC to monitor her daughter's learning through sending notes to each other, which was impossible in a public school.

#### 5.5.4.4 A satisfactory aspect of TECs: Learning Arabic

Despite discontent about the level and content of education in TECs, most parents chose a TEC for their children due to opportunity of learning their mother tongue. Even among those parents who chose public schools, there was a tendency to send children to a TEC first so that they learn Arabic and then they can go to a public school. Some parents even told instances that children went to both type of schools at the same time to make sure they were proficient in both languages. This was a solution against loosing proficiency in the mother tongue. In addition parents who chose public schools tried to cover Arabic education out of school by other means. They either thought children at home, sent them to courses at community centers or some paid language schools. Though very few in number there were also parents who were rather not concerned that their children would forget Arabic if they did not learn it at school. Effectiveness of learning mother tongue and essence of multilingual education was underlined by many studies on the other hand (Ball, 2011; Benson, 2004; Borjian, 2014; UNESCO, 2007; UNESCO, 2008)

Nader (36) said: "I did not choose a public school because my children first have to learn Arabic. I don't want them to learn Turkish first, and then Arabic."

However, he criticized how TECs would teach Arabic. He said the TECs teach neither Arabic nor Turkish, Quran teaching is critical, which is the base of the Arabic language. Linn (33) would send his son who would start school next year to a TEC so that he would learn “little Arabic first”. Aysha (42) wanted her child who had a down syndrome to learn Arabic and Quran at school however she was six years old and the family had no idea whether any opportunity existed to send her to school. Nabil (37) said they sent their seven years old daughter to a TEC after a private Turkish kindergarten. The reason was that they did not want her to forget Arabic language. Also even if he was not against inclusion of Syrian students in Turkish public schools he had concerns about this decision because he wanted her daughter to speak Arabic as the language of Quran. He said: “For us, as muslims, the Arabic language is the language of Quran, the language of paradise, I will not enter in details because it is not our subject. But me as an Arab for example, I don’t like to forget my language or make my children forget their language. I want them to learn the language of this country but at the same time I want my language to be still alive.” He was concerned that this decision would lead Syrian children to forget Arabic. He also added that he sent her seven years old daughter to an Arabic school rather than a public school to give her one more year of language, both in learning Arabic and in Turkish. Rukaya (35) sent her two children who were 6 and 10 years old to a TEC but considered whether education was better in a Turkish public school. However she said they were so confused because in a public school they might not learn anything about or may be totally forget Arabic.

Two of the parents Marwa (42) and Mayor (32) chose *imam hatip* schools as they provided Arabic and Quran lessons and that they provided for a religion focused education. Mayor (32) said they could not afford education in TECs and they wanted

to send their children to a public schools to get an approved certification They wanted them to learn both Turkish and Arabic so they thought the best choice would be an *imam hatip*. However none of the three children who were sent to *imam hatip* were adjusted to the school during the time of the interviews and moreover Mayor (32) said that they recognized that the Arabic provided in the imam hatip was inadequate and they tried to complement Arabic education at home.

An important concern for the families whose children went to public schools was that their children might loose proficiency in Arabic. Adhem (32) chose a public school for his three children who were aged 7,7 and 8 but due to his concerns that they might loose proficiency in Arabic he thought there had to be Arabic lessons in Turkey in the public schools. He justified this view like:

Here in Turkey there is about, there are about five million foreign, Arab people. From Syria, from Iraq, from Yemen, from Libya from all over the Arabic world. So the Turkish people should also learn like Arabic so they can get in touch and speak with Arabic people. Know our language...For the Turkish citizen's own good, they have to learn Arabic. Because they have lived with Arabs for five hundred years before during the Osmanlı era. So its important to learn Arabic and its important to like put some Arabic classes. (Adhem, 32)

Still, he had little hope that Arabic would be included in the Turkish curriculum. Hayat (26) whose son was going to the second grade in a public school also said that she wished that an extra lesson on Arabic would be included within the curriculum so that the children would not forget their Arabic.

Hayat (26) sent her son to a public school due to the decision of the Turkish government to include Syrian children in the Turkish public schools. She said: "Actually I wanted to send him to a TEC so that he would be proficient with Arabic. May be until fifth or sixth grade. Because Turkish is very easy." However due to decision of inclusion, they enrolled him in a public school.

Some of the parents sent their children to public schools but they supported them to learn their mother tongue at home or by supplementary courses. Some parents gave Arabic lessons at home. Hala (40) said “I couldn't place them in a TEC but I am teaching them Arabic at home so they don't forget their mother language. They are going to a public school.” Kazım's (48) son who was going to a public school for the last three years was going to a night school in Fatih, which taught him the Arabic language and Quran. Kazım said: “I don't want him to forget Arabic.” Also he was praising his son that he memorized the forty hadis in that school. Hayat (32) was grateful for the community center that they had Arabic courses at the center at least once in every week.

Alternatively Salam (24) was not concerned that her children would lose Arabic proficiency as they went to a public school since they used Arabic language at home. However Rabia, (22) who was a Turcoman told that her eight years old daughter slowly forgot communicating in Arabic. She said she observed that she was having lots of difficulties when she was talking to an Arabic child. She told to her mother that she did not want to be in touch with Arabs but rather with Turks and she even wanted to switch from a TEC to a Turkish public school.

#### 5.5.4.5 Education of Turkish language in TECs

Parents generally shared Turkish language education in TECs was often overlooked. Amr (35) and Basil (25) said their children just learnt letters and basic vocabulary in the TEC. Basil (25) also told about the difficulty her child lived due to the fact that she learnt Turkish vocabulary in plain letters in the TEC but the public schools taught in handwriting form. Marwa (29) said her children did not have education about Turkish language in the TEC. Salam (24) also complained that her children did

not have any real Turkish classes in TEC. She also added that the reason for changing children's school from a TEC to a public school was that the children could not learn Turkish in real. Joudi (42) also said Turkish education was a little ignored in the TEC that her daughter who was 13 went to. She said "There is no intensive classes for Turkish. They give only twice a week and many times the teacher doesn't come to class. They don't give importance to the Turkish language." Hence her daughter's knowledge of Turkish was quite limited, Joudi said. Nader (36) alternatively, complained in the TECs they thought neither Turkish nor Arabic to the children.

#### 5.5.4.6 Equivalency problems and invalidity of the diploma

Despite being legal, TECs aren't an accredited system that provides a valid diploma in Turkey. In September 2016, Turkish government formally decided to close TECs after a three years transition period (On Syrian Children's Education in Turkey, 2016, December 24). Correspondingly UNHCR (2016) notes that "refugees should be included in national education systems and follow national curricula rather than pursue parallel courses of study that cannot be supervised or certified by the host country", the impossibility of inclusion in education at secondary and upper levels is underlined (p. 18-19).

Many parents had concerns unrecognition of the diploma of TECs. Marwa (42) was concerned that her son's degree would not be recognized in Turkey when he finished nineth grade in a TEC. Joudi (42) said the main problem about TECs was the certification. Zeynep shared her concerns that this certification would not be of use if they returned to Syria some day. Aysha (42) explained her daughter was

unable to get a diploma from high school in a TEC and this affected her possible university education adversely:

She studied at a TEC, finished high school but all students when they have diploma from TECs they have to enter an exam for equivalency with the Turkish. She finished with 91% average She had the other exam but she couldn't [go to the university] she applied for scholarships as well. She couldn't have any opportunity to go to the university because she didn't get the diploma yet. (Aysha, 42)

Proficiency exam after graduation from TECs, which Aysha's (42) daughter suffered, was abolished. Syrian youth graduated from TECs were called to apply to local ministry of education offices for equivalency after graduation. If they wanted to continue with university they were invited to apply to open education high schools, pass its entrance exam and get some elective courses and be graduated from them to be able to apply to the Universities in Turkey (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24)

Equivalency determination was another important challenge in TECs. Parents shared that their children were not accepted to an equivalent grade. The reason was generally the loss of school years during war or migration. Nader (36) said: "...my daughter is supposed to be in the sixth grade but she missed three years because of the war... [but the people in TEC] they don't agree.". Marwa (42) said when she first sent her son to the TEC in *Çapa*, she wanted to send him to elementary school but she was refused, they wanted him to start from the sixth grade. When Ziya's (20) younger brother was in Aleppo, he was at the sixth grade. He was now 12 years old. They applied to the TEC in *Çapa*, but in the school, there weren't enough places for him in the sixth grade and the school put him to third grade as places were available. Ziya said:

We agreed to send him to third grade because we don't want him to forget how to read and write [Arabic]... We said okay [lets make it] fourth grade, [but] they said no we don't have any space except third grade...Now, he has

just started to hate the school because [he is in] third grade, [but] he must be sixth grade. He can't get along with the young kids. Because they are younger than him, ... I asked him like two days ago, "Did you find a friend?" He said, "I found one. He has a same situation like me. He was also at sixth grade." (Ziya, 20)

Acceptance of overage refugee children in lower grade classrooms in one class is criticised by UNHCR especially due to protection risks along with overcrowding and different ability and maturity levels (2016, p. 28).

## 5.6 Reflections on the future: Families, children and education

Future prospects of the refugee families on resettlement are crucial for the present experiences and future prospects of education for refugee children. The future prospects of the families on resettlement and citizenship are explored in the first section. The future prospects for the children in connection with the educational prospects are explored in the second. Finally, educational expectations from the Turkish government are discussed in the third and the last section.

### 5.6.1 Future prospects for the families on resettlement and citizenship

Most of the participants of the study said they wanted to go back to Syria rather than staying in Turkey if the situation improved in the future. Sixteen participants wanted to go back to Syria, nine of them said they rather wanted to stay in Turkey, three of them wanted to go to Europe, one of them to Canada and six of them chose not to specify. However Syrian refugees in Turkey are in a protracted refugee situation, in which it is shown that on average it takes 17 years before protracted refugees can return to home countries (Loescher and Milner, 2009).

Among those who specified that they regard their future in Syria, there were also those whose first choice for settlement would be Turkey because of the cultural

intimacy Turkey provides for them. Reasons given for going back to Syria were, wanting to live in home country, aiming at rebuilding their country and difficult subsistence conditions in Turkey. Reasons given for staying in Turkey were various. Stability, a better future for children, prospective support for Syrians, Turkey's being a promising country for the future, ease of making investments and better organization in the work-life here and less bribing. Those who wanted to go to Europe on the other hand, were fewer in number and what they emphasized was decent living conditions and comfortable life with a higher quality.

Most parents emphasized that they wanted to go back home to Syria. Amr (35) said his only wish was to go back home. Linn (33) stressed that they wished to go back home even if they knew that their house is lost back at home. Wafaa (41) said she wanted to be back in Syria and to see the release of her husband who had been imprisoned there since last four years to live with him again. Yussef (27) said he wanted to be back in Syria as soon as the war ended. Zeynep (37) also wished to go back to Syria as soon as the war stopped. Othman (40) also said he wanted to be back in Syria but in current conditions he saw no future even there. Nader (36) said he wanted to go back to Syria and he saw her children's future in Syria. He said: "So nobody knows but all that we want, all that we hope is to go back to Syria to rebuild our country and to live there, that's it. That's all what we want."

Hayat (26) said she wouldn't stay in Turkey even two minutes if the war ended. She said: "Very beautiful. Istanbul, Turkey. God be pleased with everyone. They opened their houses to us. We can't say anything but to be in one's home country is something different."

