


Racism, Interculturality, and Public Policies: An Analysis of the Literature on Migration and the School System in Chile, Argentina, and Spain

SAGE Open
 January-March 2021: 1–12
 © The Author(s) 2021
 DOI: 10.1177/2158244020988526
journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo


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Abstract

In the last decades, Chile has become a receiving society of migrants, and this has overtaxed the social services in this country, among them the school system. According to the literature, the issue is that migration has not been addressed with a proper response from public policies. This article aims to examine recommendations for the development of these policies. To undertake this task, we have conducted a systematic review of the literature on this issue in Chile, Argentina, and Spain (1990–2018). The three cases show the presence of discrimination and racism, with a common response taking the form of intercultural education. In terms of differences, only in Spain there is a consolidated body of research and public policies that focus on migration. That said, although the policies are more robust in Spain, several studies critically assess them. Hence, this country is a good example to know what to do and what to avoid. That information is exactly what is needed in countries like Chile where migration has become pressing issue that demands a proper response.

Keywords

migration, education, racism, interculturality, public policies

Introduction

International migration is a key feature of the global society, and it has important consequences for both the so-called receiving and sending societies (Carter-Thuillier et al., 2018). Chile is no stranger to this phenomenon, and the interesting element of this country is that it was historically characterized for being a sending society and in the present has become a receiving society of migration. This new trend is explained because the country's social, economic, and political stability has made it an attractive destination for migrants, especially since the 1990s, giving rise to a new migratory pattern, the so-called “new immigration” (Pavez & Lewin, 2014; Stefoni, 2011; Stefoni & Stang, 2017; Rojas & Silva, 2016). To get an idea of the scale of this phenomenon, we might note that the number of immigrants living in Chile has almost doubled in the last decade. While in 2002 (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2002) there were 184,464 immigrants in the country, the Immigration Department states that “for 2014, close to 411,000 permanent migrants were estimated to be residing in Chile, which would correspond to 2.3% of the national population. A low percentage compared to the situation in developed countries (11.3%)” (Rojas & Silva, 2016, p. 10).

It is remarkable that women comprised a larger proportion of this cohort. In 2013, the percentage of women of migrant origin was 55.1%, a figure that remained relatively steady in 2015 (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). An essential element of this feminine component of migration is that family reunification occurs in the medium and long term. This takes place when women are stable economically, which allows them to bring their sons and daughters to the host country (Pavez & Lewin, 2014). In 2014, about 20% of immigrants were between the age of 0 and 19 years (Department of Immigration and Migration, 2016, p. 53). In the case of children and adolescents (0–15 years old), the percentage of immigrant population is around 14%. If we add to those who were born in Chile and have a foreign origin (i.e., second generation), the figure rises to 21%.

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This means that the presence of migrants in Chile is directly affecting the school system.

However, much of the research on migration to date in Chile has focused on the adult population and not on migrant children (Pavez & Lewin, 2014; Tijoux, 2013). Moreover, it has reported practices, which produce exclusion and stigmatization toward these students in the school system (Rojas et al., 2015; see also Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2016). In this context, the problem is that migration in this area has not been addressed with a proper response from public policies (Carter-Thuillier et al., 2018; Castillo, 2016; Salas et al., 2016; Stefoni et al., 2016). This article aims to examine some cues and recommendations for the development of these public policies. To undertake this task, we examine the Chilean case and the literature in two other countries, namely, Argentina and Spain. This allows us to build a comprehensive reconstruction of the literature on migration in the school system on the selected countries and to illuminate possible alternatives and insights that could guide the research and policies in Chile.

In this research, we carried out an analysis of the main investigations developed on this subject in Chile, Argentina, and Spain, between 1990 and 2018. The criteria to select the data and the time period were the following:

