



## REVIEWS

### *Recensiones*



Torres Santomé, J. (2017). *Políticas educativas y construcción de personalidades neoliberales y neocolonialistas*. [Education policies and construction of neoliberal and neocolonialist personalities] Madrid: Morata. pp. 270. ISBN: 978-84-7112-821-8.

This new piece of work by Jurjo Torres Santomé, Professor at the University of A Coruña, points out the roles of the education system at every historic moment and how, by being at the service of a specific social model, such roles are accompanied by an idiosyncratic curriculum which provides an agreed selection of curricular content, according to the social model to be achieved.

The author sets forth that, if we analyse the hidden curriculum of many of the routines that govern daily life within the classrooms, the subject contents, the school tasks, the assessment models and the interactions of students with each other and with teachers, it can be concluded that, as in other social areas, the education system usually discriminates against groups living in poverty. The context is contributing to build a common sense so that certain unfair realities are not perceived and serve as a reason for dominant groups to select and impose the cultural contents which are considered to be the preferential focus of attention for the education system.

In the first Chapter, the author analyses education as a complex task that goes beyond conveying a specific cultural knowledge and developing certain skills, depending on the social class, the gender, the ethnic group, the nationality, the age, the place of residence, the ability, etc. In a reasoned way, in order to understand the present, it is necessary to point out the features of economic,

financial and labour policies, the politic ideologies that endorse them, and therefore how the policies that can solve the issues and the unfair living conditions affecting most people are provided to citizens.

The second Chapter shows how the current subjectivity and personality model which is trying to be defined and perpetuated requires a reform of the education system in order to give priority to a specific kind of contents, skills and values, specific areas of knowledge and subjects, and, furthermore, set aside and undermine others which could threaten the possibility of building a certain model of personality. To that end, a specific cultural selection is developed, trying to condition the way of studying and being able to analyse the true value and the true potentialities of the contents, procedures, attitudes and values of what is learnt, as quantitative and comparative assessments become the guiding principle of life and work within the classrooms and education centres. In this way, it is difficult to implement any innovation aimed at developing critical, thoughtful, creative, collaborative, supportive and democratic skills empowering students to become critical citizens capable of intellectually challenging the dominant power by offering possible alternatives which guarantee success for everybody, without discriminations.

The third Chapter provides a reflection about the reasons why the double network of educational institutions is still open and even going forward: the public network, on the one hand, and the privately-owned but state-funded network, on the other hand. The author insists on the need for defending and promoting a quality public education, which requires knowing the roles it can successfully play and, at the same time, the flaws of some public institutions. As a consequence, the fact that educational institutions are a project aimed at educating democratic, equitable, inclusive, sustainable and optimistic citizens is a task which demands greater commitment by political parties, unions, community organizations, teachers, families and students.

In the last Chapter, the author highlights the need for addressing teacher training and updating in order to achieve a quality education. The author supports a teaching staff constituted by active citizens, public intellectuals, and critical as well as responsible professionals that become an essential part in building a truly democratic society and therefore highly active agents against the official (un)educational policies that afflict us.

A much-needed book, here and now, recommended for all those who stand up for a more just and supportive society where education becomes the main engine for its construction.

**Ascensión Palomares Ruiz**