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**Migration and education: Voices and silencing of
immigration in Chile**

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Migration and education: Voices and silencing of immigration in Chile

Drawing on a series of qualitative interviews, focus groups and in-situ observations in a Chilean school, this paper examines how the school system integrates children of Haitian immigrants. The research was conducted in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago where sixty-five point two of the total percentage of international immigrants living in Chile reside according to the 2017 census conducted by the National Statistics Institute (INE). The selected school is an Elementary Public one, because the number of students coming from immigration is distributed principally in these schools and fifty-eight percent of foreign students are concentrated in this level of education.

I. Research context in Chile

Figure n° 1 shows the Percentage of international immigrants according to the region of habitual residence. The red ellipse marks the city of Santiago de Chile. Highlighted in brown is the number of international immigrants with respect to the total population that resides in Santiago. In blue, the total number of the resident population in Santiago. With yellow, the percentage of international immigrants with respect to the total population residing in Santiago. In addition, with green colour, the percentage of international immigrants residing in Santiago, in relation to the total number of migrants residing in Chile.

Región de residencia habitual	Inmigrantes internacionales	Población residente	Porcentaje de fila (%)	Porcentaje de columna (%)
Arica y Parnacota	18.015	220.254	8,2	2,4
Tarapacá	43.646	319.289	13,7	5,9
Antofagasta	62.663	571.446	11,0	8,4
Atacama	8.798	282.268	3,1	1,2
Coquimbo	14.741	739.977	2,0	2,0
Valparaíso	40.166	1.765.261	2,3	5,4
Metropolitana	486.568	6.962.102	7,0	65,2
O'Higgins	13.242	893.155	1,5	1,8
Maule	10.780	1.020.162	1,1	1,4
Ñuble	3.736	469.542	0,8	0,5
Biobío	12.144	1.531.365	0,8	1,6
La Araucanía	10.674	929.307	1,1	1,4
Los Ríos	3.768	371.518	1,0	0,5
Los Lagos	10.034	807.046	1,2	1,3
Aysén	2.083	98.427	2,1	0,3
Magallanes	4.714	160.220	2,9	0,6
TOTAL	745.772	12.141.339	4,35	100,0

Figure n° 1: Percentage of international immigrants by region of habitual residence: Synthesis results of Census 2017. Source: National Statistics Institute of Chile.

The migratory movements are a complex phenomenon, even more so if we consider that they not only involve the arrival of adults, but also the presence of children. Some arrive together with their families, in other cases they enter after family reunification processes, and others are born in Chile. In this presentation, I speak of children coming from immigration, because their presence in Chile originates as a consequence of the migratory phenomenon. It is important to make this clarification, for two fundamental reasons: first, because children are usually named as immigrants; and according to empirical evidence, in most cases not even adults

have consulted their opinion on their transfer from one country to another. Some girls and boys who participated in this investigation expressed that they had not been informed before travelling. Therefore, the decision was exclusive to the adults. Second, they are usually named as children of immigrants, and according to empirical evidence, some are in Chile under the responsibility of another family member or adult who is not the mother or father. In several cases, one or both parents remain in the country of origin of the child.

The purpose of reflecting critically on how children are named in migratory processes has to do with the nametags that we assign to them and all the symbolic load that these tags have. Therefore, when they are named in one way or another, it is necessary to reflect critically on the set of symbolic constructions that come into play. The children coming from immigration enter schools as the main space for their socialisation and education. There are three main reasons for this: a) Elementary and secondary school is obligatory in Chile; b) Adults have an interest in sending children to school in the country of destination; and c) Immigrants need to insert quickly into the work space when they arrive in Chile; and according to their discourses, the school represents a space of safety and protection for children. However, in recent years, the increase in the number of immigrant children in the Chilean education system has been a social phenomenon that has impacted schools and their educational communities.

Figure n° 2 shows the enrolment of Chilean, foreign and naturalised students in the Chilean school system between 2015 and 2017. However, although the number of foreign students in the official registry is seventy-seven thousand six hundred and eight, this data is inconsistent, because some schools mix information between Chilean students, students from a foreign country or students who have obtained Chilean nationality.

Año	Chilenos(as)	Extranjeros(as)	Nacionalizados(as)	Total
2015	3.517.269	30.625	951	3.548.845
2016	3.489.814	61.086	49	3.550.949
2017	3.480.739	77.608	47	3.558.394

Figure n° 2: Number of Chilean, foreign and naturalised students registered in the Chilean school system between 2015 and 2017. Source: Information from the Statistics Unit, Centre for Studies, Ministry of National Education of Chile 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The following figure n°3 shows the distribution of students in descending order by country of origin for the year 2017, which correspond principally to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, figure n° 4 shows the distribution of Chilean and foreign students by level of education for the year 2017, and principally concentrate on basic elementary education.

