

Migration, differentiation and affects: Traces of inequities in a public school in Montevideo

Migración, diferenciación y afectos: Rastros de inequidades en una escuela pública de Montevideo

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Background

Many studies reveal different ways of bias, xenophobia and social exclusion that migrant childhood confront during their school trajectory in educational system around the world. Literature also shows how oppressions are imbued in terms of race, gender, social class and the differential origin of migrants during their track in educational institutions. These studies document the importance of attend discriminatory practices and racism configurating the quotidian school experience of many students involved in movility processes. As an alternative to the tendency to diminish expectation on migrant students, studies propose how important are teachers that have developed multicultural competencies. Besides, them emphasize how educational policy structures racial inequality and the ways that social capital can limit or multipliccate the intersectional traces of vulnerability and structural discrimination.

Aims

In this paper we analyze the conditions of inequity, racialization and differentiation experienced by migrant children, from the theoretical perspective of the feminist affective turn.

Method & procedures

We hold up a qualitative study with an ethnographic focus in a public school in the city of Montevideo. We used a criterion sample for the selection of participants, and interviewed key informants on the subject of migration, family members of children from different nationalities and teachers of the selected school. Students were introduced into the investigation in specific instances in coordination with the teachers. We thematically analyzed the data corpus achieving triangulation, with the content that emerged from interviews with family members, teachers, and the fieldwork records of school activities and observations.

Results & discussion

We discussed aspects related to biased views on the origins of contemporary migrations in Uruguay, and their effects on educational proposals. We identify in teachers' speech a classification of migrant children according to their origin and that is imbued with ethnic-racial, socio-economic and gender aspects. We distinguish hostile and xenophobic prejudices, especially towards the Dominican and Peruvian population. These children carry phenotypic characteristics that allow us to think of a differentiation that is built on the basis of stigmatizing ethnic-racial patterns. Teachers' speech on uprooting, associated with the specific idea of losses, expresses a concern that leads them to think about strategies that aim to build spaces to welcome and to accompany mobility duels. Connecting with the conditions in which some children arrive, allows teachers to think about necessary changes within the school. At the same time, it is an opportunity to review feelings that emerged from the bond build with them. When compassion takes the scene, a certain paternalism and

condescension appear, forming complex power relations in which compassion justifies lowering requirements. The risk would be to associate compassion with patterns of subordination and coloniality. Instead, the reference to uprooting is a key to work with teachers, it allows them to reflect and to become aware of their own feelings associated with uprooting personal stories. At the same time, it urges them to review some practices that involve homogenization. In their speech a kind of longing appears, expressing difficulties to achieve a sense of belonging, given the permanent entry and replacement of a large number of children, what they call "transit school". This challenges them to the extent that uncertainty is the protagonist of educational processes with migrant children. Everyday teachers deploy varied strategies to deal with the pain of immigration, which questions the idea of happiness built from the norm and imperative of joy.

Conclusion

We conclude on the need to widen the margins of the recognizable and the importance of interdependence in political key to advance educational transformations that contemplate human mobility. Insist on making visible the processes of oppression naturalized in the school day, to critically question the distribution of differential value assigned to movable childhood. Extending the legitimacy of the bodies in the school means to discard the homogenizing logics of national identities, built from the illusion of whiteness. The challenge is to think of schooling without nationalizing or evoking restricted paradigms of nationalism as part of educational processes. The possibilities of in-service training, including the review of the affections that emerged when working with migrant children, the identification of tools that operate as a support and function as facilitators of educational processes can favor a critical review of educational practices. The world of dynamism, intensity, complexity and pain brought by the children requires teachers who are aware and trained in contemporary migration processes, transformations in curricular designs and in the daily life of the classroom. As a way to not repeat violence that normalizes landscapes of cruelty in the educational institution. The shift from a transit school to a school in motion involves embracing the practices that break with the hegemonic binary body/mind separation in banking education and recognizing the spaces to welcome and reflect on emotional experiences as powerful forms to counteract implicit repelling classification mechanisms, often unintentionally, to "unwanted" migration.

Keywords: childhood, education, emotion, migration

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