

“ADULT LEARNING & COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE: BETWEEN NATIONAL TENSIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES”

UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
WROCLAW, STRZEGOMSKA ST. 55

25TH – 27TH MAY, 2017

Ayşe Beyazova

MIGRATION, ENCOUNTERS AND LEARNING: SYRIAN REFUGEE PARENTS' SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH LOCALS WITHIN DAILY LIFE IN ISTANBUL

The internal war and unrest in Syria displaced a considerable magnitude of Syrian population leading most to escape to neighbouring countries including Turkey. Number of Syrians who are registered in Turkey is around 2,8 million by the beginning of 2017. Turkey assumed a less significant challenge when the influx of Syrian refugees started however it did not prove to be true with larger numbers of refugees entering Turkey every following year and the war showing no signs of culmination. By the end of 2016, Turkey has been the country, which resides the highest number of Syrian refugees and İstanbul has been the city where highest number of refugees reside in Turkey. Concerning the response of the Turkish community against Syrian refugees in general, a number of researches provide for existence of prejudice, discrimination and xenophobia against Syrians, discontent about the open border policy and the settling of Syrians in Turkey. Especially after the acknowledgement of Turkey's intention for Syrians' citizenship there have been wide reactions in the social media. The integration policies require an urgent focus on the encounters of Syrian and Turkish communities in İstanbul and this study aims at contribution to the literature on these encounters focused on the learning of adult Syrian refugees who are also parents living in İstanbul.

This ongoing qualitative study focuses on the encounters by Syrian refugee parents in İstanbul in their relation to the local environment in İstanbul. It focuses on how these encounters are experienced, on which grounds and how they are justified with what assumptions and reasons by the Syrian parents. Through in depth interviews with Syrian refugees, their encounters in Turkey are explored and their learning through these interaction is discussed and analyzed through a variation of Strauss' (1987) grounded theory approach. The research questions involve the nature and frequency of the encounters for Syrian refugees with citizens of Turkey, how they assess and justify what they experience through these encounters, and how and what do they learn from these encounters. In depth interview have been held with around forty Syrian refugees living in various areas of İstanbul with a balance between fathers and mothers.

A general observation concerning Syrian parents' social life might be that they preferred to socialize in their own community and their encounters with Turkish people were rather limited. Preliminary findings of the research provide for the distance between Syrian and Turkish people and infrequency of encounters. Most frequent encounters happened within the neighbourhood, then in the government offices and in the work places however most of the time Syrian parents emphasised

**“ADULT LEARNING & COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE: BETWEEN NATIONAL TENSIONS
AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES”**

UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
WROCLAW, STRZEGOMSKA ST. 55

25TH – 27TH MAY, 2017

that people from Turkey were “distant” in general. For a few parents, encounters were not always pleasant. They were sometimes problematic as they involved insult and exclusion but at other times they were positive and involved mutual communication and friendship. In negative encounters they said there was a full emphasis on their being Syrian. Most parents emphasized that some people in Turkey actually didn't like Syrians they justified this with respect to what they have experienced and heard. Some other parents mentioned building positive relations starting from communication with or between each other's children. Among those parents who shared very positive relationship in the neighbourhood, language barrier was mostly overcome and cultural intimacy stood in the forefront. However most refugee parents mentioned lack of contact between themselves and people from Turkey.