

## EDITORIAL

### EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY AND MIGRATION POLICIES

#### *A educação no contexto da mobilidade internacional e das políticas migratórias*

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The intensification of mobility and diversification of migration at the international level have challenged the education systems and institutions in many migrant-receiving countries. There are many places where the number of migrant students or students with a migratory background is growing, coming from countries with increasingly diverse cultures and languages. Greater visibility sometimes accompanies the growth in numbers. In fact, in contexts marked by spatial segregation, educational institutions are places where, not infrequently, the presence of non-nationals becomes more noticeable and habitual, bringing challenges and, opportunities for everyone involved.

The inclusion of migrant students in educational institutions is conditioned by a set of variables related not only to the educational system itself but also to the social, political, economic, and, above all, migratory context. In this brief introduction to the REMHU no. 69 dossier, on the theme of *Education, Migration and Human Rights*, I would like to focus on a few contextual aspects that have a profound impact on the educational spaces that deal with the presence of migrants and refugees.

Firstly, it is essential to pay attention to migration policies and the spread of a xenophobic and ethnocentric *ethos*. Even considering the peculiarities of each context, the number of countries with legislation and migration policies marked by a clear security, selective, and criminalizing bias is growing. The multiplication of material and immaterial borders (Foucher, 2009) attests to an intention to select rigorously those who enter and, moreover, to promote a “differential inclusion” (Mezzadra, 2015) characterized by asymmetrical and hierarchical relations between nationals and non-nationals. These borders – understood here as barriers – are not only erected on the geographical borders between states (walls and fences), but also before them (the externalization of borders) and, above all, after

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them, the “internal barriers”, namely the bureaucratic, administrative, and legal barriers that prevent, hinder, or sometimes make it “subordinate” or “inferior” for non-nationals to remain in the territory. One of the main internal barriers is undoubtedly migratory (non-)regularization, which produces deportable people (De Genova, 2002) and people without rights; but they can also shape educational systems and institutions as barriers to promote asymmetrical and exclusionary relations.

The multiplication of barriers and a “climate” of mistrust and hostility towards newcomers, who people often stigmatize as “terrorists”, “criminals”, “exploiters” of other people’s resources, “vectors of disease” or, simply put, as “others”, in the sense of not belonging to the national community and therefore not being trustworthy, have a mutual influence on each other (Bauman, May, 2010). In this *ethos*, “difference” in all its forms is used to legitimize “inequality” in terms of rights (Todorov, 1985, p. 143ss).

Therefore, debating educational challenges in human mobility takes on different connotations depending on the theoretical framework and the interpretative approach one takes to the role of education systems in the nation-state, and depending on the characteristics of the *ethos* and migration policies present in the country of reference. For example, the interpretative approach to migration as a temporary and therefore non-structural phenomenon – which is very widespread in contexts that naturalize the relationship between state and nation – hinders the creation of educational policies aimed, for example, at interculturality or the reformulation of curricular content and assessment processes intending to overcome ethnocentrism.

Besides this, the interpretative approach taken to education systems is also determinant. There are different theoretical approaches to the role of education, especially public and compulsory education, within the nation-state. Some approaches see institutionalized educational systems as instruments for adapting or disciplining the “new citizens” – mainly “indigenous” young people – to the coexistence and values of society, to guarantee intergenerational “continuity” and the reproduction (conservation) of society. In contexts marked by strong nationalism, this adaptive or coercive process aims precisely to naturalize the relationship between the state and a nation. In the words of Bauman and May (2010, p. 227), the “universalization of education allows all the inhabitants of the state’s territory to be trained in the values of the nation that dominate it. With varying degrees of success, the aim is to achieve in practice what was called for in theory, namely the ‘naturalness’ of nationality.” The coercion of compulsory education is the major instrument, although not the only one, to guarantee the preservation of the nation-state despite the entry of “foreigners” from other nations. Assimilation and ethnocentrism, even if veiled, represent the pedagogical

priority in the view of sovranist and nationalist groups (Bauman, May, 2010, p. 227-229).

