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After the Fifth International Conference on Critical Education*

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Hosted by Lower Silesia Faculty of Education and Department of Philosophy at Wroclaw University, the Fifth International Conference on Critical Education was held 15-18 June 2015 in Wroclaw, Poland with the organization of critical education journals from various countries around the world including the *International Journal of Educational Policies (IJEP)* and *Journal of Critical Education* from Turkey. In this paper, I will share my impressions and some notes on the 5th International Conference on Critical Education in Wroclaw which was contributed by over 50 presentations from Turkey.

The first two of these critical education conferences was held in Athens (2011, 2012), the third one in Ankara (2013), the fourth one in Thessaloniki (2014) with the participation of academics studying critical education, critical-revolutionist teachers, post-graduate students and intellectuals in solidarity with the aforementioned groups and activists who dedicate themselves to socio-economic justice. The recent conference was conducted with the attendance of academics and educators who made presentations or such plenary speakers from several countries among which Turkey outnumbered many other countries. One of these attendees from Turkey, he also is a teacher and a PhD student at the Institute of Educational Sciences at Ankara University, had a serious health problem following a fall just before the flight. This unlucky event demoralized our conference group at first, but then our group was in good spirits again since he was cared and got well soon, continued his communication with us, and followed the conference program online even if he could not join us abroad. This group of 40 attendees from Turkey has also visited Berlin and Prague for two days on the way to the conference, so it can be said that it was a beneficial activity not only

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academically, but also in cultural aspects as well as strengthen group dynamic among the participant .

Although there were contributions from many journals, the founding members of the conference were Dave Hill, the editor of the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* (JCEPS) which is a British journal, and Kostas Skordoulis, the editor of the *Kritiki* which is a Greek journal. And with the increasing number of attendees each year, this conference has evolved into a great collective event. Also with the presence of local journals, this annual conference has made notable progress recently. Below you can find the information and web sites of the journals which contributed to the conference in Wroclow with their presentations:

1. [The Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies](http://www.jceps.com), U.K., Chief editor: Dave Hill, www.jceps.com (publication in English language)
2. [Cultural Logic: Marxist Theory and Practice](http://www.clogic.eserver.org), U.S.A./ Canada, Chief editors: Wayne Ross/Sandra Mathison, www.clogic.eserver.org (publication in English language)
3. [Radical Notes](http://www.radicalnotes.com/about-us), India, Chief Editor: Ravi Kumar, www.radicalnotes.com/about-us (publication in English language)
4. [Kritiki: Critical Science and Education](http://www.hpdst.gr/publications/kritiki), Greece, Chief Editor: Kostas Skordoulis, www.hpdst.gr/publications/kritiki (publication in English language)
5. *Eleştirel Pedagoji*, Turkey, Chief Editor: Ahmet Yıldız, www.elestirelpedagoji.com (publication in Turkish language)
6. [International Journal of Education Policies](http://ijep.icpres.org), Turkey, Chief Editor: Hasan Hüseyin Aksoy, ijep.icpres.org (publication in Turkish language)
7. [Journal of Counselogy/ Studia Poradoznawcze](http://www.dsw.edu.pl/studia-poradoznawcze), Poland, Chief Editor: Alicja Kargulowa, www.dsw.edu.pl/studia-poradoznawcze (publication in Polish language)
8. [Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia](http://www.studiaphilosophica.pl), Poland, Chief Editor: Adam Chmielewski, www.studiaphilosophica.pl (publication in Polish language)
9. [Recykling Idei](http://recyklingidei.pl), Poland, Chief editor: Marcin Starnawski, recyklingidei.pl (publication in Polish language)
10. [Critical Intersections in Education](http://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/cie/index), Canada, Chief editor: Emil Marmol, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/cie/index (publication in Polish language)

Having hosted several invited speakers along with many well-known authors and academics, this conference has also run a special signing session with the renowned critical educationist Peter McLaren on the publication of his book *Life*

in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education in Polish, which was also translated into Turkish. The presentations in the conference were in English and Polish, and also simultaneous interpreting was offered in some sessions.

Among the members of the hosting organization team, I would especially like to mention the names of Hana Cervinkova, Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bak, and Ursula Klobuszewska who helped to solve the problems of the attendees in patience and persistence. In addition to coffee break cookies, they have provided the conference attendees with different lunch options such as vegetarian, vegan or Polish food, which needs appreciation since they have considered people with different eating cultures or habits. Also the proceedings book with all the presentations in both English and Polish (223 pages) shows us how persistently and diligently the organization team has worked.

The theme of this year's conference was "Analyze, Educate, Organize. Critical Education for Social and Economic Justice" and its scope has been defined in the webpage (<http://www.icce.uls.edu.pl/icce/home>) as:

At a time of economic crisis, when education is under siege by neoliberal capitalism, (neo) conservatism and aggressive nationalism, when teachers and academics are being proletarianized, youth criminalized, schools and universities turned into commodities, and when different forms of fundamentalism are growing, critical education, as a theory and as a movement, is gaining in relevance. International communities of critical educators build resistance to these processes and are engaged in fostering social change leading to a more just, equal and fair society.

Conference Notes from Attendees

Critical education conferences offer educationists not only clues on how to approach and deal with social problems, but also the opportunities for resistance and transformation the overall result of which is a rich intellectual accumulation. A quick look at the titles of presentations will suffice to understand the accumulation and selectivity in this field.

