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Maura Sellars: Educating students with refugee and asylum seekers experiences. A commitment to humanity, Opladen – Berlin – Toronto 2020, Verlag Barbara Budrich, pp. 170
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The 2019 edition of the joint OECD, ILO, IOM & UNHCR International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report shows that by mid-2018, despite decreasing numbers of refugees entering the European Union and Turkey, the global refugee population had reached 25.7 million (EASO Annual Report..., 2019). We are not able to hold people back from escaping a bombed country with a totalitarian regime where their health and/or life is in danger.

The process of becoming/being a refugee is complicated and multi-staged in its nature (pre-emigration phase; escape; reaching the country of first asylum; settling in a new country; post-migration/repatriation phase (return to the home country) (Grzymała-Moszczyńska 2000). A change of place of residence is connected with the constant accumulation of new, sometimes very difficult, experiences at various levels of human functioning. John Berry's theory of acculturation shows that the process of entering the circle of a different socio-cultural reality is long and multi-faceted (Barry 2003). Every change of residence place, in a more or less violent way 'forces' the need to 'move' within a different culture and social reality and to interact with people with various 'software in the minds' – using Geert Hofstede's language (Hofstede G., Hofstede G.J., Minkov M., 2010). Students with asylum seekers and refugee backgrounds often leave schools early, which is caused by many difficulties in their path (poor linguistic competences in the field of new language, cultural differences, including conflict of values, school backlogs, unstable life situation, insufficient support system at school, etc. Because of that, some of them become part of the so-called excluded generation (Telles, Ortiz 2008). Education is an important factor of the wellbeing and integration of students with refugee and asylum seeker experiences. Therefore, it is more and more important to conduct empirical research and theoretical analyses in this field.

The main goal of the reviewed monograph is to begin a dialogue to focus on everyone involved in education, to the stark realities that are so much part of everyday lives in westernized societies. They should not be accepted without critical reflection and without attention to what it is to be human and humane. The author of the book analyses the participation problem of refugees and asylum seekers in the education system, which, in her opinion, is an '(...) increasingly inappropriate learning environment for many children and youth from multiple backgrounds and life experience (Sellers 2020, p. ix)'. The monograph consists of nine complementary chapters which undertake current problems of political, social and cultural contexts of modern educational system and thus, students with refugee and asylum seeker experiences connected with taking part in education. The author analyses important and current categories related to the educating forces of migrant students, which are: school culture, belonging, empathy, resilience, empowerment.

First of them: *Power, Politics, People and Pedagogy*, begins with the threats of the idea and purpose of *mass education in the neoliberal paradigm*, as dominant in the contemporary education. The author notes that nowadays, educational policy in capitalist countries is heavily influenced by the ideologies of various neoliberal economic policies. Students are regarded as 'human capital' and are educated to have the skills and attitudes of a productive workforce. Next she focuses on the concepts of *love and care in education* which are based on being a human. The last part of the chapter (*Postformal Education*) is devoted to the strategy which assumes a dialogical process between the teacher and the students, in order to develop curriculum and evaluation procedures. In conclusion, the author shows the relationship between developing more equitable, more inclusive societies reconceptualising education (framework pedagogies of love and care) and resorting trust to those who have undergone the most extreme dehumanizing experience.

Chapter two *Power: Discourses of Power*, analyses the discourses of power, epistemologies, and social control as it is manifested in the educational institutions of the western societies in which students with refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds are placed. The space for analyses and comparisons in this chapter is based on Foucault's understanding of the following issues: *discourse and power, knowledge and education, racism and exclusion*. Formulating implications for students with refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds the author emphasizes that school resembles an institution with power structures. The totalitarian power of school provides potent imperative to meet the standards of the norm and engage in institutional surveillance, monitor-

ing and evaluative techniques overriding any self-originating ethnic intention. Therefore, the author of this work concludes that for societies which accept students of refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds and their communities, new 'norms' need to emerge, most especially those in relation to epistemologies and ontologies; 'norms' that challenge the core of neoliberal thought and practice.

The third chapter *Politics: Neoliberalism and Education*, explores the ways in which neoliberalism is presented in educational system and how implementation of this political and economic paradigm has changed the nature of teaching and learning interactions and what means to be a teacher and to be 'educated' in this political and economic paradigm. Afterwards, the author shows the connection between *Neoliberalism and education*. She starts with claims that schools are the main place of acculturation, then shows that they are generally part of a system, the policies which are implemented as mandatory curricula, processes and procedures. In the section presenting the implications for students with refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds, the author notes that students who were a part of completely different educational system and have experienced and survived unimaginable trauma and loss, are facing uncertain challenges and future in a new country. In the light of many theories of child development, authentic education and student emotional and social wellbeing, teaching and learning environments such as neoliberal education system, would be condemned as unsuitable ecosystems for children and young people. The author writes that schools are focused on performativity. Therefore, they are a totally inadequate setting to support students of refugee and asylum seeker experiences.