Some parents said they might go back to Syria even if the war did not end due to difficulty with subsistence in Turkey. Lujeyn (26) said her family came to

Turkey in 2013 however she sometimes went back to those areas, which were out of control of the regime and came back. Her two brothers passed away in Syria during the war and she had two more brothers who were younger, one was 22 and the other 9. Their mother also came to visit them occasionally. She said her family planned to go back to Syria even if the war did not stop, due to difficulty of the conditions of subsistence here. Cana (38) said she wanted to be back in Syria because Turkey was not good for living. Adhem (32) also said he regarded his future in Syria, as he worked 12 hours a day as a cook in Fatih and knew nothing about Turkey. He said:

I only go to work and come back to house. I don't care. My salary here is one thousand five hundred liras and my rent is one thousand one hundred liras... in Syria ... you have your own house, the schools are for free, the rent is not too much expensive and the citizens in Syria are free (Adhem, 32)

Omar (45) also was among the parents who wanted to be back in Syria as soon as the war ended. To emphasize the difficulties he lived in Turkey, during a conversation on use of physical punishment in schools in Syria, he said, "I swear the god, if you now stab me one hundred times, and if I was in Syria, I accept it...I have no hope in this country [Turkey]". He told that his oldest child wanted to be a doctor, the second one a teacher, the youngest wanted to be a policeman. But he said: " If we stay here, I don't believe their dream would come true."

Even if the parents wanted to go back to Syria, some parents had Turkey, as a second best choice in their minds because they thought the war would not end in the near future. They chose Turkey due to the cultural intimacy it provided. Despite his strong wish to go back to Syria, Omar's (45) assumption that this is impossible in the near future led him to also assert that Turkey would be the only country he would live in except Syria:

I prefer to stay in Turkey. I don't want to go to Europe. I had a chance, many chances. Many people came here and asked me we can take you to Europe with your family. We will pay you. And I said no, I don't like to go there.

Because the environment, the culture, the religious traditions. And I have many Syrian friends here. I'm comfortable here. (Omar, 45)

But he was still feeling volatile, he also said he would only go back to Syria if things got worse in Turkey. He said that when the coup attempt happened he said to his wife that, "If this coup happened or succeeded we will go, we will go to Syria. Nowhere else. We are here or we go to Syria." Joudi (42) also said she had "hopes, dreams or something" to go back to Syria. She said, "I want just this war to end and we can go back to our country." However if they couldn't go back to Syria, her wish was to stay in Turkey rather than Europe because it was closer to Syria. Rabia (22) also chose to live in Turkey even if they were accepted from Canada. She said she chose Turkey because of cultural reasons and because her family was in Turkey but there was no one in Canada. She said:

My husband wanted that. But I said to him: 'There you have your family, for instance if someone dies, they can come and hold a funeral. Who will take us there? For instance, we didn't want to go because our language is not their language, our religion is not their religion... Well, I don't know. We aren't afraid of the children's future here. There [in Canada] the children don't regard you as mother and father no more. After you are older than eighteen, you can not do that. Most people who went there, were worsened. (Rabia, 22)

Still, she emphasized that she would also have chosen to go to Canada if they were Arabs not Turcomans and if they had no relatives in Turkey. She gave an example from an Arab family who left for Germany, to Europe a few days ago. She said, "There is no one [like a relative] here, but no one there also. They don't know the language, but they don't know it here also. But life has more quality there."

Concerning their refusal to Canada, she still mentioned that even her Turkish neighbours were startled with their decision. She quoted them saying: "Are you crazy? Why did not you go? I would go even if I am Turkish."

Among those parents who wanted to go back to Syria some also had other countries in their minds because Syria was not good educational wise especially after

the war. Kazım (48) said that for himself, his only wish was to go back to Syria. But for his children, he regarded a future in America or Canada. Rabia (22) said if the war ended in 3 years or 5 years she would want to go back to Syria. However if the war would end while the children were in the university, she said, they would have to stay in Turkey for the sake of their children. Most people who stayed here had to stay this way, she said.

Among those who said they wanted to stay in Turkey one reason was Turkey's stability. Ahmad (52) who also lived in Iraq during 1990's said he liked the Turkish government and Turkish people even if some Turkish people did not like the Syrians. He said: "The country is stable. And that is enough for us." He shared that Iraqi government offered him citizenship but he refused. But if it was Turkish citizenship, he said he would have accepted. Mayor (32) also said "*Inshallah* we will have a good and safe future in Turkey".

Another reason for choosing Turkey to live in was the belief that Turkey would be better for the future of the children. Amjed (40) and his family wanted to live in Turkey. However he had concerns about equal treatment. Despite having emphasized hopes for a better future in Turkey, he also said: "Until I don't feel that my son is equally treated to other Turkish students, I can't see a future here."

Turkey's support for Syrians was another reason for the decision to stay in Turkey. Rim (43) said she had hopes with Turkey and she expected that many good things would happen for Syrians. She said, "Even if I am suffering now, I don't want to go to Europe or any other country, I love Turkey."

Turkey's possible future prospect of becoming a rich and powerful country was another reason quoted by Nabil (37), a coffee-shop owner and operator in Fatih. Nabil regarded his families' future in Turkey:

For me, Turkey [is the future], may God protect. I say this because I think there are many plots against Turkey. If Turkey continues this way, it will be great, not only for Syrians and for everyone. If [only] we [could] stay here and Turkey gives us not [only] our rights, because we are different but give us something that can make us continue living properly...The Turkish culture is similar to ours, not like European culture. (Nabil, 37)

He said he wanted to stay in Turkey and regarded his future in Turkey however then he then listed a range of concerns about Turkey. These concerns were mainly about the possible tension and dislike against Syrians by the Turkish. Still, he emphasized that he met a lot of good people in Turkey and that he had started his job from zero in Turkey and he did not want to do it again somewhere else in the world. He repeated several times that he felt home in Turkey.

Another reason was ease of making investments in Turkey when compared to other countries in the Middle East. Hussam (38) said he regarded his future in Turkey rather than other possible neighbouring countries:

There is work here, better than other countries. I went to Egypt, to Lebanon, I have residency in Oman. And I still have family in Oman. But here, I feel we are close to Syria, same atmosphere. I stayed 8 months in Egypt, and 7 months in Lebanon. But I didn't like any of those countries. But here I love it. There's many help with us Syrians. For example here we pay the same taxes as Turkish people. But other countries we pay more than citizens. If we don't go back to Syria, we will stay here. (Hussam, 38)

Less bribing and better organization with the government when compared to that of Syria was another reason to choose Turkey to live in. Ziya (20) whose family owned seven branches of a coffee shop in Istanbul said he liked staying, being in Istanbul. He said they were "... kind of rich here. We live well. They are taking care of us."

When asked about who were taking care of them and how he explained:

I like the idea of the Turkish government taking care of the shop owners and everything. Two inspectors from *Büyükşehir Belediyesi* (Istanbul Municipality) came here and they said, "Hey, you have to put some protectors under the coffee pocks in the shop." I think this is good. Here things are more organized unlike in Syria, everything is about bribing. (Ziya, 20)

Among those who said they wanted to go to Europe, Amal (24) said they terribly wanted to go to Europe but it was impossible for them to afford, through smugglers it costed about five to six thousand dollars for each member of the family. Rukaya (35) tried to go to Europe, to Germany with her family but was stopped by the police in İzmir. She said “People are comfortable in Germany, and somehow we are desperate here.” however she also said “we heard of many people who went there and now they dream of coming back.” Hussam (38) whose first choice was Turkey to live in also said: “I subscribed to go to Europe but everyone I know who went, they are not happy.” Bara (41) was still expecting to go to Germany sometime in the future for a family union as her son and daughter were there waiting for short-term residence.

In July 3, 2016 Turkish president announced that the Turkish interior ministry was taking steps to offer citizenship to those Syrian refugees who wanted it. Later on, it was announced that around 300,000 Syrians would be naturalized initially probably summing up to 1,000,000 with the families with educational and technical skills based criteria. (International Crisis Report, 2016, November 30, p. 9-23). After the acknowledgement of Turkey’s intention for Syrians’ citizenship, there have been wide reactions among the Turkish public despite the ambiguity of process. Still, citizenship for Syrians was repeatedly announced by the Turkish president during 2016 and later in 2017 while the ambiguity concerning the conditions and criteria preserved. With such ambiguity of process and criteria, citizenship might not have changed Syrian refugees’ mind to go home or to go to Europe. Nevertheless the acknowledgement of citizenship for Syrians by the Turkish president was an important mark in the direction of integration. Fourteen parents among the participants were for Turkish citizenship, four of them said it would be for the

privileged Syrians and seven were against Turkish citizenship. Ten of the participants did not share their position concerning citizenship.

Some participants regarded Turkish citizenship as a valuable asset and it would provide some advantages. Yussef (27) thought positively about Turkish citizenship. He said: "Even if the war ended there, even if we go back, if we have this citizenship, the relations between our countries will be good because Turkey is a developed country." Possibility of enabling a secure housing was something that made Turkish citizenship appealing for Linn (33). She thought it would be very good thing to have Turkish citizenship especially if it enabled to buy a house by mortgage in the same terms with Turkish people and a travel permit. Possibility of a travel permit was an aspect, which was worthy for other participants as well. Hussam (38) also said he would accept if he was offered Turkish citizenship for at least his wife could visit her family which she did not see in person for the last two and a half years and come back. Zeynep (37) who appeared as indifferent about citizenship as she couldn't see what benefit they would get from it also said "The only thing that we need [is] a ... respected life ... we don't care about citizenship ... only thing that makes me want to have it is to go and visit my family in Syria and come back."

(Zeynep, 37)

Stability and strength of Turkey was another reason to accept Turkish citizenship for Syrian refugees. Ahmad (52) said he would accept citizenship if he was offered as he liked Turkey as a stable country and the Turkish government's position and policies and wanted to stay in Turkey. Nabil (37) had positive views about citizenship and also about Turkey. He said he wanted citizenship very much and he regarded his family's future in Turkey. He said "After ten years, if the Turkish government and Turkey just continues in this manner, yeah it will be like

China and it will be like very very great country in the near future. I am very proud.”

(Nabil, 37)

One of the Turcoman participant mothers, Hayat (26) emphasized the cultural and emotional proximity that she felt towards Turkey when justifying why she was for Turkish citizenship. She underlined that Turcomans felt proximity towards Turks rather than Arabs as they were from the Ottomans. Rabia (22) who was also a Turcoman stressed how they were left in between the two societies as Turcomans. She expected some better status for themselves in comparison to Arabs as Turcomans if citizenship was to happen. However she shared her disappointment about seeing that Arabs who engaged in business were provided with a better status while she was expecting some privileged status for Turcomans. In brief, she did not believe that her family would acquire citizenship at all since it was for rich and educated people.

Amjad (40) who owned and operated a restaurant in Fatih said he regarded citizenship positively and he wanted to stay in Turkey. He thought it would be good for the children’s education. He thought they would really have a good future here. He said he expected to have priority in citizenship acquisition because he was a businessman investing in here. He said: “In Dubai, In Egypt, in every country they give the citizenship to the businessmen who have a big company. Normally they should give me the citizenship.”

Actually, the impression that citizenship would be provided for privileged people like businessman, professionals like doctors or other educated refugees was common among the participants to the study. Joudi (42) who would accept citizenship if offered also shared the same judgement. She said, “When they announced this citizenship they just mentioned the businessman and those with

higher education. I am a teacher, no one cares about a teacher.” Rukaya (35) also thought it would be for the expats, professionals and for those people who have business and it wouldn’t cover themselves. Lujeyn (26) also said that citizenship would be for special people like educated businessmen.