1. The case studies were chosen according to the following criteria. (a) Chile and Argentina were selected because both Latin American countries share historical, political, social, and economic features. Both countries were born as colonies of Spanish imperialism, and even they achieved their independence at the same time (1818). Both countries also suffered under military dictatorships during the 1970s and 1980s, which generated both solidarity practices (e.g., reception of Chilean political refugees in Argentina) and repressive practices (e.g., Operation Cóndor) between the two countries. In addition, Chile and Argentina have been essential recipients of immigration from other Latin American countries during the recent years. (b) The case of Spain was chosen, in the first instance, because of the volume of existing literature on this subject within that country, as well as the existence of consolidated public policies on migration and education. Although other developed countries have a vast literature and multiple experiences of public policies in this area (e.g., France, the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), the cultural and historical differences between such countries and Latin American countries such as Chile and Argentina were too great. This fact makes their public policy models more difficult to replicate in the Latin American context. Second, we chose Spain because their patterns of migration have some similarities with those of Chile and Argentina. In this regard, one can point to family migration (Santos et al., 2011, p. 98), which involves the presence of children who demand a response from the school system. Furthermore, Spain, Chile, and Argentina have a significant component of migrant population from Latin American countries. This element is relevant, inasmuch as both the receiving society (Spain, Chile, and Argentina) and the sending societies (other Latin American countries) share the same language (Spanish). This contributes to the possibilities of inclusion of these people from the first generation of migrants. This phenomenon is different in other countries where the migrant population (at least the first generation) does not have the local language as their mother tongue.
2. The period of observation and analysis begins in 1990 because this was when the so-called “new migration” started in Chile (Pavez & Lewin, 2014; Stefoni, 2011, 2017; Rojas & Silva, 2016).
3. The criteria and the steps to select, review, and analyze the literature were the following. (a) First, we performed an initial exploration of multiple sources to broaden the range of exploration and decrease selection bias. We reviewed the databases of WoS, Scopus, Scielo, RedALyC, and Latindex, and the following keywords (in Spanish and English) were used as search criteria: Chile, Argentina, Spain, education, school system, migration, interculturality, racism, and public policies. (b) After this first selection, we read the abstracts and conclusions of these articles, and those that were not relevant to the objective of the investigation were rejected: works that only marginally addressed the study phenomenon, research in early stages of development, and those works that were not written in Spanish or English. (c) Third, we made a reading and categorization of the selected literature. After reading the selected works in full, we apply the qualitative criteria of saturation to classify and analyze the categories, and we draw the following categorizations: legal regulations, public policies, intercultural education, discrimination and racism, and academic segregation. These categories became the main axes of analysis of the article, reflecting the most relevant evidence on the object of study according to the literature.

This article is organized into six sections. The first introduces the issue of discrimination in school systems in Chile, Argentina, and Spain. In the second section, the article discusses the normative frameworks that address the phenomenon of migration in the school systems of these three countries. The third section examines certain divergences in the literature among these countries: In the case of Spain, two related topics that are studied are academic results and segregation, whereas in Argentina and Chile this sort of research has not been conducted yet. The fourth section

describes public policies that address migration in the school system. Here, the main finding is that in Spain there are public policies that address the issue of migration and education. By contrast, the reality in Chile and Argentina is less clear in this respect because there is no systematic response in terms of public policies. The fifth section presents literature that shows that in the case of Spain the public policies have been the object of various studies and criticisms. The final section is the conclusion of this article.

Racism and Discrimination in School Systems

One of the most studied topics regarding the links between migration and the school system in the countries considered in this work is racism (for the Chilean case, see Bustos & Gairín, 2017; Carrillo, 2016; Cornejo & Rosales, 2015; Cortez et al., 2004; Darragh & Valoyes-Chávez, 2019; A. Hernández, 2016; F. Jiménez, 2014; F. Jiménez et al., 2017; Pavez, 2017; Riedemann & Stefoni, 2015; Salas et al., 2016; Stefoni et al., 2010; Suárez-Cabrera, 2015; Tijoux, 2013; Tijoux & Palominos, 2015; Zapata, 2017; for Argentina, see Beheran, 2012; Courtis, 2010; Courtis & Pacecca, 2010; Diez & Novaro, 2011; Di Napoli, 2013; Domenech, 2004; Gavazzo et al., 2014; Neufeld & Thisted, 1999; Novaro, 2012; and for Spain, see Bereményi & Carrasco, 2015; P. Blanco, 2010; Pedreño & Castellanos, 2010; Solana, 2001; SOS Racismo, 2017; Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008). According to contemporary theories, racism denotes the supposition of the existence of diverse races that make up the human species, and from that belief, asymmetrical and hierarchical social relationships arise (Memmi, 2000). Taguieff (2001) distinguishes two types of racism, namely, one of a biological type and one that focuses on cultural practices. Some authors also point out that racism constitutes a fundamentally discursive practice (Gillborn, 2000) that paradoxically tends to become naturalized and socially invisible (Van Dijk, 1992).

As noted above, Chile, Argentina, and Spain have all documented practices and structures marked by discrimination and racism that affect migrant students and descendants of migrants, alongside other groups such as indigenous people in the Latin American Countries (Chile and Argentina) (Canales & Webb, 2018; Quilaqueo et al., 2010; Treviño et al., 2017; Webb & Radcliffe, 2015) and different ethnicities and the gypsy ethnic group in Spain (Bereményi & Carrasco, 2015). This phenomenon has deep historical roots, which underpinned the projects of nation-state building in Chile and Argentina during the 19th and 20th centuries. Several studies have identified matrices of racism in which Latin American indigenous peoples and African aborigines are considered as inferior persons compared with Europeans (Tijoux, 2011; Stefoni & Stang, 2017, pp. 113–114). This Eurocentric and racist rationality operates at a cultural-symbolic level and results in hierarchies and inequalities between different groups in society.

