

Proliferation of borders in educational policies in migratory contexts in Chile

Proliferación de fronteras en las políticas educativas en contextos migratorios en Chile

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Abstract

The article aims to critically analyse how national education policies have contributed to the production of everyday borders in the educational experiences of children and adolescents in migratory contexts, with a special focus on the Norte Grande of Chile. The article is based on a qualitative study in which interviews with key informants and a systematization of public policies were carried out. For the theoretical-empirical work, two theoretical currents are articulated: border studies and critical interculturality. From the analysis of policies and regulations between 1990 and 2021, it is observed that the increase in the migratory phenomenon has reproduced a bordering of educational policies in terms of their operation and language, influencing the racialization of borders, the exclusion of migrant children, and the extension of border control towards schools. The article concluded that the field of education is a form of bordering beyond geo-political boundaries and border zones.

Keywords: educational policies, border studies, critical interculturality, bordering, Great North.

Resumen

El artículo tiene por objetivo analizar críticamente cómo las políticas educativas nacionales han contribuido en la producción de fronteras cotidianas en las experiencias educativas de niñas, niños y adolescentes en contextos migratorios, especialmente en el norte de Chile. El artículo se basa en un estudio cualitativo donde se realizaron entrevistas a informantes clave y una sistematización de políticas públicas. Para el trabajo teórico-empírico se articularon dos corrientes teóricas: los estudios fronterizos junto a la interculturalidad crítica. A partir del análisis de las políticas y normativas entre 1990 y 2021, se observa que el aumento del fenómeno migratorio ha reproducido una fronterización de las políticas educativas en cuanto a su funcionamiento y lenguaje, que influye en la racialización de las fronteras, la exclusión de la niñez migrante y la extensión

Received on April 19, 2022.

Accepted on January 11, 2023.

Published on January 23, 2023.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE LANGUAGE:
SPANISH.



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CITATION: Joiko, S. (2023). Proliferación de fronteras en las políticas educativas en contextos migratorios en Chile [Proliferation of borders in educational policies in migratory contexts in Chile]. *Estudios Fronterizos*, 24, e112. <https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2301112>

del control fronterizo hacia las escuelas. El artículo concluye que el campo educativo es una forma de fronterización más allá de los límites geopolíticos y zonas fronterizas.

Palabras clave: políticas educativas, estudios fronterizos, interculturalidad crítica, fronterización, Norte Grande.

Introduction

In Latin America and the Caribbean, internal and intraregional migratory movements have existed for a long time (Acosta Arcarazo, 2017); however, only recently has migration, as a phenomenon of study, “become more complex to be formulated as an identity process, as a border construction” (Lube-Guizardi et al., 2014, p. 10). Thus, there is an intersection between borders and human mobility, which means that borders, as important elements of this movement, have become a phenomenon to be studied (Tapia Ladino, 2017). Likewise, currently, there is a proliferation of borders within nonborder territories (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017). That is, not only is the impact of geopolitical borders on people and society studied but so are the social, cultural and political processes involved (Tapia Ladino, 2022) that configure different forms of social, cultural, symbolic, linguistic and material bordering.

In Chile, there has been a recent increase in the migrant population, and two out of every ten people who migrate to the territory are children and adolescents of school age (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas & Departamento de Extranjería y Migraciones, 2021). Therefore, because migratory movements involve not only adults, the objective of this article is to critically analyze how educational policies at the national level have contributed to the production of daily borders in the educational experiences of migrants, with a special focus on Norte Grande in Chile, which includes the borderlands of Arica and Parinacota, Tarapacá and Antofagasta.

This analysis is important given that as Nash & Reid (2010) point out, the processes of state bordering acquire a double meaning, on the one hand, as processes related to state territorial boundaries and, on the other hand, as social and cultural symbolic lines of inclusion and difference. In this sense, educational policies toward migrant children and adolescents or children of migrants represent a rebordering (Ramos Rodríguez & Tapia Ladino, 2019) because new institutions and resources are means to differentiate and exemplify what has been called relocation of the border (Ramos Rodríguez & Tapia Ladino, 2019). In other words, borders and their control and surveillance functions are no longer found only in neighboring places but, as will be seen in this case, found in the execution of educational programs as well as in the actors and institutions related to education.

For the critical analysis of educational policies, two conceptual frameworks were articulated: border studies together with critical interculturality. In this sense, a border is understood as a daily social practice (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012) that perpetuates structures and relationships that dehumanize, inferiorize and racialize (Walsh, 2010), thus affecting the educational experiences of children, adolescents and families that migrate to Chile.

The article initially describes the migratory and educational context in Chile and then presents a brief review of both conceptual frameworks that guide the study. Then, the methodology used and the results are described. Finally, the conclusions

are presented to advance toward a greater understanding of the bordering process experienced by migrant children in the Chilean educational context.

Migratory and educational context

The migrant community in Chile today represents 7.8% of the population and corresponds mainly to people from Venezuela, Peru, Haiti, Colombia and Bolivia (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas & Departamento de Extranjería y Migraciones, 2021). The majority reside in the north of the country as well as in the metropolitan region. Regarding age groups, 14% of migrants are between 0 and 19 years, coinciding with an increase in the enrollment of foreign students in Chilean institutions. According to the Jesuit Migrant Service (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes [sjm], 2020), enrollment increased 616% between 2014 and 2019. This means that in 2014, migrant enrollment represented 0.6% of the total number of students, increasing to 4.4% in 2019. Regarding geographical distribution, 78% of migrant students are concentrated in four regions: Arica and Parinacota, Tarapacá, Antofagasta and Metropolitana; therefore, migrant families live “in urban sectors with job opportunities and/or close to borderlands” (sjm, 2020, p. 1).