The forth chapter: *People: Refugee status, Trauma and Loss* allows a closer look at refugee and asylum seekers status. It also takes up the discussion on the ways in which an understanding of the nature and extend of refugee trauma experience and loss can be established in the literature and research perspectives of the first world cultural contexts in which these students are settled. The presented issues are a factor of understanding that those who suffer the effects of trauma and loss still have agency and that the increase in the numbers entangled in the global diaspora results in the revision of policies and restrictions that affect those with refugee and asylum seekers status, decreasing their compensation compensate for agency. It examines into some extent the ways in which developmental trauma relating to interpersonal interactions has the capacity to impact the cognitive and emotional growth of children and young people and analyses the potential of educational institu-

tions to undertake their social role in mediating these influences and promoting the development of healthy psychological development and resilience.

In the fifth chapter *Refugee and Asylum Seeker Status* the author clarifies what it means to have a refugee and asylum seekers status and emphasizes that unlike migrants, who voluntary leave their country in search of a better life elsewhere, refugees are forced migrants and they are the most vulnerable group of the population. The first subtitle briefly explains the meaning of the *Compassion, Love and Care* in relation to neoliberal societies and their educational institutions, policies and the impact of the acceptance of individuals with refugee status into their societies. Another part of the chapter is devoted to *Trauma, Loss, and Grief*. The author pays attention to the fact that, displacement itself is a significantly traumatic experience, causing the loss of the sense of belonging. Referring to the previously analysed issues, the author focuses on the *resilience* of students with refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds which may be understood as individual's capacity for adapting successfully and functioning competently, despite expressing chronic stress or adversity following exposure to prolonged or severe trauma. Concluding, the author claims that developmental trauma relating to interpersonal interactions has a capacity to have impact on cognitive and emotional growth of children and young people and analyses the potential of educational institutions to undertake their societal role in mediating these influences and promoting the development of healthy psychological development and resilience.

The following chapter five: *People: Compassion and Belonging* introduces current perspectives of the neoliberal policymakers and populations regarding refugee and asylum seeker, including students. This part of the book discusses some of the most politically sensitive and divisive issues of contemporary societies and their regulations regarding stateless and statusless individuals. The author concentrates on the influence of policymakers' activities concerning the situation of refugees and asylum seekers schooling. In this chapter considerations are focused on the term of *policymakers*. The policies of belonging require from the nation state and neoliberal societies to define, through the immigration policies, the physical boundaries, their political identities and to demonstrate their commitment to social justice, compassion and tolerance. In reference to that, the author formulates implications for students with refugee and asylum seeker experiences. The author presents attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers that have undergone transformations at the level of policy and the attendant procedures. To sum up, the author notes that, in the case of students with refugee and asylum

seekers experiences and their communities who are granted the settlement rights, despite the rigorous detention, dispersion or other exclusionary practices, are the characteristics of safe educational places for those children and young people – spaces where compassion and belonging are the cornerstones of students wellbeing.

Chapter six: *People: Schools as Safe Spaces*, discusses the notion of what school can do, and ethnically should be like, places of safety and support for all students, especially those with refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds. The school climate, the hidden curriculum, the compulsory content of curricula and the ways in which the socio-emotional lives of students are supported are critical to the perceptions which students develop about their schools. The author of the considerations focuses on the following factors which support the integration process in the school space: *school climate, belonging, empathy*. Moreover, she presents the possibilities of school regarded as safe spaces for students with refugee and asylum seekers experiences and emphasizes that this is crucial in order to achieve emotional and social wellbeing. In formulating implications for students from refugee and asylum seekers, the author emphasizes that students who are socially accepted and welcomed in the school community with healthy school climates integrate more quickly and adapt to their new homelands more easily than those who are not accepted, experience racism and other prejudices and are made to feel and remain different from their peers and the school community in general. In the conclusion section the author notes that role of school leadership has never before been so critical towards the wellbeing of students with refugee and asylum seeker experiences.