An alternative view by a Turcoman mother was that Turkish citizenship was not advantageous over temporary protection status. Aysha (42) said in the beginning like two years before, she thought that Turkish citizenship would be a good thing for her family but then she changed her mind when her nephew who was married to a Turkish women acquired Turkish citizenship:

It is more difficult to have this citizenship because if you don't have enough income to live like Turkish people you face many problems. Such as, now we can go to school, yeah for example we have *kimlik*, so we can go to school, hospitals [are] for free. But Turkish will have to pay. ... They have to have *sigorta*, (insurance). Now I think without citizenship it is easier to live here. If you don't have good income, so the citizenship, it will be harmful, not useful. (Aysha, 42)

A few parents shared that they were against Turkish citizenship most of whom refrained from giving reasons. Amr (35) was against Turkish citizenship and his only wish was to go back home. Nader (36) was also against citizenship. He said: “I don't want it, I have a dream to go back to Syria only. If any citizenship in the world would be offered to me, I will not take it.” Adhem (32) said he would be against Turkish citizenship if it would mean that he couldn't go back to Syria. He would accept if only double citizenship was possible. Yet, seven participants who wouldn't want Turkish citizenship refrained from reasoning.

#### 5.6.2 Future prospects for children in correspondence to education

As have been explored in the previous chapters and sections, future seemed to be full of despair for Syrian refugee parents. When they were asked about their own future,

they generally replied with absolute despair. When talking about their children's future, their level of hope slightly increased, still, not being able to see an educational future for children in Turkey was something that raised despair.

For Zeynep (37) the answer to the question "How do you see the future for your children?" was: "Lost. God knows. Future lost." Omar (45) replied the same question as: "Next generation, God help them, their future is finished. May God help them". Amal (24) and Kazım (48) said it was important to make sure their children's future was good, they only cared about children's future. Aysha (42) who had two university, one secondary school, one primary school and one preschool level daughter was hopeless about the educational future of her children. She shared that when the younger children saw that the eldest who was very successful at high school was unable to get university education, they all lost hopes. She said: "...They stopped dreaming... In Syria, the kids themselves, they had hope, they wanted to be something in the future. But here they say, even if they finish high school, 'Where will I go? What will I do? May be I will not be anything.' ". Rim (43) said she did not expect anything now for her children's future at this situation. She said: "We can't expect anything now at this situation we can't expect anything, we have no support or help from anybody. I wish they will be the best people." Joudi (42) also said she had no future prospects for her children in Turkey as they weren't entitled for a *kimlik* and a public school, while the family couldn't afford TECs and as the children had become child laborers. She said her sons worked as waiters, 17 years old in a restaurant and 16 years old in a hotel and were out of expectations of education for their future. Cana (38) was also concerned about her children's future even if they were top students at school. She said: "In Syria anyone who finished school could go to the university. Of course it depended on the degrees. But here,

there are many tests, many procedures to go to the university. It's very difficult because of that..." Othman (40) said: "I swear the God, I don't know anything about my daughter's future. But I always [give her] support like financial or emotional support. I do my best."

Abdulwahed (32) said that he could live anywhere. But when it came to the future of his children, he thought it would be better for them to go to a Western country like Canada. He said:

... for my children, may be going to a place like Canada or something like that. Because I would feel it is much better, now it is too much un-education in Syria. There is no education anymore. Before ... the statistic of literate people was 80% and now it is only 10% So for my kids yes, I hope for the best. May be going somewhere... to a good country. (Abdulwahed, 32)

He also told about his previous thoughts about sending his children to Europe in a smuggler's boat through the Mediterranean. He said he had learnt a safer way through the Mediterranean those days and he shared that he had some relatives in Holland who might have helped. However he later on changed his mind due to the risks of the journey. He explained his way of thinking likewise:

I wanted to send them to Europe first, but then it didn't work out. I was gonna send them through the boat and, whatever. I knew during that time, I knew a way that was more safe. That, there was more chances. Yeah but, at first I said, if they arrive ... Because I have some relatives in Holland then I would be very happy. But if they don't, then probably I will be very sad and mad and may be I will die after them. But, but, I thought may be if they die, it is better than even living the way they are living right now because they might be just living, but they are not really living." (Abdulwahed, 32)

Even if he couldn't send his children to Europe and even if he had to send them back to Syria during the time of the interview (August 26, 2016), Abdulwahed was still looking for ways to send his children to the West for a better education and a better life.

On the other hand, all parents asserted that they expected their children to continue education "as much as they can". Rukaya (35) said the first thing she thinks

of is to keep her children learning, keep education for them. She really wanted to send them to the university in the future. Yussef (27) said he did not expect anything from his daughter in the future but just to continue with her education. On a question about what continuing education would change within his daughter's life he said: "Even this education will not lead to financial gains or having a good job [for her but] it's enough just to learn. To be educated." Marwa (42) said that it was important for her that her children could study in the future. She wanted them to be important persons. She wanted them to have a profession. Salam (24) also said she wanted her children to finish even the university, education was important for her. Adhem (32) said he would never let his children leave the school like he did before. He, himself had finished the intermediate school but did not continue. He said he now understood that education was very important for the children and for all and they would never make the same mistake ever. Amal (24) and Hayat (29) both said their expectation was that their children continued education to the highest level as their husbands were both uneducated.

Possibly atypical were Ziya's (20) future educational prospects for his 12 years old brother. He said even if their father wanted them to go to school and continue with their studies, his 12 years old brother wanted to leave school. This was similar to his own educational experience in Syria. Ziya said he studied until the eleventh grade but he quit because he wanted to work with his father and family. The family owned a coffee shop with several branches in Syria and during the time of the interview they had seven branches in Turkey. He explained he left the school because he wanted to work with his father and his family. In addition he said no one encouraged him to study. In his family, no one studied but everyone helped in the coffee shop. So he thought that if his brother decided to leave the school in the near

future, to work in the coffee shop, they couldn't force him to go back to school. But if he wanted to continue his studies, he would. Hence their future prospects for his 12 years old brother were very flexible and probably future was not attached to education but rather to the family's business.

Ziya's (20) family's economic stability together with the family's downplaying of education within future prospects of the child was uncommon when the considerations of the other participant parents within the study are taken into account. Most participants to the study weren't stable economic wise and had difficulties with subsistence, at the same time they put a lot of stress on education. However one common aspect, which came together with their emphasis on education was that they regarded the educational future of their children in Turkey as desperate in general. However some parents shared that they regarded a good educational future in Turkey. All those who believed their child would have a good educational future in Turkey sent or wanted to send their children to public schools.

Joudi (42) whose family lacked *kimlik* as they came from Beirut, wanted to send children to a public school because children would learn the language very fast and they would have Turkish friends. Hence, she was in favour of the decision of Turkish government to include Syrian students in Turkish schools. Othman (40) also shared he was positive about the decision of inclusion but was unhappy about the ambiguities concerning policies for Syrians in Turkey. Nabil (37) thought it would be great if his daughter followed a Turkish school and reached the university. However he had concerns about a guaranteeable future in Turkey. He said, "If the war stops in Syria, maybe the Turks will say go back to your country. I am trying to be legal in every way, for example, I have tourist residence, I don't have any fines or

anything blacklisted.” Hussam (38) also said he wanted his children to study here in the future but he had concerns with education in Turkey:

*Inshallah* it is good, but I can never know. If we were in Syria, their future would be better. My son, the oldest, he wants to be an engineer. First he needs to accept the education here. The education here is easier than Syria. Syria was harder. He just needs to get used to the education system here and the language, it will be great. (Hussam, 38)

Hussam’s (38) thoughts provide for his worries about possibility of educational inclusion even if he is positive about resettlement in Turkey. Such concerns were also shared concerning the decision of inclusion of Syrian students in Turkish schools. Amr (35) thought that this decision would not be successful because of the language barrier. He said: “If these kids don’t know Turkish at all, how can they learn when the teachers are teaching in Turkish?... I prefer to keep them in TECs and no problem if they teach them Turkish”. Zeynep (37) also shared her discontentment with this decision: “At least ... Syrian students even if they are outside their country, ... they are still living in Syrian environment... still feel they belong to ...[Syria] when they study that curriculum. If they go to public school, they will loose this”.

Aysha (42) also disagreed:

... Students will go to public schools they will learn about Turkey, its history, civilization everything. And they will know nothing about, even the geographics of Syria or history. They will be just away of everything, away of their roots, origins. Yeah. Even they will, may be they will loose their language. (Aysha, 42)

Nabil (37) who was in favour of the decision of inclusion of schools also had concerns. He thought inclusion would be difficult for the elder children and it might result in children’s loosing proficiency in Arabic:

For us, as Muslims, the Arabic language is the language of the Quran, the language of paradise... I don't like to forget my language or make my children forget their language. I want them to learn the language of this country but at the same time I want my language to be still alive. (Nabil, 37)

Nader (36) also underlined that Quran teaching was the base of Arabic language together with education of morals. Aysha (41) also emphasized the importance of Quran teaching along with Arabic. Kazım (48) whose son was very successful in the fifth grade in a public school sent him to a night school so that he could learn Arabic and Quran. Rabia (22)'s daughter who is a Turcoman, chose to be transferred to a public school from a TEC and got used to the environment very fast, however she was about to loose proficiency in Arabic which was worrying Rabia as she did not want her to loose proficiency in Arabic. Criticizing the inadequacy of religious education in public schools Rabia emphasized that she wished that public education had been closer to religion and teach more of Quran and lives of the prophets.

Another expectation concerning curriculum was about English language, which was regarded as inadequate in Turkey. Salah (32) shared that he observed that English language was not taught properly in Turkey because he said: "I've been to Syria, I've been to Iraq, I find that people who live there, they know English. But in Turkey, some people even 'thank you', 'please' they don't know. Even 'hi'." So he said he expected better English education in public schools. Amr (35) also stressed the importance of English education: "I want her to learn English, more than Turkish. It is better for her, for her future. English is an international language unlike Turkish.". Omar (45) also expected high-quality English education within curriculum. He said her younger daughter's English was fluent in Syria by she was 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and she had to stop at 4<sup>th</sup> grade after when she has been forgetting all her English in Turkey.

A most prominent expectation of Syrian parents concerning the decision to include Syrian students is embraced appears to be on education of Quran and the Arabic language as a mother tongue. However concerns were not only on sending

children to schools without knowledge of Turkish, they were also worried about children's getting used to another culture and losing their roots. UNHCR (2016) notes that refugee families might be reluctant to have their children study foreign curricula due to cultural concerns and concerns about prolonged displacement but "following a new curriculum does not mean forgetting one's roots and refugee communities have shown themselves to be adept at maintaining close ties to their own cultures and languages outside the classroom." (p. 19) Still, Syrian parents seemed to be concerned about cultural familiarity within curriculum and educational environment in Turkey but more than that, most weren't optimistic about the educational progress of their children in Turkey even for those who had top grades and hence, since they put a lot of stress on education in their lives as refugees, the future of their children appeared as unpromising and ambiguous.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study examines the Syrian families' pursuit of education for their children in Istanbul, regarding previous and current experiences and future prospects. It aims to disclose the meanings, feelings and prospects Syrian refugee parents attached to their children's education and raise awareness on the ways they struggle for acquisition of cultural capital by their children in Turkey. The resources and strategies they put into use in response to the possibilities and constraints their children encounter within the education system in Turkey are explored. The research questions that have guided this study are:

- What are the Syrian parents' experiences concerning their children's education in Istanbul?
  - What factors affect their overall living conditions and how do these associate with children's education?
  - How is the school choice made for children?
  - What are the possibilities and constraints encountered in the education system?
  - With what resources and strategies do they respond to the educational constraints they encounter for their children?
- What meanings and prospects do Syrian parents attach to their children's education based on their experiences in Turkey?