With respect to the territory of Norte Grande in Chile, as a borderland, it is undoubtedly the land entry point to the national territory given its strategic geographical location (González, 2009). This is how migration in this area has historically occurred in the territory (Tapia Ladino, 2012), where migration is not something new and a diversity of nationalities converge (Mardones et al., 2021). In addition to the multiple nationalities, indigenous peoples—specifically Aymara, Atacameños and Quechuas—and Afro-descendants, especially in Arica (Salgado Henríquez, 2013), are present, making Norte Grande, due to its geography and history, a great multicultural scene.

However, there are certain paradoxes given, on the one hand, the coexistence of multiculturalism with nationalist aspects, especially in Iquique because it is an iconic city of the War of the Pacific (Aguirre & Díaz, 2005; González, 2009; Mondaca Rojas et al., 2013), and on the other hand, the resistance to include and consider the most recent migratory flows as part of the cultural identity of the city. In this sense and in reference to *Festival de Colectividades Extranjeras* (Festival of Foreign Communities), also known as *Las Colonias* (The Colonies), which has been held since 1983 in Antofagasta,¹ it is not by chance that the name of this celebration uses the word foreigner instead of migrant because of this distinction:

It has as a background a racializing and class differentiation between the migration that is valued positively (that of Croats, Greeks, English..., that is, the “white migration”) and the migration that is subordinated (that of Bolivian, Peruvian and Afro-Colombian migrants). (Stefoni et al., 2017, p. 214)

¹ More information at: <https://www.municipalidaddeantofagasta.cl/index.php/secciones/810-xxix-festival-de-colectividades-extranjeras-2015>

Dialog between border studies and critical interculturality

In the educational experience of migrant children, state borders and social borders of coexistence in the host country cross each other. In this sense, children and their families “cross borders to settle in a new society and discover boundaries, in the form of internal borders of society” (Aedo, 2020, p. 2). In this way, the article understands the notion of borders as demarcations that go beyond the geographical boundaries between countries, more in line with critical studies of borders (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012; Sánchez, 2014). That is, herein, borders are understood as a set of social practices, implying a sociological research approach to the notion of borders because it addresses the following:

To the everyday, to the processes through which controls on mobility are attempted and enacted, and the effects of those controls on people’s lives and on social relationships in general. (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012, p. 729)

For this reason, the notion of borders is understood as that which can influence the subjective experience that marks the life of migrant families. Moreover, as Maguid (2008) points out, due to the tension between the movement of capital and people, for example, in the case of the Southern Cone, there are also *socioeconomic borders* that have prevented the inclusion of migrants in the world of work, as they have obstructed their rights and access to health and education. In this sense, a border as a social practice is present in the normative frameworks and educational policies produced by the national states toward the migrant communities, in what is called nonborder spaces. That is, the Chilean educational field has become a social space where the borders of the nation and within the nation are reproduced among the members of the school community (Stang et al., 2019).

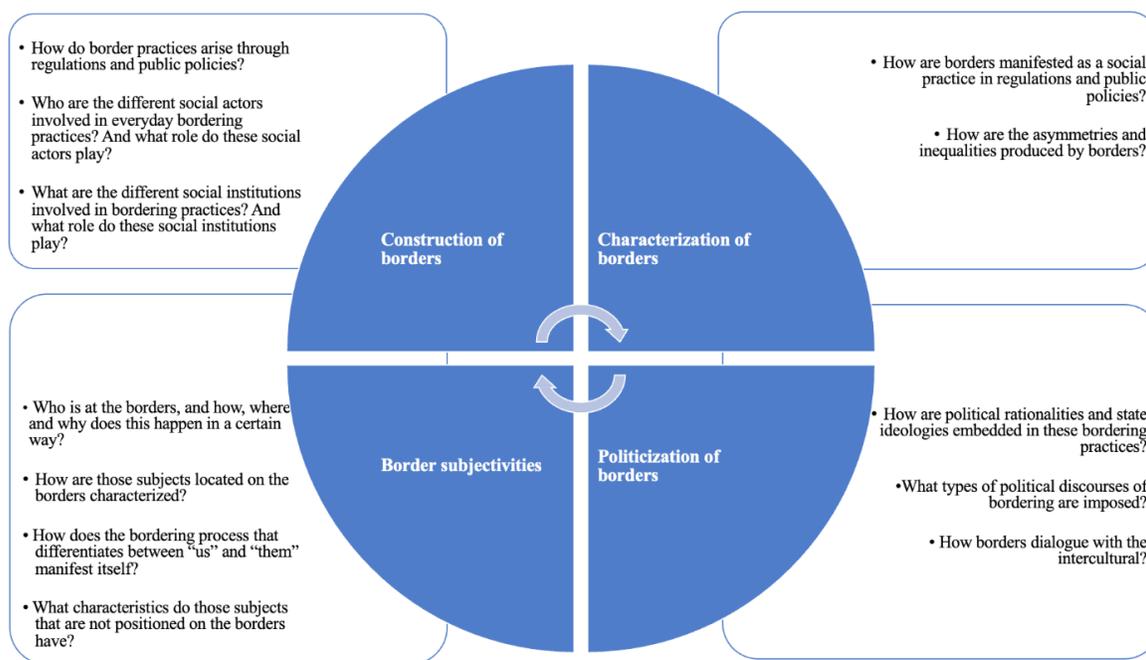
A second body of production that serves as a theoretical framework is critical interculturality. This perspective is critical in regard to understanding the way in which interculturality has developed in Latin America. It first emerged as an alternative to the assimilationist educational model of the twentieth century (Ferrão Candau, 2010) and, later, as an option in the face of functional interculturality (Tubino, 2004) under a state that continued to be monocultural and became neoliberal during the Latin American dictatorships, as in the case of Chile.