Other theoretical approaches, which are even more questioning, interpret education systems in an ideological light as instruments for legitimizing social inequalities and reproducing the norms of a hierarchical society as imposed by the dominance of a social class. In other words, neutral educational processes aim to promote the internalization of norms and the acceptance of the processes of inferiorization and exclusion present in society (Freitag, 1980), which, in our case, would also encompass the “differential inclusion” of migrants or people with a migratory background.

However, it is also worth mentioning an interpretative approach that highlights a more positive role that education can play. From a Gramscian perspective, the ruling class does not seek hegemony in the educational sphere through direct violence (only with dictatorships), but by guaranteeing a degree of freedom, albeit limited, “so that individuals from the subordinate classes can make their choices apparently freely” (Freitag, 1980, p. 42). It is precisely in these interstices that it is possible to unleash counter-ideological processes of problematizing and liberating education (Freitag, 1980; Freire, 1985).

In the specific case of the relationship between educational institutions and migrants and refugees, I think it’s a bit of an illusion to think that the same states that promote restrictive, selective and, in some cases, even necrophilic migration policies, will same time, in the educational sphere, promote policies of symmetrical inclusion from the perspective of interculturality and human rights. However, to make the reflection more complex, we must also consider the heterogeneity of the interests involved. If nationalist tendencies encourage processes of naturalization of the relationship between state and nation, on the other hand, there are economic interests that value the training of skilled labour to meet the demands of the labour market (Zanfrini, 2016), especially in contexts of significant population ageing and low birth rates<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, from the perspective of “humanitarian reason” (Fassin, 2019), there are also certain interests in maintaining a humanitarian discourse, however apparent or superficial, as essential symbolic capital to differentiate and feed the narrative of opposition to peoples or groups considered barbaric.

Finally, we cannot underestimate the role of civil society in solidarity either. Even if it is a minority, it often manages to guide and trigger transformation processes from a human rights perspective. Even in situations where the application of the norm is mediated by the interpretation of the subject or where there are lacks of guidance and systemic support, civil society, through the agency of the people

<sup>1</sup> It is worth remembering that the need for skilled labor is often accompanied by an interest in having subordinate and submissive labor.

involved, often manages to guide and trigger transformation processes from a human rights perspective. In these situations, problematizing and liberating individual or collective initiatives often fostered education processes, including the agency of migrants and refugees<sup>2</sup>.

In short, even taking into account the different theoretical approaches, as well as the numerous variables involved - including the different levels of education, the difference between public and private institutions or also the levels of public investment in the face of the neoliberal agenda - it is legitimate to think of the presence of interstices (Bhabha, 1998) in which education systems and institutions can act to trigger problematizing and liberating approaches, focused on human rights and interculturality, with the specific aim of promoting the symmetrical inclusion and social mobility of newcomers and, enabling “nationals” to encounter otherness, in order to avoid nationalistic and ufanistic drifts.

What is crucial is that education cannot be interpreted and used as an “internal barrier”, as an instrument to reinforce restrictive and selective migration policies, or even as a device to diminishes newcomers, creating a second-class population, or an inferior, docile, and submissive caste within the social fabric. Using Martha Nussbaum’s words, rather than generating “useful machines”, the aim of education is to form “complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements” (2011, p. 21-22).

### Dossier contributions

REMHU “Dossier” no. 69 presents a set of interdisciplinary perspectives on concrete realities in which the universe of human mobility interacts with education systems and institutions. The articles, even if they refer to different countries and contexts, point to challenges that highlight situations of disadvantage (Zanfrini, 2016) and discrimination by migrant students, with nationality often intersecting with other social markers and producing very negative effects, as evidenced by some recurring indicators: difficulties in accessing the education system in the country of arrival (sometimes because of migration and school documentation); higher dropout rates compared to nationals; attendance at less prestigious educational institutions; low academic performance (especially among males); and reduced presence of migrant students in university-level education, among others.