In this final chapter of the study, the discussion and conclusion of the study is presented under four main headings. First, influence of the overall living conditions of Syrian refugees on the education of their children are elaborated. Second,

possibilities and constraints for Syrian refugee children within Turkish education system are discussed both for TECs and public schools. Third, the conditions of adjustment to public schools by Syrian refugee children are explored. And finally, Syrian refugee parents' strategies on their children's education within a scarcity of resources are elaborated. Limitations are given and recommendations for further research are made at the end of the chapter.

### 6.1 Influence of Overall Living Conditions on the Education of Children

Overall living conditions of the refugee families, generally poor and deprived have affects on the educational lives of Syrian refugee children. Many children lost months, years of school during war before and after immigration, which both caused distress and insecurity and made getting reused to education difficult especially if they were in the elder ages. Labour networks, provided for better employment opportunities for fathers in Istanbul but moving to Istanbul led to intermission in children's education once again after their migration from Syria.

Families who lacked temporary protection were, the most disadvantaged as they were neither entitled to educational nor to other services in Turkey. The reason for their in-access to temporary protection regime was either procrastination of services, or their entering Turkey through another countries' borders rather than Syria. Not having a *kimlik*, children are not officially registered in public schools but may be accepted as a guest student. But being a guest student, they are neither provided with books nor with a formal certification or diploma. Otherwise, their only chance of education is with TECs if some sponsorship could be arranged. Half of the school age children who had no access to school were from the families left out of

the temporary protection regime. So without ensuring accession of “all” to schools it is not possible to consider the educational inclusion of Syrian refugee children<sup>39</sup>.

Parents faced difficulties during registration to temporary protection regime. Most mentioned negative official encounters in the government offices, as they felt unwelcome with unpleasant attitude and constant procrastination of services. Difficulties in registration in temporary protection regime resulted in difficulty in registration to public schools.

Lack of finances, directly affects school choice. TECs required monthly payments for education and transportation, which parents reported as high and arbitrary. Public schools were free, but parents sometimes had to make extra payments for additional material, school trips or other costs. Most parents who participated in the research would look for scholarships or financial support for the educational expenses of their children. Twelve research participants mentioned they needed financial support to cover educational expenses for their children. Two parents whose children studied in public schools asked support from the teachers and administrators. Three others said they were looking for scholarship for their children’s studies one in a TEC and two in universities. Another four said their child enrolled in TEC was sponsored by a friend, a relative or by the TEC itself. Despite difficulty with finances and subsistence more than half of the children within the research were enrolled in TECs. In the scope of the study, 26 children were enrolled in TECs, 23 in a public school and 20 of them had no accession among 69 children. Six parents’ reasoning for sending children to public schools was costliness of TECs. Three out of 20 parents whose children had no access to education said they would have sent them to a TEC if they could afford. Still, parents underlined many concerns

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<sup>39</sup> Concerning registration problems due to procrastination, the MoNE authorities stated assurance of registration of Syrian children to school before acquisition *kimlik* and fastening of *kimlik* acquisition process. (On education of Syrian children in Turkey, 2016, December 24)

about their children's education in TECs and were suffering from an endless dilemma of making the right educational decision for their children.

It is important to note that perceived inferiority of social status of Syrian people in Turkey caused discontent among refugee parents, which influenced future prospects on resettlement that influenced their educational decisions for children. Another factor, which greatly influenced the future prospects, was poor conditions of subsistence, which influenced their educational decisions in turn. The more the parents had a future prospect to stay in Turkey, the more they preferred a public school for their children.

Lack of means of subsistence led children become child labourers, which directly affected accession to school. One parent shared they had to take their child from a public school both as the family couldn't cover expenses and also because his mother was ill. He also couldn't follow the lessons in Turkish. He replaced his mother and started to work in the textile sector. Two 17 year olds, one 16 year old and one 14 year old were working either in textile or services sector, who were all boys. They were working for at least six days a week for at least 12 hours daily. They were engaged in "worst forms of child labor" (ILO, 1999) regarding that work harms their health, safety and access to education. For each of them, mothers stressed that the family had no other option for subsistence. Child labour is unquestionably against the best interests of these children violating their right to education along with their right to play and leisure time, self-realization, health, safety, development, a decent life and so forth and requires urgent and effective measures which should intend the basic rights and overall living conditions of all the family members.

Lack of possibilities for employment of parents directly brought poor conditions of subsistence, which affected school choice and accession to school.

Indecent housing conditions interfered with the health status as well as studies at home. Inferiority in health conditions of the members of the household adversely affected the education of children; it occasionally led to child labor in or out of the house and hindered accession to education. In another example, prioritization of children's education led parents to sacrifice health treatment of family members as education required payment even in public schools. Two disabled children (one with a down syndrome and another with thalassemia) had no school access as the parents lacked information about educational services for disabled children in Turkey. Poor health conditions even affected the future occupational wishes of the children. There were two children who wanted to be pharmacists and 8 children who wanted to be doctors within the total of 69; the reason shared by the parents were curing family members' health problems.

Additional life challenges may make it especially difficult for refugee parents to be involved in education of their children (McBrien, 2011). Along with additional life challenges, language barrier was a primary challenge against parental involvement for parents in the research. Male members of the family appeared significantly disadvantaged in opportunities for learning Turkish as they worked long hours with very limited time off, without any contact with Turkish people. Having no time and being non-proficient in Turkish, their chances of parental involvement were much less, as they mentioned. Gendered division of labor in parental involvement in education (Reay, 2005; Golden & Erdreich, 2014) categorically existed among the Syrian refugee parents within this study where mothers were held responsible of monitoring and supporting children's education and fathers were rather involved when educational decisions were taken. Still, participant mothers also appeared influential in the educational decisions and it was them who suffered more from the

dilemma of school choice in a public school as they struggled for supporting children's education in Turkish as a foreign language. If the child was in a TEC, questions of integration to Turkish society prevailed which fed the dilemma of school choice once again for both parents. Decision to include all Syrian children in Turkish schools and close TECs (MoNE, 2016, September 2) has reinforced enrollment in public schools, but policies require consideration of the factors that lead to this dilemma of school choice in order to ensure effective implementation of policy of educational inclusion in public schools.

Personal contact with Turkish citizens was considerably limited, which is a loss of potential for enhancing tolerance and integration according to the contact theory (McLaren, 2003). It also prevents the children from getting support for learning Turkish, which is a barrier for their social and educational inclusion.

Syrian parents' expressed their deep negative emotions such as despair, grief and insecurity while explaining their conditions of living in Turkey. It is a norm that emotional wellbeing of parents is crucially important for the emotional wellbeing of children (Eklund et. al., 2013). Positive feelings of gratitude and safety were, also shared by the parents. Some parents also underlined that going to school brought about feelings of safety and everyday life to the lives of their children, which is also factual within literature (Ecklund et al., 2013; Matthews, 2008; UNHCR, 2016, January).

## 6.2 Possibilities and constraints within the education system in Turkey

Syrian parents faced a continuous dilemma of choosing between public schools and TECs that continued long after their choice. Many interrelated factors and reasons exist that nourish the dilemma of school choice, which are certainly related to the

possibilities and constraints that two different school choices brought about. The factors that lead to their dilemma are explained in this section.

All parents without exception wanted their children to learn how to read and write in Arabic and preserve their proficiency in Arabic language. Additionally, some parents shared that they support the provision of Arabic curriculum as children achieve better in their mother tongue. Themselves and their children were content with the culturally familiar and hence comfortable environment in TECs, where children make friendships and feel safe. Due to such advantages, parents shared that they were unhesitant to send their children to TECs if they could afford. It is important to note that legalization of urban TECs by Circular 2014/21 has been an important decision regarding availability of education (Tomasevski, 2001) for Syrian refugee children in Turkey.

Alternatively, Syrian parents were critical of TECs as they functioned in business terms rather than educational with arbitrarily determined excessive charges and transportation costs. Even if they were satisfied with the language of the curriculum, parents shared substantial dissatisfaction with the content of the curriculum and competencies of the teachers. Content was criticized for bringing the ideological divisions in Syria into the school, lacking of Quran education and ignoring the essence of education of Turkish language. Teachers were incompetent as they were not recruited with respect to qualifications and experience but with nepotism. Moreover, no official certification existed in TECs, along with arbitrarily determined equivalencies, which raised doubts about effectiveness of education in TECs. The possibilities and constraints that TECs provide in accordance with the narratives of parents are provided in Table 13.

Table 13. Parents' Perspectives on Possibilities and Constraints in TECs

Possibilities	Constraints
Lessening loss of school years in education	High cost of education; functioning in business terms
Provides learning Arabic	High cost of transportation
Provides for a familiar and comfortable environment for children	Inferior level and content of education
Provides possibilities for building friendship easily	Incompetency of teachers
Provision of Arabic curriculum	Invalidity of diploma
Academic achievement possible due to curriculum provision in mother tongue	Equivalency problems
	Ideological curriculum where divisions in Syria are brought to school
	Lack of education of Quran, religion and morals
	No follow up with absenteeism
	Lack of education of Turkish language

Public schools also presented some possibilities and challenges for Syrian children within parents' perspectives. Learning Turkish and becoming a translator for the family in the public places is a most prevalent advantage of public schools shared by parents in contrast to what Zhou and Bankston (2000) suggested: they pointed to a risk of perceived superiority in children challenging the family leadership. A common emphasis among the parents was, children's educational attainment at school especially after they manage learning Turkish. However "a duration of suffering"<sup>40</sup> existed in public schools for the Syrian children which was forecasted to last from 3 months to one year during when they suffered from incapacity to follow the lessons, make friends, communicate with teachers and so forth until they acquired Turkish language. Such duration forecasted by parents or the school staff is well below the duration suggested by Cummins (1991) who proposed that a 5 to 7 years duration was essential to be proficient in academic second language skills for immigrants (as cited in Orozco & Orozco, 2011, p. 67). However acquisition of proficiency in Turkish adequate to communicate in daily

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from a school administrator's advice who told Hussam (35) to be patient for 6 months and the "duration of suffering" would end for his children in public school.

language would be enough for Syrian parents during when they expected this “duration of suffering” to end gradually. During this period, some children suffered from absolute exclusion and always asked for going back to TECs from parents, some others stayed disconnected without any *engagement in school* (Orozco & Orozco, 2011) where they only longed for the end of the school day, while some significant others managed to make friends and engaged in some communication with teachers even without proficiency of Turkish language.

Public schools’ potential for upholding integration was underlined by parents. Syrian children were regarded as “fast Turkish learners” by Syrian parents as they were smart, learning easy and Turkish was easy to learn. A very common concept they utilized was “success” when commenting on children’s experiences in public schools. Success was prevalent within parents’ narratives, and they attributed success to educational inclusion as is also suggested in the literature (Zhou, 1997). To them, success in public school referred to learning Turkish fast, having no problem at school, having Turkish friends, having the same achievement rate as the Turkish children, being at some rank within the class such as the first, second, etc. and getting good marks at school. When explaining the reasons of their children’s success at school they emphasized out of school help by Turkish proficient relatives and friends, or participation in language classes or homework clubs at the community center. Being supported by attentive teachers was another reason for being successful at a public school. Concerning support from the teachers, attentive monitoring, home visits, good communication, kind treatment, encouragement in learning and support against discrimination were underlined. Preschool education was underlined as it provided for learning Turkish and getting used to the school environment before primary school. Orozco & Orozco (2011) similarly suggests that

acquisition of second language, student engagement and relational support together serves for educational inclusion besides family background variables.