In this way, education and, consequently, educational institutions became one of the main tools for the reproduction of discourses that differentiate and create ethnic/racial hierarchies (Walsh, 2005) in the monocultural states of the multicultural societies of Latin America (Tubino, 2004). Critical interculturality seeks, on the one hand, to make visible that there has not been a transformation in power relations, given that there are still asymmetries in the relations and structures of Latin American societies, which continue to racialize, inferiorize and dehumanize (Walsh, 2010) because they are the product of a social matrix of a colonial order (Walsh, 2005) and a monocultural state (Tubino, 2004). Therefore, critical interculturality not only allows an understanding of how the educational experience is crossed by borders because, as Anzaldúa (1987) points out, the border crosses individuals and therefore is always present, but also of how it is affected by the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000), of being (Gándara Carballido, 2019) and of knowledge (Castro-Gómez, 2005). These three forms of coloniality highlight how in institutional and individual practices and

discourses colonial order is still present in Latin America. That is, society is world ordered based on ethnic and racial hierarchies that classify people as superior and inferior, where the Western/European subject is positioned as a frame of reference given that their culture and knowledge are validated as universal and unique.

Therefore, borders as a social practice are a combination of order and otherness (Paasi, 2021), creating hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion. That is why critical interculturality allows us to understand those hierarchies that intersect in the migratory context in Chile by a colonial matrix, given that the different manifestations of a border as a social practice perpetuate exclusive and unequal structures and relationships (Walsh, 2010). From this conceptual dialog, a matrix is developed for the critical analysis of educational policies (Figure 1), allowing us to understand how exclusions are reproduced in the educational field. That is, it analytically describes these separations and divisions: what they are like and who is/is not on the borders. Critical interculturality complements this analysis by emphasizing how these border practices affect the subjectivities of children, adolescents and families who migrate to Chile in relation to education because it emphasizes how these borders create structures and relationships that hierarchize, reproduce otherness and subordinate (Joiko, in press).

Figure 1. Matrix for the critical analysis of educational policies



Source: own elaboration

Methodology

This article uses data from qualitative research. The manuscript corresponds to the first specific objective of the study that sought to describe the regulatory frameworks and public policies at the international, national and local levels that contribute to the migrant population being able to exercise their right to education. During 2021, a total of 10 semistructured interviews were conducted with key informants from the public sector (2), civil society organizations (6) and academia (2), all of them linked to migration and education and with special attention to what happens in Norte Grande in Chile as a borderland. In addition, 46 regulations and public policies were reviewed.

The interview was the chosen method because the experiences of the subjects are at the center of the research. These were carried out virtually, lasted approximately one hour, and were recorded in audio and transcribed. The data collection protocols for this study were approved by the scientific ethics committee of Universidad Arturo Prat. As part of the ethical procedures, the consent of the participants was requested after informing them of the objectives of the study, the risks and potential benefits of their participation throughout the process, and that their confidentiality and anonymity was protected. The participants were contacted by the author through an invitation email stating that their participation would be voluntary and anonymous. The selection of the participants corresponded to intentional nonprobabilistic sampling. The number of participants was determined in relation to discursive saturation.

Regarding regulations and public policies, 46 documents within the period from 1990 to 2021 were systematized. This period was chosen because since the 1990s, there has been a political-social transition in Chile that led to migration, especially regional migration, which has been increasing given the economic and political stability of the country (Stefoni, 2011). *Regulation* refers to laws, rules, decrees and instructions of a national nature that regulate the educational system, access to education for migrants and the process of migratory regularization. *Public policies* refer to programs, guidelines, plans, actions and projects led by a national public institution. The 46 documents used for this analysis are available digitally. Of the total documents analyzed, 27 were regulations, and the remaining 19 were public policies.

For both the interviews and the regulations and public policies, a thematic analysis using deductive coding was employed from the prepared matrix (Figure 1). The analysis was carried out through the qualitative software NVivo. This matrix contains the main dimensions of the analysis with some questions that guided the analysis of both inputs: interviews and systematization of documents. For this article, what is presented below are the findings of the dimensions: construction of borders and characterization of the borders of the matrix.

Based on interpretations of the interviews and regulations, three analytical moments are constructed in the following sections on how educational policies have contributed to the production of daily borders in the educational experiences of children, adolescents and their migrant families, with a special focus on Norte Grande in Chile.

Bordering in schools in the face of migrant population growth

When asking about the bordering process in the school environment, one of the first questions that emerges is related to locating the context in which the policies arise and why (Mora Olate, 2018). The sustained increase in foreign students joining the Chilean educational system, in its different levels and modalities, has to do with the increase in the migrant population, which in the educational field had its correlate in the increase in foreign school enrollment. This is one of the main aspects included as antecedents when reformulating policies, motivating revisions, modifications and/or updates to the current educational regulations (Ministerio de Educación, 2017c).

This increase is related to a change in the pattern of migration, which today tends to be familiar; therefore, not only adults but also children and adolescents of school age migrate.