Chapter seven: *People: The School and Leadership*, explores how schools may develop as supportive communities for students with refugee and asylum seekers experiences while remaining within the compulsory, economic ideals of neoliberal educational paradigms. In this chapter, the author analyses issues of school culture and school principle. The author highlights that it is crucial to build a personally relevant model which includes ethics of justice, care and criticism, all of which will have important frameworks for solving complex problems and dilemmas. While elaborating implications for refugee and asylum seekers students, the author notes that the leaders who acknowledge and effectively design school organization, implement wide transnational and transformative pedagogical strategies and promote staff mindsets that appreciate the interconnectedness between emotion and cognition are most likely to provide safe spaces at school which students with

refugee and asylum seekers experiences desperately need and deserve. The chapter's conclusions are centered around the metaphor that 'schools are not an island of scholarship'. They reflect the culture, beliefs and values which comprise the school community.

Chapter eight: *Pedagogy: Ways of Knowing and Doing*, explores theories related to the children's development of interactions with their environments, understanding cultural differences and their importance in terms of emotional intensity and those which attempt to identify ways of making the meaning with geographical influences. In this context, the author analyses *Bioecological Theory* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), *Cultural iceberg* (Hall, 1976), *Cultural Dimensions Theories* (Hofstede, 2001). The last part of the chapter is focused on the oracy issue. In the case of students of oracy that is not supported by any written language, all these cultural, personal values and beliefs systems respond to the social modeling of oral tradition. Formulating implications for refugee and asylum seeker students, the author notes that in the situation of a sudden change of place of residence, the process of adapting to a new cultural reality takes time. In the conclusion section, the author claims that the impacts of vastly diverse cultural perspectives can be totally hidden by the official term 'refugee and asylum seekers' irrespective of how transient these labels may prove to be.

The last chapter: *Pedagogy: Educating for Global Competence* concentrates on current education policies and practice in western countries with neoliberal economic agenda which do not have the capacity to authentically develop opportunities for students with refugee and asylum seeker experiences. The situation looks as if they disregard the global educational priority to 'lay foundations in childhood and adolescence so people have the 'ability to think complexly' and to hold a paradox in mind with resorting to abstract rational thinking that splits mind and body and which is the prevalent model of thinking in the western world. The author analyses education in the light of *postformal psychology* which not only focuses on the development of cognitive capabilities but contributes substantially to critical constructivism in educational contexts. After that, the author presents *Gidley's Model of Adults Postformal Reasoning*, which proposes supporting the development of the postformal reasoning skill for young people in the formal and informal curriculum. The last part of the chapter (*Transforming Education*) is devoted to the presentation of humane educational options proposed by Kincheole, Steinberg, Gidley and others, a glimmer which offers hope for rebalancing and restoring education and other dimensions of human life. In the conclu-

sion section the author emphasizes that the adaptation of school system to knowledge of the world of humanity and epistemologies and ontologies that are diverse and multi-perspectival is not only an opportunity for students with refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds to be reorganized as a valuable and valued population in school and society, it is also a reflection on the true meaning and importance of education.

The content of the monograph *Educating Students with Refugee and Asylum Seekers Experience. A Commitment to Humanity* shows that education systems in western countries despite many examples of good practice are not prepared to support education and integration processes. They function on the basis of the neoliberal paradigm, which locates the development of human capital at the center. Human being is treated as the capital to cope with the labor market/to be workforce. It is difficult not to agree with the author of the book, who notes that policymakers and people who manage these systems (on the national and local levels) overlook compassion, empathy, and intercultural sensitivity, which should be one of the central values that constitute the basis of education. It has a great influence on educational practice. This is one of the reasons why teachers, educationalists, directors, etc. are strongly focused on students' school achievements. Educational staff very often does not realize the character of students with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds childhood, situation in their motherland, cultural belonging, resilience, etc. Many of them perceive this group of students throughout the period of education as Strangers – Different, misunderstood, provoking a whole range of hard and even negative emotions i.e. anxiety, fear or anger. Teachers establishing monocultural curriculums are unable to tackle the challenges of the contemporary world. Thus, both introducing changes in the educational policy and teacher education are becoming more and more significant.

The great advantage of the reviewed book is that most of the chapters have implications for students with refugee and asylum seeker experiences. Therefore, the monograph is an important contribution to the development of pedagogical theory as well as educational practice. It can be useful for both scientists and practitioners involved in working in a culturally diverse environment. I am convinced that the monograph would be beneficial in the context of pedagogy development and continuation of the discussion on educating students with refugee and asylum seekers experiences i.a. based on the empirical material analysis. At the level of international literature, there is still need for research and publications devoted to the socio-cultural (re) constructions of education in the situation of forced migration.

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