In the first article in the Dossier, *Celia Regina Vendramini* and *Fabio Perocco* address some of the challenging issues facing the education of migrants in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Although commendable and sometimes effective, these initiatives by individuals or civil society groups cannot and do not fully meet the responsibilities of states. In this sense, I believe that organized civil society and migrant collectives themselves should prioritize actions aimed at legislative changes and transformative public policies, including grassroots work to offer alternative narratives on migration and mobility and, in this way, denaturalize nationalist and ethnocentric approaches.

This article examines the challenges facing the education system and its need to update its pedagogical work, as well as the challenges inherent in the students' migratory situation, as well as their social class, ethnic-racial group, nationality, and even their age. If, on the one hand, there are a number of initiatives aimed at domesticating the newcomers, on the other hand, the authors recognize that school institutions can also be a "space for the active participation of the immigrant population in school life to collectively think about the direction of the organization of pedagogical work, curricula and socialization at school".

Always in relation to the Italian situation, *Paolo Morozzo della Rocca*, using a legal approach, tackles the dialectic between welcoming students from non-European countries and security policies in Italy. On the one hand, there is a need to bring in immigrant students, especially in an aging population and a low birth rate; on the other hand, there is the so-called "migratory risk", based on the fear of newcomers. Therefore, despite European guidelines that encourage entry for study reasons, administrative and bureaucratic obstacles make it difficult for non-European students to arrive and stay. The article confirms how the world of education is deeply conditioned by the climate of security, thus wasting important resources for both the receiving country and the countries of origin.

*F. Javier García Castaño, María Rubio Gómez and Elvira Molina Fernández* highlight the diversification of migration management within the same country. The case in point is Spain, where the 17 Autonomous Communities have competence and autonomy in school matters based on general state rules. Reflecting on the presence of international/foreign migrants in Special Education, the author(s) demonstrates, through official data for three Communities (Andalusia, Catalonia and Madrid), that there is evidence of discrimination due to the over- or under-representation of migrants, with significant differences between the various territories. The hypothesis raised is that it is precisely the "different school policies between the territories and the interpretations of the norms associated with them" that produce this situation.

The article by *Octávio Sacramento, Elizabeth Challinor and Pedro G. Silva* examines the challenges and responses to the presence of refugees in compulsory educational institutions in the peripheral areas of Portugal (North and Center). Among various aspects, the authors highlight the importance of the autonomy and flexibility of educational institutes, which has enabled them, through competence, creativity, and, above all, partnerships, to unleash virtuous processes to overcome structural shortcomings, lack of formal guidelines, and even deficits in pedagogical and human resources. The text, on the other hand, while stressing the importance of the autonomy of the institutions and the "good will" of their agents, also emphasizes the need for structural support, especially regarding the resources on offer and the training of teaching staff.

*Paula Daniela Fernández* and *Fernando Romero Wimer* reflect on the recognition or revalidation of higher education diplomas for students and teachers trained outside Brazil. The research was carried out at UNILA University, taking into account the legislation of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. There are a number of obstacles that immigrants encounter when it comes to having their diplomas recognized, due to bureaucracy, slowness, fees or even the difficulty of gathering the necessary documentation, especially with refugees. The text draws attention to the role that universities can play in favoring or hindering the process of immigrant integration.

*Camila Escudero* and *Alex Guedes Brum* examine a Brazilian public policy for migrants living abroad, focusing on Enceja – the National Exam for the Certification of Competences of Young People and Adults. The article reflects on so-called “linkage policies” in Brazil, highlighting the growing horizontality, intersectorality, and, above all, societal interactions based on the progressive involvement of non-state actors, including Brazilian communities abroad. The authors point out the richness and, the multiple challenges of the interaction of such several actors who sometimes have different priorities and interests, and above all, the need to consider the ever-changing and contextualized needs of Brazilian communities living abroad.