Difficulty in learning Turkish and incapability in understanding lessons was a most prevalent disadvantage of public schools. Parents underlined the prevalence of disregarding, discrimination and exclusion by peers. With such bad reputation, it was difficult for parents to convince their children to go to public schools even if they wanted to. Sometimes there were problems about registration and acceptance to school due to the perseverance of the temporariness assumption among school administrators and teachers. Parents also shared difficulty in covering preschool, school and transportation expenses. Some negative attitude of teachers was also shared such as lack of care, no extra attention or no equal treatment. Difficulty in communication between teacher and parent and difficulty of evaluation of progress by parents due to language barrier were also common challenges in parental involvement. An important shortcoming of Turkish schools was the lack of official translation in parent-teacher meetings. The possibilities and constraints that public schools provide in accordance with the narratives of parents are provided in Table 14.

### 6.3 Conditions for educational inclusion in public schools

Tomasevski (2001, p.14) underlines the condition of adaptability in which schools ought to adapt to the needs of diverse children rather than embracing “the heritage of forcing children to adapt to whatever schools … made available to them”. Inclusive education focuses on how education responds to the diverse needs of the students and how schooling contributes to social inclusion of diverse students rather than how students would integrate in the mainstream education (UNESCO, 2006). In

this respect some children lived better experiences concerning educational inclusion in public schools in comparison to their other Syrian peers within the research. This section intends the analysis of these experiences in order to quest for influential factors providing support for them in their educational inclusion.

Table 14. Parents' Perspectives on Possibilities and Constraints in Public Schools

Possibilities	Constraints
Learning Turkish and translating for the family	Convincing children to go to public schools due to bad reputation in discrimination
Teachers (good monitoring, home visits, good communication, encouragement in learning, support against discrimination)	Difficulty in registration and acceptance to school due to prevalence of temporariness assumption among administrators and teachers
High academic achievement as soon as learning Turkish	Difficulty in learning Turkish as a foreign language
Possibility to integrate	Not understanding lessons due to not knowing Turkish
Less problems in language after preschool education in public schools	Disregarding, discrimination and exclusion by peers
Supportive peers	Difficulty in parental involvement due to language barrier
Willingness for parental involvement	Difficulty in covering school expenses
Support by Turkish-Arabic speaking parents during parent-teacher meetings.	Difficulty in covering preschool education fee
	Negative teacher treatment (Lack of care, no extra attention, no equal treatment)
	Difficulty in communication with teachers
	Lack of translation during parents meetings

Among 26 children who had experience in Turkish schools, 12 were reported to have been well included, 10 children suffered from a variety of challenges and four of them would start school next year and their status of inclusion was yet not known. Among 12 children who were observed to be better included, one of them was at preschool, eight of them were at first grade, one of them at second, one at third, and one was at sixth grade. Three children at first grade were Turcomans and their mother tongue was Turkish.

For those children who were included in public schools a range of conditions existed. Having learnt Turkish before the school was stressed as a critical factor. Parents emphasized the importance of preschool education in this respect; which was

also helpful in getting used to the school environment. Support in learning Turkish through extracurricular support at home by relatives and community members who are proficient in Turkish or in a community center by volunteer Turkish teachers who are natives was also expressed. Acquisition of daily help with studying and homework was another factor. One other aspect of educational inclusion was possibility of children to participate in school's extracurricular activities such as school trips, visits and so forth. The children who were included generally had Turkish friends in and out of the school. They generally got along well with their peers in the school and peer support was also common. School's being closer to home was also rated as positive.

Another considerably influential factor was the treatment by teachers. Generally the children in this group had good relationship with the teachers and the teachers were regarded as kind, attentive and supportive by the parents. Attentive monitoring, encouragement in learning, good communication, inclusive means of communication for the child and parents, paying visits home, support against discrimination and treating Syrian children in equal terms were mentioned as positive characteristics of a supportive teacher. The school administrators were reported as welcoming and supportive in this group. One school administrator even took initiative to accept a Syrian girl to preschool education without charge. Another teacher was reported to involve Syrian children in school trips by paying herself; however this caused feelings of inequality in her brother whose teacher did not take such an initiative.

Strong parental involvement was another common characteristic for children's educational lives regarding inclusion. Close monitoring and strong encouragement among parents have been a supporting factor. Being enthusiastic with

education was also a common characteristic of parents. They had constant and effective communication with the teachers generally through whatsapp and frequent parents meetings were held as frequent as once in every week in a father's case. Parents in this group regularly participated themselves in the parent-teacher meetings always with the help of a volunteer translator who is a friend or a relative.

Children who suffered from inclusion challenges rated poor in *cognitive, relational and academic or behavioural engagement* (Orozco & Orozco, 2011). Factors and conditions hindering educational inclusion had commonalities with Bačáková's (2011) study which points to insufficient teacher competencies, insufficient support provision for refugee children's inclusion in schools, insufficient home-school cooperation and inappropriate grade placement due to lack of second language acquisition by refugee children. Children suffering from challenges of inclusion were generally newer at school and one of them started school in second semester. Lack of command in Turkish was a common aspect. Parental involvement was low. Their parents and other family members were non-proficient in Turkish so they were short of helping with their studies and homework. One parent shared struggling in google translate for hours everyday in order to help with homework which proved ineffective. Not being able to communicate with the teacher and peers was a discouraging factor for the children at school. Inattentive teachers in Syrian children's learning Turkish and unkind treatment due to lack of Turkish proficiency in class were told as characteristics of teachers of children with challenges of inclusion.

Registration problems and in-acceptance by school administrators or teachers were also common. Long periods of intermission due to migration and difficulty in getting reused to education were expressed. In such cases, children refused to go to

school everyday and parents were in an effort of continuous persuasion. Lacking *kimlik* appeared as a decisive factor as such children were treated as temporary and weren't provided with books and other materials. Temporariness assumption among teachers and administrators was common among children suffering from challenges with inclusion. In one school the child was treated like a guest in school as if s/he would be accepted after proving himself by learning Turkish.

Discrimination, exclusion and bullying at school were also common negative aspects. Children in this group had few or no friends at school. Parents of those children who had challenges with inclusion also had high educational motivation and participated in parent-teacher meetings but without any help from translators. Since they were short of understanding what was told, they lacked the opportunity in assisting their child's learning.

The factors and conditions contributing in and acting against educational inclusion provided in this sub-section bring about the essence of a holistic model of inclusion (Pinson & Arnot, 2005; Nilsson and Bunar, 2016; Matthews, 2008) of refugee students in school. The holistic model requires acknowledgement of students' multiple and complex "learning, social and emotional needs, parental involvement, community links, promoting positive images of refugees, establishing clear indicators of successful inclusion, and an ethos of inclusion and celebration of diversity" along with caring and giving of hope (Pinson & Arnot, 2005). The contributing factors in public schools have need of enhancement through a holistic perspective.

#### 6.4 Strategies used by parents in resource mobilization

Syrian refugee families' resources to mobilize, in response to the challenges against educational inclusion of their children in Turkey is considerably scarce and language barrier is a common obstacle ahead of all the strategies to be developed. Hence, it emerged that parents employ short-term tactics rather than overall strategies, which are also limited by existing constraints.

##### 6.4.1 Mobilization of cultural and social capital in learning

In the absence of economic capital, parents' cultural and social capital emerges as highly critical for enhancing educational resilience (Botrell, 2009; Çelik, 2016). Besides, in most cases, helping with children's learning is the only opportunity for making use of their own cultural capital, as employment possibilities are very limited, especially for the mothers. A sister who is a graduate of Turkish literature from Damascus University, a brother who is a computer engineer, a high school graduate mother and an elder sister in a Turcoman family at secondary school would help with the homework and studies of children as well as in their learning Turkish.

Language acquisition is critically important for refugee families, both Arabic and Turkish. Sometimes parents shared that their plan was to send the children to a TEC first so that the children would be fluent in Arabic and then they could be sent to a public school. Some others even sent children to a public school and a TEC at the same time so that they are proficient in both languages. Some families who had no members who spoke Turkish sent one child to a public school so that s/he could learn Turkish and help with public translations.

Learning Turkish has a much wider meaning than the acquisition of the language for a refugee parent. It refers to having more friends and relationships,

being able to engage in daily communication with people, to be empowered and even to be able to find a job for adult refugees. For children learning Turkish brings the possibility of educational inclusion as well as being able to follow other lessons, to achieve at school, to defend one's self against discrimination and bullying, to have more friendships and communication. Learning Turkish was much more than learning Turkish for Syrian refugees. Moreover, first sometime of school for refugee children was just for learning Turkish where the duration changed from one child to another during when the children possibly suffered from isolation, exclusion, incapability of participation, feeling lower than others and boredom. Hence, refugee parents made effort to mobilize their social and cultural capital in acquisition of Turkish by their children as soon and as much as possible.

Learning Arabic on the other hand has a more focused meaning in parents' narratives, it is about feeling of belonging to Syria, about knowing one's roots, origins, knowing the language of Quran and paradise and preserving the possibility of going back to Syria one day. Due to lack of Arabic education in public schools and due to perceived inadequacy of Arabic language education in *imam hatip schools*, parents were concerned that their children would forget Arabic. Among the participants, a seven years old Turcoman daughter was reported to have forgotten daily Arabic and three other Arab children at first grade did not ever learn how to read and write in Arabic at all. These children felt as a part of the school community, but parents were concerned about loss of cultural belonging and proficiency in their own language. A practical reason to preserve mother tongue was parents' strong desire to live in Syria after the war. Hence it was not only for learning Turkish language but also for preserving proficiency in Arabic language, Syrian parents attempted at mobilization of cultural and social resources. Many parents whose

children went to public schools tried to acquire books from TECs to teach Arabic by themselves, or by the help of relatives or community members at home. Some parents' underlined that Arabic language education could not be separated from learning Quran. One family mobilized financial resources and children followed a private Arabic and Quran course in the evenings after school in Fatih.

#### 6.4.2 Learning together

Learning Turkish is crucial for educational inclusion. Some parents reported trying to learn Turkish themselves in order to support children's learning Turkish. "Learning together" was a strategy of acquisition of Turkish language, which was critical for school achievement of children. To exemplify, some children participated in the Turkish lessons conducted by the researcher in the community center together with their mothers and they were observed to learn faster. Similarly, Turcoman parents reported learning how to read and write in Turkish easily together with their children by watching Turkish television, as their mother tongue had a lot in common with Turkish used in Turkey. They had also more advantage in comparison to Arab parents in supporting children's studies at school.

#### 6.4.3 Parental involvement in school

Syrian parents made effort to be involved in public schools however their chances for involvement was considerably limited with the language barrier. Some highly enthusiastic mothers and fathers reported never missing any of the parent-teacher meetings even with a lack of command of Turkish, sometimes utilizing community members as interpreters. However in most cases, the power relationship between families and schools was *conventional* where the communication was always

initiated by the school, language barrier was disregarded and parents' role was limited to provision of the physical needs of the children (Delgado Gaitan, 2012). It was difficult for the parents to initiate communication even if they were enthusiastic to draw resources from the school. A unique exemplary case for a *culturally responsive family-school-community connection* (Delgado Gaitan, 2012) was with a class teacher in a public school. She paid frequent visits to Syrian children's home, held weekly parent-teacher meetings and an active whatsapp group, which provided chances for a better communication as translation was possible through the internet.