[There is a] strong dynamization of the migratory pattern, which changes to a much more familiar migration and that, therefore, increases very, very, very much the number of migrant children in the educational system, which is super different than it was at the beginning of the 2000s (Tania, civil society organization, interview, August 19, 2021)

This increase also resulted in a racialization of the student body due to the arrival of Afro-Caribbean communities, especially from Haiti and Colombia (Pavez-Soto et al., 2019). Importantly, migration has always existed in Chile, especially in Norte Grande (Mardones et al., 2021), but for public and regulatory policies, the arrival of Afro-Caribbean communities marks a milestone of distinction—and, therefore, of the creation of the border with the other—. Viviana shares about a particular milestone stemming from an encounter between a political authority and Afro-Caribbean students, which led to the enactment of a particular policy:

In his second week, something happens [to the minister]... he goes to a school and sees many students of color, and it gets his attention and asks about the issue in the background, and this person who I tell you was in the cabinet still, has to report, and we had the possibility of having a meeting of about three hours long with the minister, which... no minister takes the time to do, no, and we explained, we told him, how it truly was, in quotation marks, a space of privilege because we had never had any other authority be so interested in understanding this in some way (...) we sent it [the policy], and he told us, perfect, and like two weeks after that meeting, they launch in an educational community (...) the ministerial institution is basically committed to society through this document that we have continued to disseminate. (Viviana, public sector, interview, August 3, 2021)

Undoubtedly, this shows how the borders in social practices and discourses are racialized. Moreover, according to Claudio and in the case of northern Chile, Afro communities have always existed, especially in Arica with its Afro community, and therefore, it was not an issue. However, with the arrival of Colombians, another vision appears, and nationalist racism begins because they are Afro but not from Arica.

The school discriminates, be it racist, nationalist, or both. When a Colombian appears, racism appears because of the color of their skin (...) even though we had blacks here before, but those blacks were from the Azapa Valley, they were from Arica. However, when Colombians enter, another vision of the black enters, and racism enters, and with them discrimination, also of a nationalist nature. (Claudio, academy, interview, August 12, 2021)

In addition to the racialization of the student body, with the arrival of the Haitian community, the question of the linguistic diversity of those communities that are not Spanish-speaking is introduced.

The arrival of people of African descent, especially from Haiti, made even more visible the increase in foreign students in the educational system that occurred between 2015 and 2016, especially due to the particularities of their skin color and the obvious language barrier. (Ministerio de Educación, 2018, p. 13)

Suddenly, monolingualism became evident in a country where different languages coexist but remain invisible, for example indigenous communities. This is how the linguistic/idiomatic border emerges and manifests itself in the experiences of non-Spanish-speaking migrant children.

The biggest obstacle is with non-Spanish-speaking families, especially with Haitian families. A so-called language barrier remains. Whenever I am in a workshop, I make that clarification; let us not say a language barrier because it already sounds like there is a problem that cannot be solved. Finally, mentioning it, there is the presence of the other language, so it is not denied, but I'm looking for another word instead of barrier (...) I feel that at a political level, these particular needs were not addressed because, in the case of the Non-Spanish-speaking families in 2017-2018, it was like in vogue to speak for their access in schools, that they were not denied speaking Creole. (Marta, civil society organization, interview, August 16, 2021)

Even as Tania indicates, one cannot separate the idiomatic from the racism of Chilean society toward Afro-descendant communities. This undoubtedly leads us to think about the postulates from the critical interculturality that remind us of the intersection that exists between the languages of the colonized and the function they fulfill from the coloniality of power and knowing their invisibility:

I believe that we cannot separate racism from the analysis of the idiomatic because if they had been French, it would not be the same (...) it seems to me unacceptable that the Mineduc to this day does not have a proposal, policy, program, whatever it is, that schools with Haitian students can access; it is unacceptable... truly, you can be delayed a year, but four or five, and nothing. (Tania, civil society organization, interview, August 19, 2021)

However, not everything turns into a bitter pill in regard to bordering experiences. As Juana narrates, from a diagnosis made by her organization in the north of the country with respect to the barriers that the Haitian community lives, the possibility arises of reversing this situation, seeking to somehow cross the daily border.

We began to see obviously that there was one more impediment to what it means to be able to inhabit this territory, with all that this territory means for migrants, which was the language gap. The language was super powerful, in addition to all the racialization due to the color of the skin, because they did not speak the language; so, their situation was quite precarious here (...) So from all that observation that we began to make, we began to think about this idea of being able to build a school that could contribute, to overcome a little, this language barrier that was quite brutal in this population. In addition, in 2018, we already started working fully with them. (Juana, civil society organization, interview, August 20, 2021)

This experience of popular education mentioned by the interviewee begins to emerge in different parts of the country as an alternative to formal education. The foregoing reveals the role that nonformal spaces can acquire as well as the capacity to make visible and resist the processes of bordering that emerge from organized civil society, contributing to the deconstruction of borders.

Children excluded by border processes

Even when there is an intention of the policies to be inclusive toward migrant children, as indicated for example by the document “Orientaciones para la construcción de comunidades educativas inclusivas” (“Orientations for the construction of inclusive educational communities”) (Ministerio de Educación, 2017a), which highlights that the internal instruments of institutions should be built or revised to favor “the development of an inclusive school culture that is committed to the learning, participation, development and well-being of all its members” (p. 24), there is a policy that has reproduced the exclusion of children because there is a slow descent from politics to school, little political will and strong centralism in decision-making. Regarding the first point, Tania notes the following:

I think that more than the regulation creating obstacles, it is that the regulation is insufficient and is insufficiently implemented; that what exists in terms of regulations is not necessarily bad, but I believe that it is very insufficient, especially regarding its implementation and regarding if it encompasses or not educational communities. (Tania, civil society organization, interview, August 19, 2021)