In the Argentinian case, the construction of the nation-state entails Eurocentrism in which this country understands itself as composed of European migrants. During the 19th and 20th centuries, this country encouraged the migration of Europeans. Moreover, in Argentina, the building of the nation-state was associated with a series of imaginaries, which regarded the migration coming from other Latin American countries as otherness. This element shaped the social and cultural frames that explain racism toward these groups (Domenech & Pereira, 2017; Gavazzo et al., 2014; Novaro, 2012).

These matrices have their correlate in a series of racist practices against migrant students in the school systems of the three countries analyzed, and they are structural in nature. They are not particular events or episodes; instead, they are systems in which groups are located in different places of the social structure (Carrillo, 2016; Riedemann & Stefoni, 2015; Tijoux, 2013). Tijoux (2013) studied this phenomenon in schools in Santiago de Chile and showed how students, mainly of Peruvian origin, are discriminated and mistreated due to their place of origin by other actors in the school system. Meanwhile, Riedemann and Stefoni (2015) analyzed the racism that affects students of Haitian ancestry in the secondary level in the same city. The authors contrast the existence of racist practices with the narratives of various actors in school communities who deny the existence of such racism. According to this study, it is common to observe strategies that hide these practices, inasmuch as racism is seen as politically incorrect. A. Hernández (2016) also mentions that the main reasons, which explain racism against migrant students in Chile, are physical characteristics and their national origin. The groups that frequently receive humiliating and offensive treatment are the Peruvian and Afro-Colombian students (A. Hernández, 2016, p. 167). In general, Carrillo (2016) shows that the Chilean educational system would be based on socioeconomic segregation and a monocultural curricular model, where the latter is oriented toward cultural homogeneity and the supremacy of the national. This would generate the conditions of discrimination in schools, both at the discursive level (teaching content) and at the practical level (peer relations), despite the fact that there is no indicator that shows that immigration has negatively affected the Chilean educational system (Eyzaguirre et al., 2019, p. 183). This explanation of the Chilean case is in line with the evidence found by authors such as Cornejo and Rosales (2015) and Tijoux and Palominos (2015).

In the Argentine case, research shows that migrant students in the school system are subjected to situations of stigmatization, xenophobic practices, and exclusion (Beheran, 2012, p. 202). There is also a series of negative attributes that are placed upon migrant children and their families. Neufeld and Thisted (1999) note that this implies processes of racialization/alteration, whereby the difference is classified and evaluated in a negative and ethnocentric way by attributing behaviors and values to certain

phenotypic traits. They add that these processes of racialization mean that the configuration of the “we” is positively valued by negative opposition to designated others. Within the stereotypes associated with the different nationalities, one of the most mentioned is that received by people from Bolivia, where the “lack of orality,” “silence,” and the lack of “basic cultural norms” are usually mentioned. Meanwhile, Paraguayan people are associated with violence and promiscuity (Beheran, 2012, p. 208; Diez & Novaro, 2011; Novaro, 2012). This coincides with the findings of United Nations Children’s Fund (2013), institution that asserts that these students are “generally” labeled “by the same teachers, managers, and colleagues under concepts such as ‘lazy’, ‘slow’, ‘dirty’, ‘quiet’, among others” (p. 83).

In the case of Spain, some studies have shown that racism and discrimination affect migrant students. In this country too, it is possible to distinguish a cultural matrix of racism and discrimination that associates migration with social problems, and thereby stigmatizes migrants (Solana, 2001). This widespread racism underpins practices in schools such as the denial of scholarships or unjustified unequal treatments of students of foreign origin (SOS Racismo, 2017, p. 32). P. Blanco (2010) analyzed various situations of racism, discrimination, and violence in schools, showing that migrant students recognize the existence of practices and attitudes of rejection and ethnic discrimination. Furthermore, violence operates as a mechanism through which the exclusion of migrant students is materialized (P. Blanco, 2010, pp. 163–164). In general, this racism has as its main victims African and Latin American students (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008).