Still, most Syrian parents were reluctant to participate in regular parent-teacher meetings due to the language barrier. Ercan (2012) suggested enhancement of parental involvement in school through traditional and new ways; community education in the first language; and cultural responsiveness by the school by supporting family goals for child development.

Parents had difficulty in the first avenue of learning the *language of schooling* (Bourdieu, 1986), that is: communicating with educators individually (Gaitan, 2012). To enable their individual communication, I mobilized the community center to arrange parent-teacher meetings in a public school nearby. Establishment of a context that brought Syrian parents, teachers and school administrators together proved useful in supporting educational inclusion and also enhanced researcher's understanding of functions attributed by Syrian refugee parents to parent-teacher conferences in public schools.

Diverse functions were attributed to parent-teacher meetings. Some parents regarded them as opportunities to "follow school achievement", and others to "learn children's problems at school." A father said for him they meant to "show his support for his daughter" as he always participated in them even if he knew that he

wouldn't understand a word. A crucial function was to "develop communication and understanding" between Syrian refugee parents and Turkish teachers which was critical for educational inclusion. Another function was observed as to "share appreciation of teacher's efforts in children's learning" for the Syrian parents during parent-teacher meetings.

#### 6.4.4 Drawing resources from the school

Another basic strategy against scarcity of economic, social and cultural resources is to "draw resources from schools" (Çelik, 2016) mainly through teachers. Teachers in public schools are regarded as a primary resource in children's learning while they are described as kind and supportive by Syrian parents. Parents generally shared appreciation for what the teachers have done for their children in educational inclusion. However, due to the *conventional power relationship* (Delgado Gaitan, 2012) between the parents and schools, which is worsened by the language barrier, it is difficult for the refugee parents to initiate communication with schools and the teachers. Asking for financial exemption was a reason for breaking this conventional one-way relationship, and another reason was children's being subject to discrimination and bullying at school.

Syrian parents visited schools to ask for exemption from educational expenses. Though there were only two examples within the research, in cases of such referral, an administrator or a teacher could take an initiative. Similarly, a school administrator took initiative to accept a Syrian child to preschool education without charge. Another teacher paid the fees of school trips herself so that a Syrian girl could attend in school trips.

In cases of discrimination and bullying parents consulted the teachers and administrators personally, however the discriminatory attitudes were often reported as not to have changed. In one case where Turkish boys insulted a Syrian girl, her mother thought that the teachers did their best, they talked to the parents of the disturbing children but they couldn't force people to change their minds. In another case of exclusion faced by a Turcoman boy, the teacher told the mother not to worry as she would take care of the situation, but nothing changed. In general parents regarded the teacher's reaction as adequate even if the issue in question was not solved at all. A reason for these low expectations from Turkish teachers and administrators might be that Syrian parents appreciated Turkish teacher's efforts in Syrian children's learning and inclusion more as a favour than as a duty. Still they strived hard to mobilize teachers whom they regarded as their unique source of influence on the educational environment in Turkey.

#### 6.4.5 Community center as a supplement or a complement

SPI Community Center in Çapa neighbourhood of Fatih, which 14 mothers in the research were actively involved was highly appreciated by parents especially for its social and psychological contributions to the lives of the refugee families. The center is also empowering for the mothers as it enables them to provide a little contribution to household income by enhancing their skills. Most mothers mentioned spending their lives between home and the center. The center plays a crucial role in the lives of the mothers, which falls beyond the scope of this study, still, the center is also crucially important for the educational inclusion of Syrian refugee children. Turkish, Arabic, English, French, and German language education and support for school curriculum and homework are available at the center, which is also crucial for

sociability. However its role in educational inclusion of Syrian children is far beyond providing language courses, homework clubs and sociability.

In reality, the constraints ahead of educational inclusion of children in public schools are correspondent to the possibilities the community center brings to the lives of the Syrian refugee children and the community center provides solutions against these constraints by complementing or sometimes supplementing public schools. Syrian children are faced with the difficulty of learning Turkish as a foreign language whereas they are provided with lessons on Turkish language in the community center. They have difficulty in understanding the lessons and doing homework and they are provided with homework clubs where one to one counselling is provided to help them understand their lessons. These exemplify complementary solutions. However concerning peer discrimination and lack of sociability, the community center serves as supplementary. Syrian children going to public schools are reported by their parents to cover lack of friendship at school by having company with other Syrian children in the community center. Public schools provide for very limited parental involvement opportunities due to the language barrier, whereas parental involvement of Syrian parents is possible at every level also involving decision-making in provision of services by the community center as the language barrier is not existent due to presence of Syrian refugees who are proficient in Turkish or English along with Arabic. In Table 15, all the constraints faced by Syrian children in public schools are correspondingly linked to the complementary or supplementary possibilities the Community Center provides.

Table 15. Correspondence of constraints in public schools with possibilities in the community center

Constraints in public schools	Possibilities in the community center
Difficulty in registration and acceptance to school due to prevalence of temporariness assumption among administrators and teachers	Easy registration and acceptance in the community center for refugee families and children
Difficulty in learning Turkish as a foreign language	Provision of Turkish language courses at least two times a week for different age groups by volunteer Turkish teachers
Not understanding lessons due to not knowing Turkish	One to one counselling in understanding lessons by the help of Turkish volunteers
Disregarding, discrimination and exclusion by peers	Center serves mainly to the Syrian community that no such discrimination and exclusion exists. Good opportunities for friendship and fun with an international network of volunteers
Difficulty in parental involvement due to language barrier	Parental involvement at all levels including decision making
Difficulty in covering school expenses	Possibilities of getting some little financial returns after skill development in crafts
Negative teacher treatment (Lack of care, no extra attention, no equal treatment)	Positive and inclusive treatment by all volunteers
Difficulty in communication with teachers	Open communication with volunteer teachers
Lack of translation during parents meetings	Translation always available with Syrian volunteers who are proficient in Arabic and Turkish or Arabic and English

Hence, the community center either supports or replaces the public school in supplying the needs of the refugee children concerning educational inclusion. And all of what is provided by the community center are readily welcomed by the Syrian parents who are trying to build strategies in the absence of resources. The complementary services provided by the community center such as Turkish language education or one to one counselling in understanding lessons are highly supportive in educational inclusion of children in Turkey. But those aspects that the community center appears to serve as supplementary are fields that the Syrian parents could advocate for enhancement in public schools such as parental involvement, open communication, inclusive treatment and so forth. It is important to note that the community center's work towards empowering parents to advocate for solutions in public schools is crucial. On the other side, the public school's cooperation with a community center would greatly enhance the educational inclusion of Syrian students. It is important to note that the community center emerged as a vital

resource in the Syrian parents' responses against the possibilities and constraints concerning their children's educational inclusion in Turkey.

## 6.5 Concluding remarks

After a severe experience of forced migration from Syria, families are in a process of distressing transformation of lives. The new environment in Istanbul that they are getting used to provides some cultural intimacy due to a common religion and history but requires that they learn Turkish, which is a foreign language for most of them. They have little and sometimes negative personal contact with Turkish citizens. Temporary protection regime entitles educational and health services as well as employment for them. However, along with difficulties in reaching other services, employment possibilities are very low and they are employed illegally in abusive conditions. Families suffer due to difficulties with subsistence and deprived living conditions. Their economic and social capital remains significantly scarce and cultural capital is not of use especially due to the language barrier.

In such circumstances, children's education in Turkey has a significant precedence. Nearly everyone suffers from despair due to trauma of war, as well as concerns about future, yet they assign massive expectations to education of children. Future expectations revealed meanings Syrian parents attached to education such as "power", "dignity", "independence", "future", "self-fulfillment" and "hope". They emphasize that themselves have lost their future but children might still have a possibility for a decent life as long as they continue education.

Children's education provides an anchor that they can depend on which brings about some security and stability in life within the precariousness they live in. It provides Syrian parents and children some sort of continuity against the

breakdown of life due to war, forced displacement and forced migration. Hence, children's in-access to education in Turkey is not only against wellbeing of children and a violation of right to education, but has profound implications for the wellbeing of Syrian refugee families as a whole.

Considering educational lifelines of Syrian refugee children through parents' perspectives, education has been satisfactory, self-fulfilling and totally without charge in Syria while education in Turkey is confusing, requiring payment and less satisfactory by quality especially in TECs. Besides outcomes of education in TECs or in public schools in Turkey is rather ambiguous for Syrian parents. Still, they attach profound importance to education along with preservation of the hope that children would succeed in education and come to best positions in the future. The contrast between current circumstances and future expectations were significant. Most future hopes were attached to education even if it was ambiguous whether children's educational experiences in Turkey would bring them about.

TECs have been established in urban centers in Turkey since 2012, and they were evaluated as important by Syrian parents in the study as they served to lessen loss of time in children's education, in contrast to the catastrophe they lived in other parts of their lives. They provided Syrian children a familiar educational environment, in Arabic and with a revised version of the same curriculum, with Syrian teachers. Even if the quality of education and teachers were generally low in TECs, and they were arbitrarily and often abusively charged even without a lack of official certification, they provided a safe haven for Syrian children in Turkey according to the parents in the study after having experienced forced migration from Syria due to war. Yet as underlined in the name, TECs have been "temporary" for Turkish authorities and their function was to provide that Syrian children would

access education until they went back home. Syrians were assumed to go back to Syria soon following the culmination of war.

Education in public schools on the other hand provided for various opportunities and constraints for Syrian parents. Most prominent opportunity for Syrian parents is possibility of learning Turkish. Some regarded this as an important step towards integration and others rated children's learning Turkish as a practical opportunity as children assisted as translators during public encounters. Some others sent children to public schools as they were without charge. Still the language barrier and being subject to discrimination and exclusion by peers were major constraints in public schools. Syrian parents shared feeling inadequate against these constraints. Their experiences provided that they had difficulty in mobilizing resources against such constraints and also to support children's learning in public schools especially due to the language barrier.

"Dilemma" is a most appropriate concept to describe the situation of Syrian refugee parents concerning their children's education in Turkey. Syrian parents are faced with a dilemma of educational choice for children in Turkey, which even continues long after the choice is made. This dilemma somehow coincides with the dilemma of educational authorities in Turkey between development of policies assuming Syrian refugees' temporariness or permanence in Turkey. Families tend to choose TECs for provision of Arabic language learning, as they achieve better in their own language and also due to the familiar school environment with ease in making friends. On the other hand families chose public schools due to possibility of children's learning Turkish and public schools' potential for upholding integration.

Decision to close TECs and to enroll all Syrian students in public schools by Turkey in August 2016 demonstrates acceptance of permanence of Syrian refugees

in Turkey and revision of educational policies in accordance. This decision could be regarded as a step to end the dilemma of educational system concerning Syrian refugee children in a direction to involve all Syrian children. However, Syrian families' dilemma of school choice seems to have furthered with this decision. Some parents, who have a will to be back in Syria are disappointed with this decision and question whether it could be revised. Some others are for this decision as it would enable children's integration in Turkish society but they share concerns that children would lose their mother tongue and culture. Hence, the educational choice dilemma of Syrian parents is linked to the dilemma with respect to temporariness/permanence of Syrians in Turkey, which brings about the long lasting challenge of Turkish education system concerning multiculturalism in education and involvement of minority cultures in school.

