

Determinants of refugee children's schooling experience: A comparative study of refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, and Australia

Abstract

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This article examines the schooling experience of Syrian refugees in three countries, Lebanon, Australia, and Turkey. Refugee students in each of these countries are offered different types of legal settlement and, thereby, face different educational paradigms. In Australia Syrian refugees have a permanent settlement, while in Turkey refugees are offered a medium-term settlement yet can have a path to naturalisation. On the other hand, refugees in Lebanon have no path for naturalisation and are awaiting repatriation. Accordingly, the schooling provisions for refugees differ between the three mentioned host countries. To investigate the determinants of the schooling experience and the role of different schooling provisions offered by different types of legal settlement, a quantitative survey of 1,298 middle school refugee students was carried out in addition to interviews with teachers, parents and school principals. Our findings indicate that the meso level factors, i.e. school environment and in-class practices shape to a great extent refugee educational experiences to an extent that it lessens the role of type of settlement (permanent vs temporarily) and the state of precarity which refugees often face in the emergency context. Furthermore, our findings reveal that in-class language seems to be a key factor. Finally, social integration in the community also seem to play a significant role in shaping refugee students' schooling experience.

Biographies of Authors

Ola Al Samhoury is a junior researcher at the Center for Lebanese Studies and is part of the team that is conducting the longitudinal comparative study which examines and contrasts the policies, education programs, and practices which affect the refugees' education in Australia, Lebanon, and Turkey over a five-year period. She previously worked with "Teach For Lebanon" as a teacher for underprivileged children in rural areas and later on as an education mentor to support novice teachers in their teaching and learning experience. Ola holds an MA in Education with an emphasis in leadership and management. Through her thesis, she explored the educational challenges that Syrian refugee children face in Lebanon, and the academic and psychosocial support offered to them through non-formal early childhood education programs. Her interest in research emerged from her belief in its power to change the education system positively and thus leave a collateral impact on the society.

Maurice Crul, Distinguished Professor of Education and Diversity in the Sociology Department of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He has coordinated two major international projects: the TIES project (The Integration of the European Second generation) and the ELITES, Pathways to Success project (<https://www.elitesproject.eu/>). He is an expert on the school and labour market careers of children of immigrants and refugee children in both Europe and the Transatlantic. In 2017 he was awarded the European Research Council's Advanced Grant for the project *Becoming a Minority (BaM)* and he is currently coordinating this research on the integration of people of without a migration background in majority-minority cities in Europe (<https://www.bamproject.eu/>).

Mohammad Hammoud is a Research and Project Manager at the Centre for Lebanese Studies. He holds an M.A. in Economics from the University of Lethbridge and a B.S. in Economics from the Lebanese American University. His master's thesis entitled "Determinants of International Peace: An Empirical Analysis" examines the direct implications of political, economic, and socioeconomic determinants of peace on global peace level. Mohammad's research focuses on political and socioeconomic topics mainly peace, migration, political participation, and international sanctions. He has substantial experience working with quantitative data, empirical modeling, and various econometric estimation techniques.

Frans Leslie is a fellow at the department of Sociology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. A social worker by training, she has worked with women and their families with a migration background. In the last fifteen years she has worked on the topic of education of the children of immigrants. For the ELITES: Pathways to Success project, she produced five short movies looking at role models belonging to the successful second generation from the TIES survey, telling about their pathways to success in Belgium, France, Germany and The Netherlands: <https://www.elitesproject.eu/educational-kit>. Currently she is the project manager for the project *Becoming a Minority (BaM)* on the integration of people of without migration background in majority minority cities in Europe.

Maha Shuayb the director of the Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS) since 2012 and an associate lecturer at Cambridge University, Faculty of Education. Maha's research focuses on the sociology and politics of education particularly equity and equality in education and the implications of the politicization of education particularly on marginalized groups. Over the past eight years, Maha has been occupied with the education response to the Syrian Refugee crisis in Lebanon. She has headed a number of research studies looking at access and quality of education for refugees and the bottlenecks. Her most recent studies include a comparative longitudinal study between Lebanon, Turkey, and Australia which examines the impact of status on education provisions for refugees in the four countries. Maha has numerous publications on education, refugees including an edited book on education for social cohesion.