Normative Frameworks and Intercultural Education

Given the evidence recounted in the previous section, it is worth considering the normative frameworks that (at least discursively) seek to respond to the phenomenon of migration in the school systems of these three countries. In the three countries selected in this study, there are regulatory bodies that recognize education as a right, namely, the Inclusion Law 20,845 (Chile), the National Law 26,206 (Argentina), and the Organic Law 8/2013 for Improvement of Educational Quality (Spain). In the case of Chile, the Inclusion Law states in its first Article that “the system will encourage educational establishments to be a meeting place for students of different socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, gender, nationality or religion conditions.” In Argentina, the National Law incorporates concepts such as diversity and interculturality. It is relevant to observe how this regulation combines two impulses that seem to be contradictory in the literature: on the one hand, the recovery of an idea of a national we, and on the other hand, the recognition of diversity within the framework of democratic values (Soria, 2010). Finally, in Spain the Organic Law 8/2013 establishes

the duty of education administrations to guarantee education as a right to which all children and adolescents who enter the educational system can access (Capote & Nieto, 2017). Thus, “Spain does not link the right to education of children with the nationality of origin or the administrative status of their family” (Cabrera & Montero-Sieburth, 2014, p. 15).

Now, it is relevant to examine the concretization of the right to education throughout principles and procedures that operate within school systems. This is even more important in a context in which there is a clearly limited recognition of rights for migrants (Thayer & Stang, 2017). Regarding the focus that this article is developing, the discussion has been centered around debates on multiculturalism and interculturality. Multiculturalism is defined as a de facto situation in which contemporary societies are diverse. This diversity is reflected in the presence of groups that are differentiated by nationality, ethnicity, social class, beliefs, and so on (Stefoni et al., 2016). According to the literature “A multicultural society is one where individuals and groups of different cultures coexist within a common territory, but this does not necessarily imply that there is a communication or relationship between them” (Carter-Thuillier et al., 2018). For its part, interculturality goes one step further and indicates that it would be expected that the different groups within society should enjoy equal rights in the various spaces where they congregate and that these groups communicate between each other. Moreover, it assumes that the groups recognize each other and can evaluate their social relations from the perspective of the interests and needs of others. Thus, the intercultural approach implies knowing others, valuing them for what they are, and fostering spaces of dialogue between all actors.

Interculturality is opposed to assimilation, which involves various groups adapting to the normative ideal commonly associated with the nation. This implies the acquisition of ways of seeing and doing proper to the host society, thus nullifying diversity (Van Dijk, 2013). In the research on migration and education in the three countries, the rationalities that tend to prevail are assimilationist (Beheran, 2012; Bordegaray & Novaro, 2004; Gavazzo et al., 2014; González et al., 2012; A. Hernández, 2016; Martínez de Lizarrondo, 2009; Novaro, 2012; Salas et al., 2016, p. 15; Soria, 2010; Stefoni et al., 2016). Faced with this situation, a series of suggestions have been developed to incorporate the intercultural approach.

Following Van Dijk (2013), Stefoni et al. (2016, pp. 162–163) have developed the following criteria for the incorporation of intercultural education in social settings where racism prevails: (a) the different groups in society should know about each other as much as possible; (b) the different groups should communicate between each other; (c) it is necessary to provide intercultural information to the whole society; (d) representatives of migrants should be included in collective decision; and (e) the authorities have to recognize the interests and needs of all groups in society. These principles are relevant and could shape intercultural education, and as the

literature state that just as racism is a system of learned justification, so too can anti-racism be taught. In this regard, “explicit anti-racist policies must be an integral part of all public policies and all decision-making processes” (Van Dijk, 2013, p. 119). One interesting example of intercultural education is related to sports. Bastian Carter-Thuillier et al. (2017) and others have studied the positive effects that these practices could have on intercultural education, insofar as throughout sports students can engage with others and learn more about their differences and similarities.

Now, it is important to recognize that intercultural education is not an exclusive approach toward migrants. Instead, it also refers to the policies to deal with inequalities, racism, and social marginalization that affect different groups based on their ethnicity. In the case of Argentina and Chile, intercultural education begins in the 1990s, and its focus was indigenous populations. It is important to notice that these policies have been seen as assimilationist (Quilaqueo et al., 2010; Quilaqueo & Sartorello, 2019; Treviño et al., 2017). In these two countries, one of the chief policies is the so-called “bilingual intercultural education” (BIE), which seeks to preserve the native languages. In the Chilean case after almost 15 years of BIE, since 2009 it has established the “Sector de Lengua Indígena,” which implies the design of a specific curriculum for the most representative native languages in the country (Aymara, Mapudungun, Quechua and Rapa Nui) and that also includes the specific cultures. In Spain, intercultural education also is not exclusive to migrants, but it includes different ethnicities and the gypsy group (Besalú, 2002) (in the section “Critical Assessment of the Policies in Spain,” all the relevant bibliography for the Spanish case is provided).

