

REPORT
On
Pedagogy of Migration Studies: A Roundtable

Online Discussion on 13 January 2022

Moderator: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta and Calcutta Research Group, India*

Panellists : Anju Mary Paul, *Yale-NUS College, Singapore*

Joyce C.H. Liu, *National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan*

Natalija Perišić, *University of Belgrade, Serbia*

Anju Mary Paul delivered a presentation titled **‘The Pedagogy of Migration Studies: Challenges and Opportunities.’** She detailed certain traits of the subject that make instruction in it innately challenging: its interdisciplinarity; its nature as political and polarising, complex and layered, as also global; and its wide range of methods. Classes in migration must be designed so as to convey to students these challenges as well as the methods to engage with them so as to impart a holistic introduction to the subject. Paul described how she attempts to structure her introductory course so as to overcome these challenges. Course readings become significant in this respect. Since the readings cumulatively embrace a mix of disciplines, asking students to find connections and complementarity between the readings allows them to appreciate the perspectives and methods of diverse disciplines. The readings also highlight the diversity and global nature of migration. The classroom itself is conceived as a safe and brave space wherein the subject can be freely discussed in a respectful manner, and students can own up to their ignorance and misunderstanding. Discussions about research design and methods are woven into the course.

Joyce C.H. Liu delivered a presentation titled **‘Border Politics and Unequal Citizenship: Syllabus Making and Research Methods in Migration and Forced Migration Studies.’** She conveyed that she employs Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy as the guiding principle of her teaching practice. Freire had preferred a ‘problem-posing education’ which is centred on the intellectual development of students, as opposed to a ‘banking mode’ in which education becomes an act of mere depositing in which students are perceived as depositories and teachers as depositors. ‘Problem-posing education’ prepares students for positive actions that shape society. Liu’s courses, seminars, and readings introduce students to important theorists and their original works. Simultaneously, students are encouraged to face and challenge situations of unequal citizenship in their respective countries. In the larger educational context, Liu also spoke of facilitating student-oriented research activities and productions, and fostering the idea of a university beyond borders.

Natalija Perišić delivered a presentation titled **‘Education in Response to Migration Challenges: Child-Centred Perspective and Practice.’** She spoke of how the University of Belgrade recently developed an undergraduate course devoted to the protection and support of migrant children. The significance of the course has to be understood in the context of the migrant crisis in Europe (to which Serbia was not immune), and the fact that such a course was never previously offered in any Serbian university. Natalija Perišić detailed the preparation of the course, which included a systematic literature review as well as consultations with professionals and decision-makers in the field. Crucially, the course designers interviewed refugee children from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran so as to hear their experiences. These interviews—which were consensual, age sensitive, and assisted by interpreters and cultural mediators—produced case studies for the course. While the course did impart to students a knowledge of the law and theory on the subject, emphasis was placed on practice, especially the ethical dilemmas which arise in the field. Elements of the course such as case studies and internships with relevant organisations point to this emphasis. A textbook and workbook on the subject of protection of migrant children have been prepared from the course materials.