Furthermore, what happens many times with public policies is the ineffective transfer of discourse to action. In fact, the interviewees recognize that the language used in regulations and public policies are words, with little execution:

We are wonderful at writing (...) we can write eternally, compose spectacular, wonderfully written passages, but when those proposals or legislation have to become real, let us say, in everyday life, for practical things, that is when one begins to realize that you find yourself with a series of underlying obstacles. I believe that more than anything if a law is not clear and concrete enough and that it leaves many things open-ended, there is no real implementation of that law. (Juana, civil society organization, interview, August 20, 2021)

Moreover, even though Chile has signed a series of international treaties that address the issue of the right to education of migrants, adolescents, and children of migrants, the policy does not manage to reach the daily work of the schools, which means that borders continue to be generated:

I believe that one thing is the discursive statements and another thing is the implementation of these statements to the day to day of school management, classroom management, initial teacher training, work with families. I believe that is where the critical point of what we currently live lies. Chile has signed international treaties on many issues, not only this one, but the implementation in everyday life is where we fail. (Liliana, academy, interview, August 6, 2021)

To the above, then, we can add so-called (non) political will to make these regulations and policies effective. As we saw in the previous section, it was a personal experience of the minister that made him aware of the issue and allowed the enactment of the National Policy for Foreign Students; however, the volatility that is generated by the *politics of mood* (Thayer Correa et al., 2020) depends on the commitment or not of authorities regarding an issue or on the discretion of an official.

Therefore, deep down, if you ask me, all this that I tell you behind the scenes, is the sample, a bit of the urgency of having a political authority committed to the issue because if not, it is super-hyper difficult. (Viviana, public sector, interview, August 3, 2021)

Suddenly, some brutalities happen, which is that there is a lot of discretion, I think, and that means that it is not such a good policy because application is going to depend on the government of the day or whether the school is interested or not, interprets it or not, carries it out or not. Of course, it means that basically no, it is not implementing the protection or the rights of children and young people. (Tania, civil society organization, interview, August 19, 2021)

Likewise, politics has tended to establish short-term and not definitive measures, demonstrating that bordering policies work with limited times and depend on discretion or political will.

It is decided to go the fastest way, also because of this, because if we had made a decree, we would probably have been delayed two years, that is, it would not have been released before 2019, and with the imminent change in authority, the fastest and most efficient way at that time was an ordinance. (Viviana, public sector, interview, August 3, 2021)

Importantly, decrees and ordinances are not the same, as the same interviewee notes:

[a decree is] more difficult [to be annulled] because it already has the force of law (...) it is like an important brick within the norm of institutionality. An ordinance is a procedure and can be limited, can be for certain dates, and can be revoked by another ordinance (...) the ordinance gives the political authority as much power to carry out a process. In addition, just as it is given

to you, it can be taken it away, at any time. (Viviana, public sector, interview, August 3, 2021)

This means that in this case, something less definitive is chosen given the contingency of the political will of that time. To this (non) will of politics is added the problem of decentralization that the country is experiencing, a difficulty that is present throughout all the themes and territory (Von Baer & Bravo, 2019).

In relation to the students who are in regions and opt for the process of validation of studies, each Provincial Department of Education and/or Regional Ministerial Secretary of Education is concerned with sending the documentation to the Central Level of the Ministry of Education as soon as possible. (Ministerio de Educación, 2005)

Specifically, this is addressed by the interviewees from Norte Grande, who point out that centralization is one of the great frontiers created for the proper development and implementation of public policies. That is why there has been effort to create teams at the territorial level, because the country's reality is very diverse:

We decided to do these macrozones because the regional reality of the north is completely different from what they are living in the south and well, in Santiago, in the central zone. Therefore, we decided to make this macrozone to address this type of issue at the regional level because, among the three regions, we almost have the same reality. Therefore, since then, we started working in parallel as a macrozone, with our own activities and meetings to discuss these issues. (Alicia, public sector, interview, August 10, 2021)

However, there is also a more critical diagnosis that indicates that there has been an invisibility toward the regions, especially extreme regions (Correa Vera & Salas Maturana, 2015). Regulations and public policies have focused on the capital, which is why they barely cover the problems of border life, such as the habitual entry of migrant communities through unauthorized entries, especially during the pandemic. Therefore, a *methodological santiaguism* is created (Guizardi et al., 2017) in the development of regulations and policies.

I also feel that yes, it is very focused on the metropolitan level because at no time is this income from unauthorized passages addressed. As people live on the border, there are other forms of access to schools (...) I feel that in the campaigns, when they are born here, from Santiago, it is like a cloud that is only here in Santiago and that is very strong on Santiago television, but at the regional level, at the radio level, they do not echo there. (Marta, civil society organization, interview, August 16, 2021)

The centralization of policies has made the reality of the regions invisible by promulgating a homogenization of the needs of those who inhabit the different territories of the country. For the particular case of Norte Grande, it is seen that there is a border between regulations and public policies that ignores the reality of the north, and this undoubtedly builds particular borders in the educational experience of migrant children who live in the territory.