In the specific case of intercultural education and migration, one of the concrete aspects that the literature has developed is the need to focus on developing the school curriculum. In this context, the literature shows that there is a contradiction between the need to incorporate new elements into the curriculum and the permanence of the “institutional implementation of the standard curriculum, which is materialized in a permanent pressure to comply with external indicators linked to certain standardized knowledge and skills” such as Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación (SIMCE) (Stefoni et al., 2016, p. 173). In the face of this tension, the research on the topic recommends allowing the generation of a flexible curriculum in multicultural contexts, where planning could help to bring together the contents declared in the curricular framework and the knowledge of groups currently engaged in the educational communities (A. Hernández, 2016).

This is especially relevant in counteracting assimilationist policies that, in the case of Chile for example, find expression in the form of a “Chilean curriculum” (A. Hernández, 2016). Moreover, it is a clear shortcoming of the fact that the curriculum implemented in schools with migrant students has not undergone any major changes. As A. Hernández

(2016) has noted, “curricular contextualization” is “reduced to the insertion of data or information isolated from other cultures, without major restructuring of it” (p. 168) of the curriculum. Against this, the literature recommends the incorporation of the knowledge of other cultures into the curriculum (Mondaca et al., 2013). Another suggestion refers to understand the curricula of the countries of origin of the migrant population, in terms of both content and methodologies, as this would facilitate the teaching-learning process (Mondaca et al., 2013).

In Argentina, there are also tensions within the incorporation of interculturality, particularly in respect to curricular issues. For instance, Beheran observes that while in some cases teachers can recognize the particularities of migrant children, this does not imply that there are changes introduced into the curriculum. Furthermore, the knowledge that remains “often has little to do with the sociocultural diversity that manifests itself in school spaces” (Beheran, 2012, p. 212). Consequently, diversity is not incorporated into the curricular level, which results in the absence of a system, which is sufficiently sensitive to students’ cultural and social backgrounds. As Beheran (2012) notes, “many teachers consider that the only” legitimate “knowledge is that which is taught in the school space” (p. 213). In short, interculturality is situated only at the level of discourse, and not at the level of institutions and practices (Novaro, 2012; Soria, 2010).

In the case of Spain, also the chief relevance of intercultural education is mentioned. In this regard, the need to promote education for the conservation of the mother languages of the migrant students is mentioned, although “the promotion of the languages of origin has hardly been promoted” (Martínez de Lizarrondo, 2009, p. 263). This would constitute a weakness because interculturality implies the recognition of migrants’ cultures, and therefore, policies aimed at maintaining mother tongues would move in this direction. Finally, another suggestion that is made in the case of Spain (though it is also present in the research on Chile and Argentina) is the establishment of teaching practices that incorporate interculturality (González et al., 2012, p. 118; Salas et al., 2016, p. 16; see also Beheran, 2012; Superintendency of Education, 2016).

Divergences: Academic Results and Segregation

As we have shown, in Chile, Argentina, and Spain, one of the problems associated with migration and the school system is racism. In that context, the chief normative point of reference that seeks to direct public policies is that of intercultural education. However, it is also important to highlight the existence of certain divergences in the literature among these countries. In the case of Spain, there are systematic works that examine academic results and segregation, whereas in Argentina and Chile this sort of research has not been conducted in the same degree. Nevertheless, in the

Chilean case it is important to mention two studies that explore the patterns of inclusion and exclusion of migrant students (Eyzaguirre et al., 2019; Villalobos & Carrillo, 2014). Villalobos and Carrillo show that migrant students are concentrated in Region Metropolitana and in the regions of the North (Arica y Parinacota, Tarapacá, and Antofagasta). In addition, according to the two studies, migrant students are normally concentrated in certain schools, namely, public and poorer schools. This happens because it seems that migrant families prefer schools that already have migrant students (see also Joiko & Vasquez, 2016). Similarly, limited economic resources and social networks, migratory policies, and policies of access are elements that explain this concentration. In terms of academic results, it is not very clear whether migrant students have lower or higher results than Chilean students (Eyzaguirre et al., 2019; Villalobos & Carrillo, 2014).

Moreover, in the case of Chile, an important body of literature has provided segregation data in intercultural education with an indigenous focus (nonmigrants). According to this research, there are important inequalities in the system between indigenous and nonindigenous students, which are detrimental for the former (Canales & Webb, 2018; McEwan, 2004, 2008; Noe et al., 2005; Treviño et al., 2017; Undurraga, 2014; Webb & Radcliffe, 2015). Now, returning to the focus on migration, in what follows, the article discusses these two axes of research in the case of Spain.