Pais
Chile
Perú
Colombia
Bolivia
Venezuela
Haití
Ecuador
Argentina
Sin información
Otros

Figure nº 3: Distribution of students by country of origin in 2017. Map of foreign students in the Chilean school system (2015-2017).

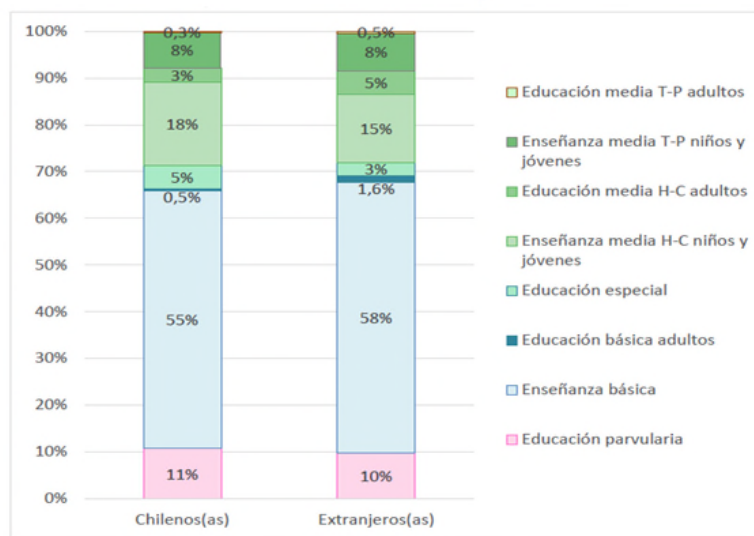


Figure nº 4: Distribution of Chilean and foreign students by level of education for the year 2017. Map of foreign students in the Chilean school system (2015-2017).

2. Investigating institutionalised school practices: Objectives and importance of the research

The central objective of this contribution is to present some of the main findings of the doctoral thesis research, whose objective was to study institutionalised school practises in relation to the socio-cultural and political processes of Chilean elementary schools, with high enrolment of students who come from immigration.

The importance of investigating institutionalised school practices lies in the fact that they are one of the relevant aspects of school life and the socio-cultural and political processes that take place in schools. Institutionalised school practices capture the subject (Larrosa, 1995). This is produced by the characteristics of these practices, because they have patterns of order, repeated patterns of action, are dynamic and are implemented systematically. Therefore, their deployment takes place from and for the educational institution, because they are assigned a categorical value that justifies and legitimises their existence.

In this sense, institutionalised school practices can manifest as directed or undirected signals in reinforcing political and socio-cultural assumptions (Lutz and Ramsey, 1973). This corresponds to the subsystem that the school reproduces for the socialisation of students and its function of uniting the members of the educational community, around values and a sense of moral community. According to the objectives stated in the mission and institutional vision declared in the educational project, each school transmits in a visible or invisible way, a certain group of values, norms, beliefs, and the cultural heritage on which the society in which it is located is based. It should be remembered that the school represents one of the institutional mechanisms created by the State to ensure social reproduction. For this reason, the experiences that take place in the school do not emerge in isolation from the structural processes of the society in which it is located.

Therefore, the socio-cultural and political processes that take place in schools are permeated by historical issues; by reasons of political, social and economic contingencies; by the ideological construction of the phenomenon of immigration as a problem; and by the construction of physical and symbolic frontiers; among others.

3. Main findings

A **first** finding is that the majority of people interviewed who work in educational institutions; conceive the phenomenon of migration as a problem. The categories 'race', 'nation' and 'class' intersect and produce meanings on the students, in order to classify them differently according to their skin colour, country of origin and economic situation. In the case of those who come from Haiti, the symbolic and ideological construction around poverty falls on them to leave them devoid of any form of capital. For example, although students from Haiti currently live in marginalised conditions in Chile, it is often believed that even in marginalised conditions, they are better off in Chile than in Haiti. Conceiving the phenomenon of migration as a problem is related to the intersection of the categories 'race', 'nation' and 'class', in order to place students coming from immigration in Chile, principally those coming from Haiti, in a place of permanent exclusion.

A **second** finding refers to the fact that the students originating from Chilean immigration are conceived symbolically in a constant dichotomy. Their acceptance and rejection are permanently at stake in the studied school institutions. This reproduces the fragmentation of the subject and its social exclusion. The presence of children coming from immigration revitalises the subsistence of public educational institutions, because it contributes to balancing the loss of enrolment thereby avoiding their closure. In addition, their presence disrupts the socially constructed reality of school. This happens because the school has a series of routines and prescriptions that are functional for its maintenance and reproduction. Therefore, the emergence of new ways of doing and moving in the social space makes social interactions tense. There are intentional actions, principally by teachers and inspectors in these schools, to ensure that girls and boys incorporate ways of being that conform to Chilean ways.