Yes, centralism [will] always be prioritized. Each region has its peculiarity and its form, and as long as it is not given autonomy (...) it will always be believed that Santiago is Chile and that the rest is nothing. So, each region has its own diverse peculiarity (...) The boxes [aid that the government provided during the pandemic] that were given in Santiago were the boxes! The boxes that are given here in Iquique are truly sad. So, there you make the comparison; how can you not believe that children at the national level are all children? There is no division, but nevertheless, there is a clear division today, right? It is totally different. (Luz, civil society organization, interview, August 23, 2021)

To this exclusion that occurs from the differences in the delivery of state resources, distinguished depending on where you live, another process made invisible by politics must be added: *migratory grief* (González, 2005). This concept, with its origin in psychology, was heard for the first time from Luz, one of the interviewees, who, in addition to being an active member of one of the most important territorial organizations in Norte Grande, is a migrant mother. She notes that schools do not take charge of the migratory grief suffered by migrant children and adolescents or children of migrants. For them, this grief begins because no one asks them whether or not they want to migrate, and they leave behind many things and ties, such as their grandparents, which they later miss (Hein, 2012). Therefore, if the educational policies of destination countries want to develop a comprehensive inclusion and reception plan, they should consider this grief.

With migratory grief, we mean that the parents uproot that normal life of the children, because you do not ask the child, the minor, if he wants to come or not or in which school he wants to study or not; you force him, you bring the child for common welfare or for whatever you determine as an adult, and he is positioned in a society that is not known (...) some say, no, children settle in, they learn easily; that is what people believe. However, we never ask the child. Psychologically, the child is not monitored either, and there are many children who are left with trauma, and that is where bullying is born, discrimination is born, racism is born because there are children who do not speak up, they settle in. (Luz, civil society organization, interview, August 23, 2021)

Moreover, the school plays an important role in this grief because it is where children spend most of the time when they arrive; as is known, one of the reasons why adults migrate is to work. Therefore, school becomes the second home of children and adolescents in a migratory context.

For the child, the school practically becomes their home, and it is where they spend most of the time. So, since the parents work, because that is what they come to do, work, work, work (...) the child lives all his/her life experiences at school, and the institution should not be a nursery but have a comprehensive plan. But that is why we have to talk about this. (Luz, civil society organization, interview, August 23, 2021)

Considering this migratory grief requires schools that are capable of understanding the environment of migrant children.

There is no monitoring of families; that is, we cannot truly speak of a comprehensive education if we are not interested in what comes beyond the family (...) Today, we cannot speak of a comprehensive plan if we forget about the rest of the student's environment, how they live, if they have the conditions. Today, we see a significant number, in the region, of students who previously lived in the city and today live in the taken lands of Iquique and are suffering the consequences. (Luz, civil society organization, interview, August 23, 2021)

Luz is emphatic in pointing out that only by recognizing the context of life of children and adolescents can we truly speak of a comprehensive or inclusive education as stated by current regulations and public policies in Chile. As Walsh (2010) would say, only from this point of view can a person who has been dehumanized be humanized.

Here, we could be talking about a comprehensive education, where I as an institution worry about how the student is integrated into the schooling process, not only that they enroll and continue studying (...) I have to know the characteristics of these families, the characteristics of the student, what is his particularity of knowledge, to be able to reinsert him into this student life. It goes beyond the regulations that are set in the school. (Luz, civil society organization, interview, August 23, 2021)

Understanding the experience from this migratory grief allows us to understand the process of adaptation that migrant children go through, processes that public policies recognize as difficult:

The adaptation of foreign children and adolescents occurs gradually (...) when they arrive at school, they tend to isolate themselves and adopt an attitude of distrust, which is reversed over time, after which they become integrated with the other students, getting to know each other and sharing. (Ministerio de Educación & Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia, 2018, p. 34)

That is why it is necessary for public policies to promote “the valuation of acceptance and diversity over the assimilationist and dominant adult-centered approach” (Galaz et al., 2021, p. 147).

Educational spaces as an extension of border control

A third aspect to highlight is that borders symbolically and materially manifest when regulations and policies give extreme importance to the demonstration of documentation that proves identity and previous education, which must be legalized from the countries of origin in order to be validated, which can affect immigration regularity and become an obstacle to exercising the right to education. In this sense, as suggested by Maguid (2008), given that there is free movement of capital, this should also work for people, allowing the elimination of “situations of irregularity” and facilitating an “end to the discrimination suffered by immigrants with respect to (...) access to education for children and young people” (p. 360). As the ministerial document points out, “if documents issued outside the country are presented, they

must be duly legalized by the Chilean Consulate in the country of origin or apostilled” (Ministerio de Educación, 2017b, p. 31).

For schools, the regularization of their student body becomes a primary element; therefore, before being able to work on social and coexistence aspects, schools must understand the regulations, specifically those that allow the regularization of their students. Furthermore, it is at this point where school institutions tend to reproduce social inequalities and excessive socioeconomic borders, which in the case of Norte Grande have become more evident with the increase in the migrant population (Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020).

The demand declared, underneath it all, is always for the normative (...) So, of course, that is what [the schools] need, not to be reflecting on if I am racist or not because obviously I am not. Therefore, yes, I believe that the manifest demand always goes on this side more than the administrative one, as the concrete problem and the other always tend to be more sneaky, under the table. (Tania, civil society organization, interview, August 19, 2021)

A role that is increasingly present in educational institutions is that which has to do with the prolongation of border control in their work. This refers to the fact that in the educational sphere, schools have become *border control agents*. In other words, they have been directly involved in the family regularization process. This materialized with the implementation of Escuela Somos Todos (We Are All School) program (Lyons, 2016), which later became known as Plan Chile te Recibe (Chile Receives You Plan) (Gobierno de Chile, 2017). Thus, for example, in the Escuela Somos Todos program, the educational community is used as a mechanism to convey to parents or guardians the requirements to regularize their children. Moreover, for the program to function properly, a coordinator at the school should have the following responsibilities:

- Guide parents/guardians and help them fulfill tasks;
- Identify students with an irregular immigration status and analyze their situation;
- Gather and verify the necessary documents for each student; and
- Collect the data of a group of students and periodically send the information to the DEM (Departamento de Extranjería y Migraciones).