In the context of Spain, there is a considerable amount of research which investigates the relationship between migration and academic results. In this type of research, quantitative methodological approaches tend to prevail because these methodologies are better suited, than qualitative approaches, to analyze this issue. In general, the migrant population has poorer academic results than the Spanish national population (Garrido & Cebolla, 2010; Rahona & Morales, 2013; Salinas & Santín, 2012; Zinovyeva et al., 2008). However, the effect is commonly explained by variables associated with the socioeconomic situation of migrants (Calero et al., 2009; Calero & Waisgrais, 2008). In particular, more precarious work situations of the parents negatively affect the performance of the students. It is also important to note that the worst academic results tend to be reduced as migrants spend more time in the host country (Zinovyeva et al., 2008).

This explains how the academic results differ in relation to whether the students are first- or second-generation migrants. In the case of the first generation, academic achievements tend to be lower than those of nationals, whereas for students of second generation, the difference between their academic results and those of nationals may or may not be significant (Rahona & Morales, 2013). The authors add that “the greater educational performance of second-generation immigrant students is a consequence of the fact that they were born in Spain and, therefore, do not require a period of assimilation to adapt to the environment” (Rahona & Morales, 2013, p. 53).

On the contrary, several authors have studied the relationship between academic results and segregation in the Spanish context. Starting from the hypothesis of the effects of pairs (group effects), the research shows that the groups to which students belong is an important variable that explains academic results (Hanushek et al., 2003). It has been observed that in the schools where there is a significant concentration of migrant students, academic results are worse than in schools with fewer migrants (Garrido & Cebolla, 2010; Salinas & Santín, 2012; Sánchez-Hugalde, 2007). This same relationship has been documented in other studies (Salinas & Santín, 2012; Sánchez-Hugalde, 2007, p. 1; Pedraja-Chaparro et al., 2016).

As can be seen, segregation has been an essential variable within the studies on academic results and migration. Taking into account the three cases, segregation and migration in the school system are social issues studied mainly in the Spanish case. And the evidence shows that migrant and migrant-origin students tend to concentrate in specific educational centers. To understand these dynamics, it is important to specify how establishments in Spain are divided according to their ownership, which can be public, private, or concerted. The public establishments are those that operate primarily with state resources; the private ones are those financed with funds from private, non-state actors. The concerted ones are “those centers whose owner is a private individual or legal entity, but which are sustained with public funds” (Rahona & Morales, 2013, p. 55). As in the case of Chile with the system of subsidized establishments, the logic behind the model of schools set up in Spain is to extend families’ freedom of choice. However, research has questioned whether “the system of educational concerts has contributed to equalizing the opportunities for choosing educational centers for all families” (Mancebón & Pérez-Ximénez, 2007, p. 93). Rather, the opportunities for choice are mainly mediated by socioeconomic differences. Several authors argue that such socioeconomic inequality would result in school segregation whereby migrant students will tend to be concentrated in public establishments (Capote & Nieto, 2017; Rahona & Morales, 2013; Salinas & Santín, 2012).

One factor behind this phenomenon is that generally the families of native students are better off than the families of migrant students (in terms of income and social status). And they tend to choose private and subsidized centers (García-Castaño & Rubio, 2013; Salinas & Santín, 2012). This happens because families think that the arrival of migrant students will negatively affect the quality of schools. As a result, they would tend to self-segregate (Martínez de Lizarrondo, 2009, p. 260; Joiko & Vasquez, 2016). Moreover, migrants are not aware of their right to access both public and private schools, regardless of the socioeconomic status. However, in the concerted centers, a series of practices that constitute barriers to the access of migrant students will be developed (Capote & Nieto, 2017; Martínez de Lizarrondo, 2009, p. 260; Rahona & Morales, 2013; Villarroja, 2003, p. 203).

Divergences: Public Policies on Migration and the School System

In this section, the article discusses the presence of public policies in the three case studies considered in this investigation. The main finding is that in Spain there are public policies that address the issue of migration and education. By contrast, the reality in Chile and Argentina is less clear in this respect because there is no systematic response in terms of public policies (Beheran, 2012; Castillo, 2016; Joiko & Vasquez, 2016; Novaro, 2012; Salas et al., 2016; Soria, 2010; Stefoni et al., 2016). One important issue discussed in the literature in Chile is school access for migrant students. In this regard, Joiko and Vásquez (2016) studied how the election process “can act as a form of inclusion in the educational system and in society in general” (p. 132). Specifically, the objective of their study was “to know the experiences of migrant families when choosing a school” (Joiko & Vasquez, 2016, p. 133). This research showed, on the one hand, that migrant families access information from formal spaces about schools and enrollment possibilities (e.g., the website of the Ministry of Education). On the other hand, there are also informal mechanisms that explain the practices of choice: Visit the schools close to home and through the information available in their social networks.