More parents in comparison to 2015 enrolled children to public schools in 2016, however many children in public schools were in a "period of suffering" in public schools against which parents strived hard to mobilize resources. The "period of suffering" lasted differently ranging from three months to more than a year but both Syrian parents and public school staff including administrators and teachers regarded this period as inevitable. During this period, some Syrian children suffered from absolute exclusion and always asked for going back to TECs from parents, some others stayed disconnected from school and some others managed to make friends and engaged in some communication with teachers even without proficiency of Turkish language. Yet, during this "period of suffering" children generally lived two separate lives one in the public school where they suffered from feelings of lagging behind in learning and possibly exclusion by peers and the other one probably within confines of their own community or in a community center which

serves for Syrians where they felt better, made friends and felt belonging to. Possibly without recognition, current situation of policies brought about two separate lives for Syrian children in different spheres.

Despite scarcity of resources, some parents developed some strategies to support children during this “period of suffering” so that its duration was shorter and possible negative influences on children were lessened. Those children were generally among those who were better included in public schools. Making efforts at mobilizing social and cultural capital in children’s learning was a common strategy. They acquired help from Turkish proficient relatives and friends, or guided children to participate in language classes or homework clubs at a community center. Acquisition of daily help with studying and homework was reported as well as efforts to gain some proficiency in Turkish before school. Mothers even learnt together with children. Critical for children’s achievement at school, “learning together” was a strategy of acquisition of Turkish language for parents. Strong parental involvement especially by mothers has been a common characteristic for those children who felt belonging to public schools. Mothers enforced ways to be involved in school, and draw economic, cultural or social resources from school, especially from teachers even without knowing Turkish. Teacher’s contribution to Syrian children’s inclusion in public schools was remarkable for parents’ of these children who were better included in public schools. Support for children’s learning, their empowerment against discrimination and in building communication with parents, were particularly reported. Yet, it is not easy for Syrian parents to overcome some critical constraints such as the language barrier and discrimination by peers. In addition, concerns remained that children might lose Arabic proficiency, their culture and their roots. Most parents’ expectation in the future was to go back to

Syria and children's losing proficiency in Arabic was an important concern for them.

Decision to integrate Syrian children in public education system enhances the requirement for a more inclusive education system in public schools, which gets along well with multiculturalism, and requires some decentralization in educational decision-making. Not to lead to an *education debt* (Ladson-Billings, 2006), which the Turkish society would owe to Syrian refugee children in this case, reconsideration of Turkish education system in a *critical multicultural paradigm* (May, 2011) is required.

There are major conceptualizations that may be discussed as an outcome of this study, which has been carried out in a grounded theory methodology. Each abstraction summarized below is worth recognition and consideration by educational policy makers in Turkey.

- Syrian parents' economic and social capital is significantly scarce and cultural capital can not be utilized especially due to the language barrier. In such conditions, it is nearly impossible to transform one form of capital into another and most often they are in a position to start all over where they have to raise them from the start. Policy measures are required that would support them to utilize current and raise anew economic, social and cultural capital.

- Massive expectations are assigned to children's education within the life of a refugee family. While most refugee parents are desperate about future, possibility of children's receiving a satisfactory education is a sign of hope for children's future. This possibility emerges as a source of resilience for Syrian refugee parents, backing them in their struggle against difficult living conditions. Critical role of education within refugee families' perceptions and lives require recognition by policy makers.

- Education provides Syrian parents and children some sort of continuity and stability against the breakdown of life due to war. Hence, children's accession and continuity of education in Turkey is not only important for wellbeing of children, but also has profound implications for the wellbeing of Syrian refugee families as a whole.
- A contrast exists between the current circumstances and future expectations on children's education within the perceptions of Syrian parents, which requires consideration by the policy makers.
- Syrian refugee parents look for an educational context for their children, which provide that they learn and preserve their language and culture. Possibility of preservation of Arabic in a familiar educational environment in TECs, have provided Syrian parents and children a sense of safety so that they can cope with trauma of forced displacement and migration. A school context, which respects Syrian children's culture and language where they feel as a part of is required for the public school system.
- Question of temporariness or permanence of Syrian refugees in Turkey seems to have resulted in a dilemma for the policy makers as well as for the Syrian parents as for making a school choice for children in Turkey. Families shared a continuous dilemma of school choice. Turkish government's decision in 2016 to involve all Syrian children in public education system demonstrates that permanence of Syrian refugees is accepted. However this decision seems to have furthered the dilemma of school choice parents as a main concern was preserving children's proficiency in mother tongue and knowledge of their culture. Educational integration policies should take concerns of Syrian parents, which point to a need for recognition of multiculturalism and decentralization.

- When Syrian children were enrolled in public schools, parents told children had to live through a “period of suffering” especially due to the language barrier, which lasted in a different duration for each child but was inevitable. This situation brings about Syrian children living two separate lives, one in public schools where they suffer from lagging behind in learning and exclusion and another one within confines of their own community or in a community center where they could make friends and feel belonging to. Pedagogical outcomes of this division in Syrian children’s lives should be considered. Policy measures are required to cope with this “period of suffering” and bring about possibilities for Syrian children so that they can feel that they are welcomed, they can succeed and feel belonging to public schools.
- Critical for children’s achievement at public schools, “learning together” was a strategy of acquisition of Turkish language for parents. Educational contexts should be developed in public schools where parents and children could learn together.
- Even if they had difficulties in mobilizing social and cultural capital for enhancing children’s learning, parents enforced ways to be involved in school and draw economic, cultural or social resources from school, especially teachers. Parents generally shared appreciation for teachers’ efforts in children’s learning and inclusion. Hence developing measures to ease communication of parents with teachers are required. Assignment of translators in schools is urgent and critical in this respect. Development of innovative ways for involvement of Syrian refugee parents in public schools would contribute to their mobilization of resources for children’s education and possibilities of learning together with their children.

## 6.6 Limitations

There is a possibility that the researcher as a female and educated Turkish citizen might influence the participant answers. In order to break the hierarchy between the researcher and the participant, a comprehensive thought about what could be said or not is essential; Bourdieu's *epistemic reflexivity* requires a sociologist to display *autoanalysis*, taking sociologist's self as a sociological object and making sociology of one's self and *reflexivity*, getting rid of the ethnocentric view that apriori assumptions are nonexistent (Jourdain and Naulin, p. 27-28). Briefly, the sociologist should analyse her/his approach to the issue, which I also aimed at. Having realized that discrimination was not the first but one of the many concerns the Syrian parents' had, I acknowledged how the research analysis could be affected by the priority I placed on discrimination myself due to my previous studies on discrimination in educational environments.

Being an outsider to the refugee parents' experiences such as a civil war or cross-border migration, the researcher struggled to understand the possible influences this research could bring for the participants. Most Syrian parents accepted to participate in the research at once while four parents refused who were all fathers in their work places. Most parents were content with sharing their children's educational experiences in Turkey despite living some highly emotional moments arising from sharing painful experience. I struggled to take the researcher's reciprocal approach in interpreting the refugee's experiences in a considerate and empowering way, which Lather suggested. (1991).

Another limitation is the researcher's non-proficiency in participant parents' native language (Arabic), which provided an obstacle to understanding and exploring into the narratives. Researcher might have not captured the nuances at times as

understanding was limited to the interpreter's level of English, his reflections, interpretations, and suitability of the interview site. Considerable time and effort is spent for explanation of the attentions and restraints to the interpreters beforehand however interpretation is a hard task, which may be difficult especially if one isn't a professional. From time to time interpreters added their own points of view inevitably due to their subjective positions, they were Syrian refugees themselves. A translator reviewed the transcriptions to trace for meanings lost in translation or interpreters' subjective thoughts, which was valuable for ensuring validity but probing was impossible as the reviews were done afterwards.

In the beginning, interviews with refugee parents were both difficult to arrange and less in-depth but the researcher was able to gain familiarity and gather powerful narratives through her volunteering experience, which also provided insight concerning the daily lives, living conditions and agenda of the refugee mothers living in Çapa neighbourhood of Fatih district and exchange of learning with school-age refugee children.

Interviews prove the following difficulties: First was the fragility of refugees in a temporary status with no foreseeable future, for which they approached interviews with caution. Second was the difficulty of conducting interviews in English to Arabic while the researcher's mother tongue is Turkish. Third was, parents' difficulties with subsistence and their coping other problems than education, which they wanted to share with a Turkish researcher and ask if she could help. Finally another issue is that most interviews involved narratives on overall living conditions such as scarcity of employment, health problems, or difficulties in getting *kimlik* (foreigner's identity card), which were of course very influential on the educational lives of the children. However, in such volatile conditions, educational

access was not the initial issue they wanted to talk about, which also hardened conducting in-depth interviews.

Studying diverse educational experiences of refugee children, who are probably affected from war trauma and whose families face socio-economic problems possibly split between cities or countries, is a challenging process. The research should consider the unique background of each refugee family to understand their educational situation. Hamilton, Moore, Loewen & Frater-Mathieson (2004) discuss that “the experiences of refugee children can only be understood considering the three phases of their changing contexts, pre-migration, transmigration, and post-migration” (Quoted in Isik Ercan, 2012, p. 3026). Refugees’ past experiences and their future expectations definitely affect their current educational context. In this study, to understand parents’ perspectives on the current schooling experiences of children, I tried to inquire the pre-migration schooling experiences of the children and search for parents’ future prospects, both with caution in order not to regenerate trauma.

## 6.7 Suggestions for further research

Comparatively less research examines refugee children’s subjective experiences concerning educational inclusion (Prior and Niesz, 2012). Research focused on subjective experiences of refugee children in Turkey through their own perspectives of educational inclusion and attainment is also considerably scarce. Up until now, only some reports prepared by national or international NGO’s (HRW, 2015; STL, 2016; Dorman, 2014) involve perspectives of refugee children & youth on their education in Turkey. Syrian children’s subjective experiences and perspectives concerning their educational inclusion require scholarly attention as well as their

peers from Turkey. Taking the ethical principles in research with children into consideration (Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson & Fitzgerald, 2013), further studies examining subjective experiences and perspectives of Syrian children and their peers from Turkey concerning their educational inclusion are crucial. A safe visibility and voice should be offered to refugee children in this respect (Pinson and Arnot, 2010).

TECs developed in an extraordinarily decentralized way of decision-making and operationalization for the first few years after which Turkish government decided to legalize and control them under the auspices of Provincial Directorates of Education by the Circular 2014/21. Moreover by August 2016, they were decided to be closed at most in three years by 2019 while all Syrian children studying in TEC's were expected to enroll in public schools with their closure. Hence the permissive space provided for TECs to operate by the Turkish government has been gradually limited concurrent to the acceptance of permanence of Syrian refugees in Turkey ending up in their incremental closure at most in three years by 2016. Still TECs have both been important for Syrian parents as they provided a familiar school environment for their children suffering from trauma of war and migration. TECs are also important for Turkey as decentralized educational decision-making organisations. Hence research on experience of TECs in Turkey would be worthwhile.

Longitudinal research on integration of Syrian children in Turkish education system would also be valuable both for evaluation and revision of relevant educational policies if needed and also to contribute to the international literature on refugee children's education. Studying Turkey's experience in educational inclusion of Syrian children would be creditable as it would provide insight for educational inclusion of Syrian children elsewhere in the world. Such studies would also

contribute to revealing the changing role of education due to international movements of people and diversification of national populations as Pinson and Arnott suggested (2007).