*Sabrina Generali* and *Denise Cogo* reflect on intercultural educational practices in urban public elementary schools in Boa Vista. The authors highlight the challenging and sometimes xenophobic context, lack of institutional guidelines or specific curricular changes, and the shortcomings in teacher training, especially about knowledge of Spanish. In addition, the absence of educational policies aimed at interculturality is highlighted, possibly because an interpretation of Venezuelan migration as a temporary, provisional phenomenon that favors the option of emergency solutions. In Boa Vista too, as elsewhere, individual initiatives by teachers or other staff, whether individual or collective, end up trying, with little impact, to compensate for the limited presence of public policies about interculturality.

Similar conclusions are presented by *Paula Luciana Buratovich*, who analyzes the challenges of access to the education system in Argentina and Chile for migrants. Although both countries recognize the rights of migrants to education, the “intersection of the migratory condition with other factors, such as social class, place of residence, time of arrival in the country and socio-educational level, among others, can generate specific forms of exclusion and gaps that remain hidden for an analysis limited to normative aspects and the design of public policies”. Buratovich also emphasizes the responsibility of states to go beyond the mere logic of access (to education) and focus on the quality of the access offered, with a view to eliminating inequalities and discrimination.

The last article specifically highlights the issue of language, one of the challenges most cited in the various texts in the dossier. *Thalita Camargo Angelucci* reflects on the interaction and complementarity between the so-called “*lengua-hogar*” and the “*lengua-lugar*”, the language of the construction of the subject and the language of displacement, which can be the second language, the foreign language or the “other” language. The reflection focuses mainly on the subjective and identity dimension of language, which cannot be interpreted as a mere (neutral) instrument of communication. The reflection provides interesting elements, especially for the intercultural training of teaching staff in contexts of significant human mobility.

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In the “Articles” section, *Belén Rojas Silva* and *Catalina Álvarez Martínez-Conde* reflect on the relationship between memory and migration based on a survey of Chilean women living in the Paris region of France. Migratory movements generate memories which, in turn, give new meaning to lived experiences, pointing to a reciprocity between migrations and memories.

*Erika Andrea Butikofer* and *Andressa Alves Martino* reflect on the discrimination experienced by black asylum seekers in Brazil, especially during the process of applying for asylum. Analysing the process of “bankarization” (*bancarização*), the authors infer that asylum seekers in Brazil “are in a kind of ‘legal limbo’, that is, without the protection of their state of origin and without the protection of the state”.

Based on clinical experiences, *Paula Campos Andrade*, *Gustavo da Silva Machado* and *Marcela de Andrade Gomes* reflect on the racialization of migrants and refugees in Brazil, specifically highlighting the theme of psychological listening as a decolonial tool for welcoming and including citizens. According to the authors, “we listen to life conditions when we co-create possibilities for material and subjective continuities in the host country”.

*Ana Paula Risson* and *Carmen Leontina Ojeda Ocampo Moré* look at the migratory project of Haitian women living in Brazil, focusing specifically on the motivation for emigration and the challenges of first settling in the territory of arrival. The article stresses the need to avoid generalizations and highlight the family as a central epistemic element for understanding Haitian flows.

From a legal, intersectional, and human rights perspective, *Andrea Carolina Subía Cabrera* reflects on migration control and integration policies in Ecuador. The author highlights the vulnerability of migrants and points out the inadequacy of state responses in terms of reception and integration, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

In the final article, *Nicolas Parent*, *Stacey Wilson-Forsberg* and *Abderrahman Beggar* discuss and compare two areas considered to be “transit” areas for migrants,

the state of Chapas in southern Mexico and the Canary Islands. The authors engage in a dialogue with the available academic literature and problematize certain approaches and gaps, such as the “essentialization” of the migrant identity, and the invisibilization of certain “flows” or local resistance.

*Barbara Marciano Marques’s* review of the book, “Sociologia da imigração no Brasil, 1940-1970: A contribuição dos clássicos”, written by Márcio de Oliveira, closes the issue.

We wish you all a good reading!

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