In general, the literature in Chile and Argentina shows that teachers intuitively seek to carry out actions aimed at the development of intercultural education. And therefore, they do not know whether and to what degree they are actually implementing the proper practices. The professionals seek to “react intuitively to the sociocultural transformation experienced by the establishments” (Castillo, 2016, p. 6). Therefore, they ask the Ministry of Education to support them with specific guidelines and policies on the subject (Salas et al., 2016; Stefoni et al., 2016). In this regard, Castillo (2016) notes the “nonexistence of a national policy that guides the daily practice of schools” (p. 1), and that “as regards the implementation of educational policies aimed at the migrant population, there have been no significant advances either” (Castillo, 2016, p. 5; see also Carrillo, 2014).

In contrast to the tension between the migratory reality and the public response in Chile and Argentina, the situation in Spain is rather different. In this country, the “reception programs for immigrant students” and those with “specialized professionals” stand out (Rahona & Morales, 2013, p. 63). These are teachers, tutors, and intercultural mediators, who help to integrate students and their families into schools. Regarding the reception programs, all the Spanish autonomous communities have promoted them because they are seen as vital to adequately deal with migration (Martínez de Lizarrondo, 2009, p. 253).

One of the central aspects of the reception programs is the support they give to children so that they acquire a level of linguistic competence that allows them to integrate and be included in the school system. This aspect combines

language learning with the acquisition of competencies and curricular contents (M. Blanco, 2002). That is why, in the Spanish school system, it is considered

convenient that immigrant students, at the beginning of their schooling, have a period of adaptation to the school institution. This adaptation should be focused on both language learning and knowledge of the guidelines of conduct; specific to the educational center. (Rahona & Morales, 2013, p. 65)

In this way, the “linguistic reception rooms” are managed by the different autonomous communities (Capote & Nieto, 2017, p. 94). The literature also mentions the existence of compensation programs aimed at “students with poor schooling and linguistic conditions” (Rahona & Morales, 2013, p. 64). Such programs admit students with at least 2 years of curricular deficit (M. Hernández et al., 2016).

Critical Assessment of the Policies in Spain

What has been shown thus far is that Spain does have public policies aimed at the inclusion of migrant students. It should be noted at this point that these policies have been the object of various studies and criticisms, both at the level of the autonomous communities and at the national level. One of the main issues that has been examined in the literature is the extent to which intercultural education has been incorporated into the system (T. Aguado et al., 2003; Akkari & Ferrer, 2000; Besalú, 2002; Borrero, 2012; Buendía et al., 2004; Donoso et al., 2009; Escarbajal, 2014; Espejo, 2008; Fernández & García, 2015; Flores-Aguilar et al., 2019; García et al., 2008; R. Jiménez, 2012; Jociles, 2007; Leiva, 2012; A. Martínez, 2007; R. Martínez et al., 2010; Márquez-Lepe & García-Cano, 2014; Nieto & Santos, 1997; Olmos, 2016; Olmos & Contini, 2016; R. Rodríguez, 2009; N. Rodríguez et al., 2011; Soriano & Peñalva, 2011; Torrego, 1997). This literature agrees that the incorporation of intercultural competencies into the education system should continue to be promoted (Donoso et al., 2009, p. 165; Martínez de Lizarrondo, 2009, p. 263). However, a significant limitation remains, one that is structural. Essentially, although diversity is a fact, there is not a “true culture of diversity” (Borrero, 2012, p. 360) to support these policies over time. Instead, racism, stigmatization, and the assimilationist rationality prevail.

A. Martínez (2007) adds that Spain has two political limitations in its attempts to confront immigration and the management of cultural diversity. First, it does not have a policy based on decentralization, and second, it does not have a well-defined migration policy. Moreover, immigration policies do not have a privileged position within public policies (Espejo, 2008, p. 41). In this context, there is no general education policy indicating the specific interventions that should be applied in the schools. Rather, each

autonomous community decides how to implement their own specific programs (O. Aguado, 1999; Bartolomé, 1997; Garreta, 2003; Martín et al., 2003; A. Martínez, 2007, p. 287). García et al. (2008) agree with this description, adding that in Spain, as in many other countries, there is a gap between public discourses that address the issue of diversity (linguistic and cultural) and the concrete reality of social contexts, such as schools. Thus, although there has been a lot of normative and discursive progress, the same cannot be said of the concrete measures put in place (A. Martínez, 2007, p. 314).