## APPENDIX A

### BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL

T.C.  
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Sayı: 2016/20

27 Haziran 2016

Ayşe Beyazova  
Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü  
Eğitim Fakültesi

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"İstanbul'da Yaşayan Suriyeli Mültecilerin Gözünden Eğitim" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2016/4 sayılı başvurunun revize edilmiş hali İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 27 Haziran 2016 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Saygılarımla,

İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mehmet Nafi Artemel

Dr. Nur Yeniçeri

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Could you introduce yourself? (age, from where, how long in Turkey?, directly to Istanbul?, number of children)
- Could you tell me about your education? Why did you stop going to school? Did you ever want to continue?
- Did you ever work? Where and how long?
- What is your husband's (wife's) education? Did s/he work?
- Do you learn Turkish? Why? Do you want to learn Turkish? Why? With what expectations? Do you go to any other courses or may have an opportunity to learn something else here in Turkey?
- Do you have interaction with Turkish people? May be neighbours, or others? Does your child have Turkish friends? Where are their friends from? School? Neighbourhood?
- Can we talk about your children? (age and gender)
- Are they going to school? Which school? Why?
- How did you decide to send them to school?
- Did you / do you receive any support from anyone or any institution concerning your children's education? Do you have a supportive environment here? Institutions? People? Syrian? Turkish?
- Any problems during registration to school? How?
- How is the school going? Are there any difficulties?
- Are the children successful? How?
- Can you help them with their education?
- Do you have to make payments to the school? How?
- Are the children themselves happy?
- Any problems about language?
- Do you think there are any cultural challenges they face?
- Any experience about discrimination or bullying?
- Are the teachers supportive?

- Do you have connection with the school? Do you visit the school? Do you talk to the teachers or administrators? How often?
- Did you think of sending them to Turkish/Syrian school? Why? Why not?
- Can you compare schools in Syria and in here?
- What did going to school change in the child's life? In the family's life?
- How do you see the future?
- What do you expect for your son's and daughters future? Do they have their own expectations? Does education play a role in the future of the family?
- What is it like to be a Syrian migrant in Turkey?
- Did you ever get in contact with the state institutions? Why? How was the treatment and service?
- Do you have any expectations from the Turkish government?

## APPENDIX C

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

**Name of the Research:** Education and Seeking Refuge: An Analysis of Perspectives of Syrian parents in Istanbul Living Under Temporary Protection

**Name of the Researcher: Ayşe Beyazova Seçer      Telephone: 0 532 767 31 29**

### **For additional information:**

**Thesis Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Coadvisor:** **Telephone:**

**Project:** Syrian parents who are under temporary protection in Turkey are in pursuit of education in Turkey for their children however their perspectives and position concerning their children's education in Turkey is less known and they generally appear not to have a voice in the development of Turkish educational policies for their children. Concerning education of Syrian nationals who are under protection in Turkey, Syrians themselves may be regarded as actors who have the least say as the current literature is limited to provide for their position. Hence, in this study on education, the experiences, expectations and imagination of Syrian nationals under temporary protection in Turkey will be studied to contribute to the policies to be developed in this respect.

**Consent:** I invite you to my research to enable possibilities of having a say of Syrian migrants in accession to education in Turkey. I aim that this studies' results contribute to the policies in the education of Syrian migrants living in Turkey. If you participate in my research, I want to carry out an interview in a proper place which would last for an hour at most. In the research, I will ask questions concerning your experiences and expectations concerning education of your children to request your thoughts and comments on this issue. To enable communication, a translator who speaks Arabic to English will be together with us during the interview. If you permit I will record the interview. This is a scientific research and your name is not necessary and will be kept confidential if you share.. All your comments will also be kept confidential and will be erased after the research. Participation is totally voluntary. Please sign the form if you accept to participate in the research. You can draw your consent at any time without justifications. If you would like, I can give a copy of the research to you.

Before signing, please ask your questions concerning the research if you have any. If you have further questions, you can reach me anytime.

I have read the text above and considered the scope and aim of the research. I have found a chance to ask questions about the research. I accept to participate in the research voluntarily without any pressure.

Name of the Participant (optional)

Name of the Researcher: Ayşe Beyazova Seçer

Signature:

Signature:

Date (day/month/year):...../...../.....

Date (day/month/year):...../...../.....

## APPENDIX D

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (ARABIC)

#### معلومات المشارك و استماره المواقفه

اسم البحث : التعليم و السعي للجوء: تحليل لمنظور الآباء السوريين الذين يعيشون تحت الحماية المؤقتة في إسطنبول  
النليفون: 0 532 767 31 29  
اسم الباحث: Ayşe Beyazova Seçer

معلومات اضافيه :  
مستشار الاطروحة :  
النليفون :  
مستشار متعاون الاطروحة :  
النليفون :

المشروع : الآباء السوريين الذين يعيشون تحت الحماية المؤقتة في تركيا هم في سعي لتعليم أولادهم . مع العلم ان منظورهم و مكانتهم يخصوص تعليم أولادهم في تركيا غير معروفة ، و من الظاهر انه ليس لديهم صوت في تطوير سياسات التعليم التركي لأولادهم . و بخصوص تعليم المواطنين السوريين الذين تحت الحماية المؤقتة في تركيا السوريين انفسهم قد يعبروا ممثلين بالصوت الأقل حيث ان الأدب الحالى محدود لتوضيح موقفهم . و بالذالى هذه الدراسة في التعليم و الخبرات و التوقعات و الرؤى للمواطنين السوريين الذين تحت الحماية المؤقتة في تركيا سوف تتم دراستها لتشارك في السياسات لتطويرها في نطاق هذا المنظور .

المواقفه : ادعوكم في هذا البحث لتمكن الاحتمالات للمهاجرين السوريين في الحصول على حق الانضمام الى التعليم في تركيا . انا اهدف في هذه الدراسة الى تناول تناول في سياسات تعليم المهاجرين السوريين المقيمين في تركيا . اذا شاركت في بحثي سار غب في اجراء مقابلة في مكان مناسب تستغرق ساعه كحد اقصى .  
في هذا البحث سوف اسأل اسئلته حول خبراتك و توقعاتك بخصوص تعليم أولادك و اطلب افكارك و تعليقاتك في هذه القضية . و لسهوله التواصل سوف يكون معنا مترجم يتكلم العربيه و يترجم الى الانجليزية خلال المقابلة . و اذا وافقت سوف اقوم بتسجيل المقابلة .  
هذا بحث على وليس من الضرورة ذكر اسمك و سوف احافظ على سريه هوينك اذا شاركت . و تعليقاتك ايضا س يتم الحفاظ على سريتها و س يتم محواها بعد هذا البحث .  
المشاركة تطوعاً بالكامل . من فضلك وقع على هذا النموذج اذا وافقت على المشاركه في هذا البحث ، و يمكن سحب موافقتك اي وقت و بدون مبررات ، و اذا اردت استطيع اعطائك نسخه من البحث .

قبل التوقيع : من فضلك اطرح اسئلتك بخصوص هذا البحث اذا كان لديك اسئلته ، و اذا كان يوجد لديك مزيد من الاسئله يمكنك التواصل معى في اي وقت .

لقد قرأت النص المدون اعلاه و احترم نطاق و هدف هذا البحث ، و لقد وجدت الفرصة لطرح الاسئله حول هذا البحث . و انا اوافق على المشاركه في هذا البحث تطوعاً بدون اي ضغوطات .

اسم المشارك "اختياري" : .....  
التوقيع

**APPENDIX E**  
**PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

No	Gender	Name	Age	From	Yr of entry	Education in Syria*	Employment in Syria	Employment in Turkey	Marital Status	Nr of ch
1	F	Amal	24	Aleppo	2014	high school	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
2	F	Bara	41	Damascus	2015	high school	Laundry mgr / Nurse	Housewife	Single	4
3	F	Hala	40	Aleppo	2014	intermediate	Hairdresser	Housewife	Married	4
4	F	Houda	41	Damascus	2014	intermediate	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
5	F	Cana	38	Deraa	2015	high school	Housewife	Housewife	Married	4
6	F	Marwa	42	Aleppo	2013	high school	Housewife	Housewife	Married	4
7	F	Rukaya	35	Damascus	2015	university	Prmry sch teacher	Housewife	Married	2
8	F	Yasmin	53	Aleppo	2014	high school+	Prmry sch teacher	Housewife	Married	4
9	F	Sündüz	30	Aleppo	2014	primary	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
10	F	Lujeyn	26	Aleppo	2013	intermediate+	Housewife	Housewife	Single	4
11	F	Linn	33	Zabadani	2014	intermediate	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
12	F	Rim	43	Damascus	2015	intermediate	Housewife	Housekeeper	Married	4
13	F	Wafaa	29	Damascus	2015	primary+	Housewife	Housewife	Single	2
14	F	Semahe	24	Damascus	2015	intermediate	Housewife	Housewife	Married	2
15	F	Zeynep	37	Damascus	2015	university	Teacher	Teacher	Married	3
16	F	Aysha	42	Damascus	2013	university	Mathematics teacher	Teacher	Married	5
17	F	Joudi	42	Aleppo	2013	university	Kindergarten teacher	Housewife	Married	3
18	F	Hayat	26	Lazkiye	2014	intermediate	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
19	F	Rabia	22	Latakia	2014	intermediate	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
20	F	Mayor	32	Aleppo	2015	primary+	Housewife	Housewife	Married	3
21	M	Abdulsettar	35	Rakka	2016	intermediate	Tailor	Bakkal	Married	3
22	M	Omar	45	Zabadani	2013	university	Supermarket owner	Restaurant accountant	Married	3
23	M	Nader	36	Aleppo	2014	primary+	Restaurant manager	Restaurant manager	Married	4
24	M	Yusuf	27	Aleppo	2016	university	Studies in university	Sweets shop owner/mgr	Married	1

No	Gender	Name	Age	From	Yr of entry	Education in Syria*	Employment in Syria	Employment in Turkey	Marital Status	Nr of ch
25	M	Abdulwahed	32	Damascus	2015	primary+	Barber	Barber	Married	3
26	M	Amr	35	Palmyra	2014	high school+	Fireman	Supermarket/salesman	Married	3
27	M	Othman	40	Damascus	2014	high school	Taxi driver	Restaurant accountant	Married	1
28	M	Basil	25	Latakia	2014	primary	Barber	Barber	Married	1
29	M	Ahmad	52	Aleppo	2014	primary+	Cook	Cook	Married	5
30	M	Ziya	23	Aleppo	2015	intermediate+	Coffee shop owner	Coffee shop owner	Single	7
31	M	Kazim	48	Aleppo	2014	primary+	Tradesman	Breakfast shop owner	Married	3
32	M	Yassir	37	Damascus	2012	high school+	Barber	Coffee shop owner	Married	3
33	M	Adhem	32	Damascus	2012	intermediate	Supermarket Manager	Cook	Married	3
34	M	Hüsam	38	Damascus	2014	primary+	Shop owner	Restaurant manager	Married	3
35	M	Amjed	40	Damascus	2015	primary+	Restaurant Manager	Restaurant Manager	Married	3

\* “+” signs in Column 7: Education in Syria signifies that the participant has studied for some more duration within the next level but did not manage to complete that level. i.e. “intermediate+” signifies that the participant finished intermediate level and studied for some more years in high school.

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