Among the invited speakers of the conference, there has been many familiar names for the readers of *Critical Pedagogy* such as: Peter McLaren (Chapman University, California, USA), Joyce Canaan (Birmingham City University, UK), Hana Cervinkova (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland), Adam Chmielewski (University of Wrocław, Poland), Anna Dzierzgowska (Jacek Kuroń High School, Warsaw, Poland), Panagiota Gounari (University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA), George Grollios (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece), Gail Edwards (Newcastle University, UK), Dave Hill (Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, UK), Aygülen Kayahan Karakul (İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Turkey), Ravi Kumar (South Asian University, Delhi, India), Robert Kwaśnica (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland), Heidi Mirza (Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK), Lilia Monzo (Chapman University, California, USA), Ünal Özmen (Journalist/Author, Turkey), Lotar Rasiński (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland), Guy Senese (Northern Arizona University, USA), Bogusław Śliwerski (The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of

Special Education, Warsaw, Poland), Kostas Skordoulis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece), Tomasz Szkudlarek (University of Gdańsk, Poland), Paolo Vittoria (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Ahmet Yildiz (Ankara University, Turkey), Marta Zahorska – Bugaj (University of Warsaw, Poland), Edyta Zierkiewicz (University of Wrocław, Poland).

Samples from Presentations

It's obvious that reviewing hundreds of presentations given in the conference in a few paragraphs here is impossible. I would like to share some selections of a few presentations from my notes even though they are subjective.

In the presentation of Gail Edwards from Newcastle University entitled “The Schooling of teachers in England: Rescuing Pedagogy”, the sentence that caught my attention was “Pedagogy is radical because it's transformative”. In her presentation entitled “Deconstructing the Myth of Social Justice Towards a Militant Critical Education for Rupture”, Panayota Gounari from Massachusetts University has shared the attempts to discover new approaches and reveal the discursive construction on “social justice” in critical education theory after having drawn attention to how frequently this concept was used in mainstream education literature as well as in critical education literature. Dave Hill from Anglia Ruskin University, who is one of the organizers of the conference, has explained various dimensions of an egalitarian and democratic school system and shared the propositions that he deduced from historical discussions on education in his presentation entitled “Developing a Schooling System for Equality”. In her presentation entitled “The Endpoint of Anticipation from Education and Starting Point of Struggle: The Unemployment of White Collars”, Aygulen Kayahan Karakul who was a faculty member from İzmir Kâtip Celebi University and also an invited speaker on behalf of the *International Journal of Educational Policies* from Turkey has stated that there has been significant changes in vocational structure such as a decrease in labour value, proletarianization of professionals, destruction of labour norms, an increase in flexible and insecure working styles, and an increase in global production chains. She has stressed that such changes led to an apparent increase in the unemployment of white collars and a change in the concept of unemployment.

“The Children of Seasonal Agricultural Workers, Primary Education and Language Problems: A Critical Analysis”, a team presentation on the discrimination against seasonal agricultural workers was presented by Nurcan Korkmaz on behalf of the team members Meral Uysal, Ahmet Yıldız and Fevziye Sayılan. According to this presentation, talking about the discrimination they face in the places where they migrate to work, one of the seasonal agricultural workers said “The locals don't allow us to bury our dead people in the local cemetery; they can't even stand to our deceased ones, so how can one expect them to stand our living ones?” Nurcan Korkmaz has also given another presentation with Perihan Tutar entitled “The Paradox of Education and Political Participation: Being a Woman on the Road which cannot Reach to the Assembly”.

The presentation entitled “Views of Teacher Candidates Regarding Sexist Discourse of Political Power Towards Women” was presented by Naciye Aksoy, a

faculty member from Gazi University in Turkey. Prepared by Naciye Aksoy, Ebru Eren Deniz and Fahriye Hayırsever, this research paper has aimed to analyze the views of primary school teacher candidates regarding sexist discourses of political power towards women in terms of several variables. According to the results of this research, political identity and the sex of the teacher candidates along with their university determine their level of approval for the discourses of the political power (The Justice and Development Party government in Turkey) concerning women. In this context, male teacher candidates approve the sexist discourses towards women more than female candidates do. Students at one University approve the sexist discourses of the political power towards women more than the students at another University. While the teacher candidates with a conservative political identity highly approve the sexist discourses, students with a socialist identity tend to disapprove those discourses. Parents' education levels and occupations, levels of income and the place where they have spent the most of their lives are not determinants in teacher candidates' approval or disapproval choices. Moreover, most teacher candidates tend to approve of religion-oriented sexist discourses. On the other hand, while most teacher candidates approve the participation of women in working life, the approval level for this discourse decreases against working mothers.

There has been many other presentations in this conference including mine and those the titles of which have not been mentioned here due to space limit. Because of parallel sessions, it was not possible for the attendees to listen to all the presentations. I hope that all those presentations of academics and educators will reach the readers as journal articles or book chapters.

I finish this essay by hoping and wishing that next conference will be another success with great participation and organization bringing new studies to the field of critical education and making strong bonds among critical educators. My another wish is to be able to see more diverse groups consist from the critical educators from more diverse countries and continents. We aware that, academics and students from some developed countries may find a way to join the conferences easier than the countries less developed. The conference organizers should keep the eye on and encourage the potential participants from the different regions of the world, especially from the less developed countries. Another world should be constructed in all the spaces, including International Conference on Critical Education.

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