Similarly, several authors point out that educational policies in Spain contain assimilationists and compensatory views of intercultural education. Therefore, the policies are centered on the acquisition and compensation of linguistic skills on the part of the foreign students, as the first focus, and on the integration of the difference, as the second focus. Consequently, these policies center primarily on immigrant students acquiring language competency, with the integration of their differences following afterward (Espejo, 2008, p. 40). This rationality survives, despite the linguistic and cultural diversity that currently characterizes the country. In addition, the majority culture, in each of the territories, continues to prevail over foreign cultures, which are associated with marginalization and social conflict (Akkari & Ferrer, 2000, p. 312).

An additional connected issue raised in the literature is teacher training. Pedagogical changes to teacher training that promote the adaptation required adequately face these socio-cultural changes that have not been forthcoming (Akkari & Ferrer, 2000; Bartolomé, 1997; Jordán, 2004; Muñoz, 2002). Leiva (2012) even maintains that the training of teachers in intercultural matters has been excluded from the didactic formation, both in the initial training and in the continuing training of the teachers (p. 8). Although in recent years the situation has improved, education policy remains predominantly the cognitivist training of teachers. This leaves the rest of the educational community without training in intercultural competencies (Leiva, 2012, p. 8).

T. Aguado et al. (2003) take a more critical line, claiming that educational centers, far from helping the sociocultural integration of immigrant students, actually contribute to the discrimination of these and other groups of students. This is done through a series of explicit practices (such as the formal curriculum) and implicit practices (such as the hidden curriculum). This is particularly problematic, where there is a tendency among teachers to try to make cultural differences invisible, assuming that this would guarantee equal opportunities (T. Aguado et al., 2003, p. 341). Furthermore, Fernández and García who examine one specific program note that there are “special classrooms” for students who do not know Spanish. The authors conclude that this policy is part of a series of regulated devices that wish to protect native students and teachers from diversity, where the latter is seen as a new systemic “problem” (Fernández & García, 2015, p. 486).

In general, these studies do show that there has been an attempt to incorporate intercultural education policies. There are a number of problems, however, that make it difficult to incorporate them properly. Therefore, intercultural education, in Spain, continues to inadequately address cultural diversity (T. Aguado et al., 2003, p. 340). This general diagnosis reveals the need to create and support policies that build intercultural competencies, in accordance with the new sociocultural reality of the education system (Leiva, 2012).

Conclusion

Our analysis allows us to establish two conclusions and to propose a suggestion for the development of public policies in Chile and in Argentina. (a) In the three cases, migration is of a family type, which explains the presence of children of migrant origin in the school systems of these three countries. Although in the three countries education is a basic right, in all the cases there are relationships characterized by violence, discrimination, and racism within the school systems. This results in social bonds that are marked by asymmetries between nationals and migrants, and severe stigmatization of migrants or sons and daughters of migrants. In this scenario, the recommendation for public policy in all countries is the incorporation of intercultural education, understood as a set of practices and institutions that protect and guarantee equality and recognition among the different actors that congregate in the school system.

(b) There is a difference between the three countries in terms of the development of policies regarding this issue. Spain stands out in terms of the establishment of several measures that according to the literature are necessary and positive. The situation is different in Chile and Argentina, where there are notorious deficits in terms of the development of public policies to attend the migratory phenomenon and its pressure in the school system. In these Latin American countries, only isolated actions implemented by the teachers and the schools aim to address the migratory issue, but there are not guidelines defined by the state.

(c) An additional difference between the case studies is that in Spain there are consolidated bodies of research that have studied two relevant aspects: differentiations regarding academic results between migrants and nationals, and the link between school segregation and migration. This research field is not consolidated in Chile and Argentina. That said, as the article shows there are authors who have published on these issues in the Chilean case, which certainly is an important effort and a starting point to carry out these studies. We surmise that the development of both public policies and consolidated research in this area are complementary processes that can be mutually explained and reinforced. This allows us to suggest that the development of this type of research can be a good starting point for motivating the development of concrete public policies in this field in both Chile and Argentina.

The article has shown that Spain is an example in terms of the amount and quality of research on the topic and in terms of the development of public policies on the issue. Nevertheless, the critical assessment developed in the last section shows that even when these policies are implemented, they still have significant shortcomings. Hence, the Spanish case complements the previous discussion of Latin American countries, by providing examples of the sort of studies that can be carried out in this area. Moreover, this European case is essential to examine the pros and cons of the development of these public policies.

Acknowledgments

The support of the Framework Agreement, Initial Teacher Training, UTA1856 is gratefully acknowledged. The second author also thanks Becas Chile—Doctorate Scholarship Program of CONICYT.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by Fondecyt N° 1191317, UTA Mayor 5724-19 and the support of the Framework Agreement, Initial Teacher Training, UTA-1856.

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