Moreover, the program instructs schools how to identify if a student has an irregular status and complete necessary forms, which, among other issues, asks about entry into the country (authorized entry or not) and the immigration status of the guardian. Likewise, they are instructed on how to identify if a document was legalized and the different documents necessary for a visa application. In addition to the We Are All School program, ordinance 894/2016 (Ministerio de Educación, 2016) requires educational authorities to promote the migration regularization process for the

families of children and adolescents. These functions serve as extensions of the DEM, which has the following mission:

Guarantee compliance with the immigration legislation in force in the country, regarding the entry and exit, permanent or temporary residence, expulsion and regulation of foreign citizens who remain in the national territory, within the framework of the National Immigration Policy of the Government of Chile.²

This is a mission that is transferred to the schools, which undoubtedly affects and influences their primary work, which has nothing to do with being an immigration control agent. Thus, the regularization process is one of the most important manifestations of how a border is present in the school experience of children and adolescents and their families. This has become an administrative issue, undoubtedly of political will, which has been made visible many times by civil society organizations and academia, who have called for the urgent regularization of people.³

There is no intention to actually regularize these people because if we wanted to regularize people, the conditions would be there, that is, the requirements would be realistic. You cannot ask anyone the impossible. If it has not changed in the last five years and we still have the same issue, I believe that it will remain an issue that is beyond the public policy's capacity given the context that we are living. (Jacinta, civil society organization, interview, August 17, 2021)

As there is no political will to facilitate and expedite this process, today, the educational system has implemented the so-called provisional school identifier (Identificador Provisorio Escolar [IPE]) for students in an irregular situation and the provisional guardian identifier (Identificador Provisorio Apoderado [IPA]) for the guardian.

The Mineduc, through the offices of Citizen Assistance Mineduc throughout the country, will deliver a provisional school identifier to all migrants since January 2017 who do not have a Chilean Identity Card and who want to join the school system. (Ministerio de Educación, 2016)

In this context, it has been necessary to update and create a series of pertinent instructions to regulate and guarantee the presence of foreign students in different educational communities. The main mechanism to safeguard access has been the creation of an IPE, which seeks to prevent immigration regularization from being an impediment to participation and to guarantee prompt entry into school, ensuring the right to education, above any other condition. (Ministerio de Educación, 2021, p. 10)

Both identifiers provide a provisional number because nonregularized people do not have a Unique National Registry (Registro Único Nacional [RUN]), which

² <https://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/quienessomos/>

³ <https://radiojgm.uchile.cl/solicitan-regularizacion-migratoria-para-mas-de-240-ninos-y-ninas-que-viven-en-chile/>

is provided on the Chilean Identity Card (*Chilean card* as it is known colloquially), which is granted to people in a regular immigration situation or when they are born in the territory. This provisional identifier allows access to certain rights of the educational system, mainly those that have to do with a space in the school. However, it does not correct the problem at the level of other social systems, such as health, housing or work.

We deliver the IPE, but the IPE is only for everything that is related to enrollment, but for example, they cannot use the IPE to get healthcare. Therefore, we deliver help in education, but in regards to health, the children do not receive the same; so, regardless of the fact that it is a child who is in school here, if he has to undergo health treatment, it is not the same. I mean, I think there is a disconnect in that sense. (Alicia, public sector, interview, August 10, 2021)

This disconnection mentioned by the interviewee is even recognized by the regulations themselves:

Regarding the universe of foreign students who are in the educational system, it should be noted that approximately one-third of the total enrolled have an irregular status because they do not have a RUN, which until today prevented them from accessing the benefits of school support. (Ministerio de Educación, 2017d)

Likewise, a symbolic border is created where the school environment and its actors begin to differentiate between students with an IPE and those in a regular situation who have a visa and therefore an RUN. Each child or adolescent with their RUN may request the benefits that correspond to them in terms of health and education, among others (Lyons, 2016). Moreover, some contradictions are observed in the policy because the Ministry of Education (Mineduc) is clear about the limitations of the IPE; however, at the level of the Ministry of the Interior, which is in charge of visas, priority has not been given to regularization:

The IPE only has the purpose of safeguarding access to the educational system, guaranteeing kindergarten, basic and secondary education, as for all national students; however, the irregular migratory situation of foreign students, as well as that of their families, tends to be associated with precarious situations, such as housing precariousness, labor abuses, and lack of protection in the field of health; they cannot belong to the Social Registry of Homes and receive social support, and there is an increased risk of being victims of crimes such as human trafficking. Therefore, students with an IPE are subjects of special protection, particularly at school, because they represent a universe of families that are exposed to greater situations of exclusion. (Ministerio de Educación, 2020, p. 6)

Today, therefore, the greatest barrier to the exercise of the right to education for migrant children, as well as other social rights, has to do with regularization, creating symbolic and material borders in the daily experience of children and adolescents. Moreover, due to the way in which decisions regarding migration have been made in recent years, especially during the second Piñera government (2018-2022), Chile has

become a country that produces migratory irregularity (Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020; Valencia Huerta & Ramos Rodríguez, 2021). This occurs, according to Jacinta, for the following reason:

Because it does not establish constant or permanent regularization policies, it does not establish immigration regularization procedures that follow the reality that the country is experiencing. Today, thousands of people are migrating each month, entering Chile through unauthorized entries. The state response to this is policies of securitization, militarization, and protection of the borders, which are also seen as ridiculous policies from the territories themselves because the border is so porous in Chile and so extensive that even if they put a soldier and a police officer every ten meters, the issue will not stop. (Jacinta, civil society organization, interview, August 17, 2021)

As previously indicated, not having all the papers required to apply for a visa means that families cannot regularize their situation. Many of these papers are impossible to obtain because they do not exist in other countries or because the political situation of some, as is the case in Venezuela, makes it impossible for families to acquire the requested documentation. In other words, the most critical aspect of this situation is that the Chilean authorities are aware of this situation but have not been able to make the procedure more flexible.

