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The highly differentiated field of global migration research became vastly more complicated over the past decade when the so-called refugee “issue” suddenly took on prominence on continents across the world. Today, even relatively focused literature searches tend to yield a veritable plethora of diverse findings on refugees and the situations they are dealing with. However, the migration researcher who is more interested in the specific implications for refugee children as a vulnerable sub-population within this context finds that this latter kind of research and writing is scattered and far between and that much of it is even questionable with regard to its quality and accuracy. Against this backdrop, discovering a recent publication - *Syrian Refugee Children in the Middle East and Europe: Integrating the Young and Exiled* – edited by Michelle Pace and Somdeep Sen turned out to be both refreshing and edifying.

This slender volume of edited articles emerged from an international conference held at Roskilde University in Denmark in 2016, as part of a “way forward” strategy directed towards policy-making and implementation. It provides a defined and inclusive framework within which ideas exchanged at the conference coalesce to inform as many “front-liners”—policy-makers, educators, researchers, service-providers, scholars, and practitioners—as possible.

The editors, Michelle Pace and Somdeep Sen, draw upon their respective backgrounds and their studies of issues of integration among migrants, refugees, and asylum applicants across numerous societies, including those who are “stateless,” to provide a unique perspective within which the authors explore the numerous conundrums involving integration and resettlement, specifically of Syrian refugee children in selected host societies, and articulate some practical solutions and interventions. In Pace and Sen’s own words, the book provides a “comparative lens” for comparing and contrasting the approaches in the two broad geographical regions under study. Refugee children are viewed simultaneously as comprising an especially vulnerable segment of the larger Syrian displaced population and as possessing enormous potential for agency, resilience, and positive change. The themes associated with the integration and resettlement of refugee children play out again and again throughout the book. Early on, the importance of the “de-securitizing” of the “figure and image of the refugee” is emphasized, particularly with respect to that of the refugee child; the work also emphasizes the importance of moving towards a more “human rights” based model of refugee integration that is far more humane, protective and far-sighted.

The introductory overview by the editors and the “postscript” conclusion, by Jennifer Skulte-Ouass, book-end this compact collection of ten chapters, bringing to it a sense of completeness and closure. Of the ten chapters that make up the book, three consider the global and structural elements integral to the dilemma of young refugees. In Chapter Two, Michelle Pace ponders the far-reaching impact of the European Union (EU)-Turkey deal in terms of the severe limitations it places on the human rights of refugee children under the rationale of ensuring national or regional security and warns that placing children in immigration detention, for instance, is not only against their best interests but also a flagrant violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Dogus Simsek writes in Chapter Three about the implications of the integration process for the education of Syrian refugee children in Turkey. Simsek defines integration as a two-way

process involving both refugees and the host society, playing out in the sharing of resources, equal access to rights, and reciprocal cultural exchange. She notes that when refugees find themselves being excluded, unable to access resources, *and* facing discrimination, they typically do not “aspire to integrate” into the receiving society. Simsek believes that the state of Syrian refugee children’s education often “mirrors” their level of integration in the receiving society at large and that while Turkey has an “open door” policy, refugees—of all ages—often find that they themselves have to assume a more active and strategic role in order to facilitate their own integration.

In Chapter Eight, Lana Khattab, Chiara Butti, and Iliana Slavova describe the futility of attempting to build social cohesion between Syrian refugees and their host communities even in everyday situations potentially involving interactions and transactions, *i.e.*, with neighbors, peers, classmates or teachers at school. Khattab et al. attribute this futility to the limited formal or structured opportunities for such interaction within the existing hierarchical social “arrangements” within Lebanon; they point out that refugees have a very precarious legal status that is not perceived as being on the same social level as other, more established groups within Lebanese society and, therefore, contact or interaction with refugees is dissuaded. In addition, geographical segregation and separate school “shifts” during different times of day further limit these scarce opportunities for contact.