A **third** finding is associated with the normalisation and corporeal discipline of girls and boys. There is intervention on the bodies and emotions of the subject, through different control mechanisms. The institutional power operates, for example: a) standing up to greet the teacher each time the teacher enters the classroom; b) raising one's hand to ask for one's turn to speak; c) remaining seated in the classroom at all times, only leave if authorised by the teacher; and d) occupying a specific place assigned by the teacher in the classroom. This series of practices are articulated with the norms and rules established to regulate interactions in the daily lives of students, to order their body movement, and to control their actions.

A **fourth** finding is related to the teaching of the Spanish language as an institutionalised school practice, and its implications in the daily life of the school. The construction of the linguistic ideology was built through the historicisation of the national language, and as a political and identity project, it had to last in time. For this purpose, the school was one of the fundamental mechanisms, and became obligatory teaching of Spanish. For Metzelin (2011), in Chile it was important to insist on a set of linguistic ideologies, which emerged to highlight nationalist positions on the language, because when the country became independent Spanish language had already been standardised, especially by the Real Spanish Academy. The Spanish language used in Chile has its own characteristics that have been constructed symbolically and that respond to a national linguistic unit. This represents some difficulties for Spanish-speaking students coming from immigration. However, for non-Spanish-speaking students, this means a linguistic barrier that hinders their possibilities of interaction, and emotional and cognitive development. This is the case of Haitian students, because their language is Creole.

In the discourse of staff working in educational institutions, there is a relative undervaluation of creole. Some teachers expressed, for example: a) Haitian students arrived in Chile and have to speak Spanish; b) Creole is only spoken by Haitians who have no education, because others speak French; c) students speak Creole, but sometimes they cannot even write it; d) only 20% of teachers would like to learn some phrases in Creole language to speak to students.

A **fifth** finding relates to the ideal representation of the Chilean nation, which is learned in school. This operates as explicit and implicit identity references, for example through curricular content; ethical and moral formation; the celebration of civic acts, and especially the celebration of Chilean national holidays. Precisely the symbolic construction of the national identity implies the construction of a 'we', oriented to differentiate from the 'others'. Thus, identity markers are established, such as patriotic symbols - with the purpose of locating people in a particular space and time.



Picture nº 1: Group workshops. Credit: Claudia Carrillo-Sánchez (2018)

The paintings made by the children in the group workshops express their relationship with the flag as a symbol of national identification. This symbolic construction is associated with the migratory trajectory, the number of years of residence in Chile and the origin of the parents.

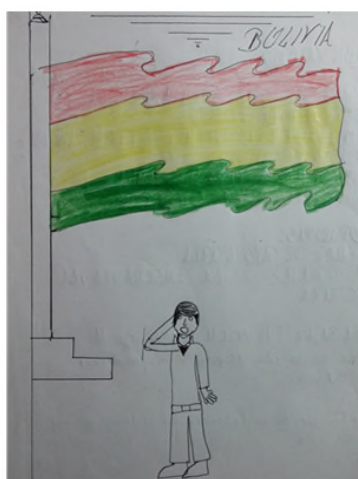


Illustration No. 4.
Elaborated by TG_Student 4_11 years_Bolivia_1 year in Chile.



Illustration No. 22
Elaborated by TG_Student 3_11 years_Peru 3 years in Chile.

Picture nº 2: Group workshops. Credit: Claudia Carrillo-Sánchez (2018)

In a school-life scenario, the strength of incorporation of these symbols is usually reinforced through educational discourse. It is in the realm of the symbolic, that language operates a reproduction of physical and imaginary frontiers. Mainly the national anthem, the Chilean flag and coat of arms are symbols of national continuation and Chilean identity (Sagredo, 2013).

A **sixth** finding is associated with the historical denial of the black presence in Chile. To the climatic conditions of Chile, was attributed the life of some and the death of others. According to Palacios (1918), the Chilean climate would be very adapted to the 'races' of northern Europe, because the softness would greatly favour the multiplication of the blond 'race' from Spain. However, this climate would be unfavourable towards blacks,

because they came directly from hot regions of Africa. When they found the temperate and cold climate in Chile, they died.



Picture n° 3: *Raza Chilena*, by Nicolás Palacios. Credit: Claudia Carrillo-Sánchez (2018)

This negation responds to the ideological construction of the 'Chilean race'. It is worth remembering that for Palacios (1918), 'the legitimate Chilean does not have Latin blood in his veins, no matter how much he speaks romance and bears Castilian surnames' (p. 38). These ideas are part of the myths historically constructed to invisibilise the black presence in Chile. Black bodies are perceived as 'cursed' corporality that seems to disrupt everyday Chilean life; they are bodies with volumes, expressions, forms, movements and curves that attract attention.

Today, in the 21st century, racist stories are closely related to the past, and span over a historical continuum that still prevails in Chile. Today the black population of foreign origin represents danger; they are seen as barbarians distant from the human and proximate to the animal. This accumulation of negative meanings reproduces their social death. In synthesis, the forms in which contemporary racism emerges, conjugates old elements with renewed discourses, practices and subjects.

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