In immigration regularization procedures, requirements that are impossible for children and their families are requested; for example, they ask for apostilled documents. That is, first they ask for documents that are not the same documents that are used here in Chile, such as birth records or birth certificates, which are not in all countries... not in Bolivia. From what I have heard from key informants in my research, they point out that in Bolivia, regarding the birth record, there does not seem to be a policy established as here in Chile for people to register their child at birth in the Civil Registry there, and so there is already an absence.... documents are required that do not exist in the countries of origin or documents that exist but, with the current institutional crisis that exists in Haiti or Venezuela, are impossible to obtain. Therefore, migration regularization processes can be initiated, but the regularization of that child will never be completed. The visa will never arrive because it is impossible to obtain an apostilled birth certificate. (Jacinta, civil society organization, interview, August 17, 2021)

This is how a border materially manifests in the lack of flexibility of regulations so that people can regularize their situation; the particularities that certain communities that migrate to the territory are experiencing are not being considered when implementing policies.

There are documents that, today, the Haitian community cannot obtain, for example, and that are requested to access extraordinary regularization. Or, in the case of the Venezuelan community (...), regularization has a very strong impact on everything, and at this time, the different migrant communities do not have access to regularization as well. (Tania, civil society organization, interview, August 19, 2021)

In this sense, there is a perception that regularization is not the same for everyone, demonstrating that there is a racialization of regulatory policy. As Tijoux Merino and Palominos Mandiola (2015) point out, racialization practices can be understood as follows:

Processes of production and registration in the bodies of marks or social stigmas of a racial nature (...) derived from the European colonial system and the conformation of Chilean national identities, in which certain embodied features are considered hierarchically inferior to “us”, justifying different forms of violence, contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation in which racism (...) takes on a practical dimension. (p. 250)

The great criticism of the government led by former President Piñera is that regularization has not been a priority but that expulsions have been, even with the designation of budget and human resources to carry out these acts.⁴ This was implemented with the intention of the former president’s government to show citizens that they have addressed the increase in migration in the country not through regularization and rights but through criminalization and expulsion:

Today, the only options that the government is considering are illegal expulsions that have occurred within the last year, where due process has not been respected, where the person does not have access to defense, and where these collective expulsions have violated international treaties; then, that seems to be the only option that the government is considering regarding the regularization of people. (Patricia, civil society organization, interview, August 25, 2021)

Undoubtedly, this manifestation of a border indicates that bordering goes beyond education and affects to the daily lives of children, adolescents and their families.

Conclusions

This article identifies how borders are constructed and characterized in educational regulations and policies toward migrant children and their families in a migratory context, with special attention to Norte Grande in Chile. The racialization of the border arises as a response to an internal colonialism of Chilean society (Joiko & Cortés Saavedra, 2022) where they create otherness through national and ethnic origin. Likewise, the article shows that educational institutions are agents of border control, which is not surprising in a state policy that has tended toward deportation rather than inclusion. Finally, the article makes it known that the bordering of educational policies is present in the barriers that exist with regard to the exercise of the right to education due to immigration status. All of the above directly affect daily life in an area whose borders have become porous.

The article, therefore, contributes to interdisciplinary studies on education and borders because it places the school space as a social space where bordering is present, symbolically affecting the daily experience of migrant communities through

⁴ <https://interactivo.latercera.com/migrantes-expulsiones-ilegales/>

the sociocultural aspects mentioned in the article, for example, the racialization of borders. Furthermore, bordering appears materially in the daily experience of children and adolescents, for example, in the legal aspects of migratory regularization. In this way, borders are seen as a social practice beyond geographical space. Borders as spaces of exclusion, segregation and otherness are present in daily life through the implementation of public policies. Likewise, the article incorporates critical interculturality as an analytical lens that allows the recognition that this bordering is racialized and that some communities are more affected than others. That is, critical interculturality facilitates a better understanding of how the reproduction of hierarchies and classifications that differentiate the communities that migrate to the territory operate in the context of Norte Grande in Chile, with an emphasis on the exclusions experienced by children and young people in educational spaces that have their roots in a colonial order that continues to interiorize, racialize and dehumanize (Walsh, 2010).

Finally, it is necessary for future studies to incorporate the perspective of migrant children in relation to the bordering process of their educational experiences. Likewise, it is considered relevant to explore in greater depth how nonformal spaces can counteract the frontier experience of schools.

Acknowledgments

This article is part of the postdoctoral project Fondecyt N°3210090 “La frontera como demarcación simbólica y material en la experiencia educativa de niñas, niños, adolescentes y sus familias en contextos migratorios en Chile” (“The border as a symbolic and material demarcation in the educational experience of children, adolescents and their families in migratory contexts in Chile”) that received funding from the National Research and Development Agency (ANID). I would like to thank everyone who participated in this article through the interviews, as well as Marcela Tapia, Andrea Riedemann and Angélica Alvites who read the manuscript and offered comments.

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