Non-formal programs organized by nonprofits and NGOs are few and far between, and also temporary, but have nevertheless demonstrated that social cohesion can be achieved along with considerably improved intergroup perceptions and relations. The authors conclude, however, that while formal and non-formal programs complement one another in promoting social cohesion, formal education is more critical because it is the most direct route to work and advanced educational opportunities. And because of the ubiquity of formal programs, these represent a significant potential opportunity—or the loss thereof—for enhancing social connection and cohesion.

The introductory chapter and its corresponding postscript chapter, in addressing the issue of “the young and the exiled,” assume more reflective and sweeping “big-picture” perspectives in order to address larger issues more pertinent to the globalized world. In Chapter One, Sen and Pace raise the most important questions: Why are refugee children and youth experiencing so much suffering? What happens when basic human rights are taken away from them? And what is it that creates the feeling of being “in-between,” of *liminality* (*i.e.*, the state of in-between-ness)? In the postscript chapter on “the young and the exiled,” by Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, besides reinforcing the central theme of the book and providing its counterpoint, the author points out that the contributions in the volume do not exhaustively represent the lives of refugee children in the Middle East and Europe and that while some critical issues have been raised, they are not necessarily addressed and that there are important gaps in the discourse. Skulte-Ouaiss suggests that the most useful way to view the various issues that do converge in this book might be to see them in terms of space, time, and agency.

Against this wide backdrop, at least five of the chapters extend the discourse in the direction of considering engineered practical solutions or imagined future scenarios specific to certain regions or subsets of the population. Michel Maragel and Sandra Manachi write in Chapter Four about the dearth of research on refugee children and the importance of studying processes involved in resilience and of providing timely and “highly tailored” interventions. In Chapter Six, Bassel Akar and Erik Van Ommering articulate the elements of an “emerging” framework for providing education to Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, arguing that it is only

when five dimensions—professionally trained teachers, involved caregivers, inclusiveness, policy and legal advocacy—are in place that true education can take place. In Chapter Five, Josepha Ivanka Wessels explores the paradoxical nature of the journey refugees undertake from the initial “state of shock” after displacement to discovering a sense of “agency in liminality.” Comparing the situations of Syrian children in internally displaced (IDP) camps and those in Europe, Wessels comes to the conclusion that both experiences of displacement and mobility ultimately determine the extent and duration of liminality. In Chapter Seven, Lisa Maren Steller articulates the possibilities in terms of the right “to have rights” of Syrian refugee youth and the path to citizenship in some host countries, such as Jordan, which enables them to transition beyond the in-between state into a more-settled “future of exile.” Finally, Chapter Nine marks an important juncture in the book as well as bringing together the work’s varied themes. In it, Somdeep Sen lays out an activist agenda for researchers in the form of proposals that can be applied to different scenarios.

This is a compact and economically compiled book, with succinctly written chapters unified by connecting bridges of ideas and coherent common themes. The larger focus is on major theaters of activity and power—the Middle East and Europe. However, some of the chapters refer mostly to Turkey and Lebanon. The question that comes to mind is whether the book’s title is not misleading. The book is not about all of the Middle East, and is certainly not about all of Europe, so does the book overpromise and underdeliver as far as the title is concerned? This reviewer is inclined to think so. On the other hand, a more limited but realistic title may have restricted the book’s reach by not attracting as much initial interest and may have dissuaded some readers altogether. Fortunately, the work’s subtitle emphasizes the “integration” angle, on integrating the young and exiled, so while the research reported under that umbrella seems to be limited to Lebanon and Turkey (and not the entire Middle East region or Europe), the book’s strengths come from the broader relevance of the ideas and concepts within it as well as examples and case-studies replete in these chapters.

Despite any shortcomings, the central vision behind the book’s creation is broad, cosmopolitan, inclusive, and forward-facing. The writing styles range from light, engaging, and masterful to marginal, choppy, and slightly unfinished. Perhaps a little more careful editorial intervention and fine-grained editing and proofreading may have helped to smoothen the convergent flow of different writing styles while allowing space for the individualities and idiosyncrasies of the authors. Nevertheless, this text remains a worthwhile addition to any serious collection on the refugee experience and would be of interest to migration scholars, researchers, social scientists, and practitioners alike.

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