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Refugees in/and Education throughout Time in Europe: Re- and Deconstructions of Discourses, Policies and Practices in Educational Contexts
Network 07 Social Justice and Intercultural Education & Network 17 Histories of Education

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From “poor refugees” to “good old niggers”

Presentation

France has been a country of immigration since the second half of the nineteenth century, although it had no official immigration policy until 1945. The question of immigration has usually been brought to public attention and to political debate in times of unemployment and general destabilisation of wage conditions, and in times of urban crisis. From the Second World War, France has been suffering from both a labour shortage, and a low birth rate. Immigration would be part of the solution, and it explains that education of immigrant children in France is still a huge political question.

Following « UN [United Nations] committee on the rights of the child » definition, UAM (UnAccompanied Migrants) are specific migrants "who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so¹". Most of them are male, between 15 and 18 years, from Western and Central Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Algeria and Morocco. Although not a new issue, the subject has taken on new significance in recent years, due to the increase in UAM migrations Europe has been experiencing for the last decade. Whereas the concept of 'unaccompanied minor' does not correspond to a legal category, it deeply impacts countries immigration policies and forces states to adapt to such a new situation: taking in charge migrating unaccompanied children.

As individuals, we have been volunteering for 1 and 4 years into a collective fighting for UAM rights in Toulouse (South West of France). This organization is the only one in France providing at the same time daily life assistance including places to live, food and clothes, juridic assistance and support for schooling. Born in 2016 following major change in French UAM integration politic, it took in charge hardly 400 UAM since the beginning, from the moment they are considered majors by Conseil départemental to the day Child Judge agrees they are minors. In Toulouse, UAM are mainly from Algeria or Morocco, and Sub-saharian Africa. As Algerian and Moroccan UAM seem preferring staying undocumented into their local communities, hardly only African UAM reach the collective, mainly entering UE through Spanish frontier.

As school is supposed to be one of the greatest ways to integrate teenagers that have just emigrated in France, this paper will assert the question of UAM schooling, whose right to stay depends on their integration and their academic achievements.

What does this say about UAM report to school, to education, to knowledge? How is it structured and built up? With what kind of specificities? What is report to schooling relation with the personal migrating project? That is what we aim to understand and describe in this study, based on almost three UAM interviews.

¹Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

To contextualise and historicise discourses and voices of refugees in education (Marfleet 2007), a literature review of Spanish and French specialised publications about UAM is presented. Then after a short presentation of UAM situation in Toulouse, France, their voices will be heard. We will focus on ten young men living and learning in Toulouse through the association, specially on their report to school, to education, to knowledge.

The confrontation between discourses on refugees and their own voices will give us a way to know a bit more about UAM situation. Work may lighten up some keys about UAM figure construction in our societies. Castoriadis work upon "institutions imaginaires" (Castoriadis, 1975, 1999) and Goffman's theory of "stigmatization" (Goffman, 1963) will be used to analyse data.

methodology

As a first step, we use documentary study to investigate UAM reception conditions both in Spain and France, from administrative point of view, but also in what concerns identity building process and schooling process.

Following Vinsonneau (2002), we struggle on UAM "collective identity" building process. We particularly show how, if State strategies include increasing specific arrangements for minors, it keeps being very linked to minority assessment programs.

Corpus is constituted from a pool of almost 200 newspaper and review articles, published from January to December 2019. Part is sourced from internet and press alerts with keywords such as « UAM » and « UAM schooling ». Others are coming from professional and research sites regularly used by French and Spanish teachers and educational sciences researchers.

Each article has been read and treated the same way, including recording of specific characteristics and using a treatment matrix so as to firstly organize data categories and extract primary convergence lines. Then, main ideas of each article have been quoted as for from 4 to 6 keywords by article. Relevant quotations may be extracted from the text and included afterwards in the data matrix, with the aim to draw kind of a landscape of the type of papers and speeches produced upon UAM.

Then we used three UAM interviewees : Felipe, Martinez and Malik's ones. They help us to try to understand how UAM report to schooling is built-up and structured, from their own point of view.

Interviews are long and semi-directive, so that subject speech could be liberated as much as possible. It questions subject's report to schooling, both in France and in the country of origin, but also feelings these young men experimented when arriving in France, as for when they first began to imagine their migration project. Clinical approach from psychoanalytic orientation is the key point to grasp the teaching-learning challenges, (Carnus, Terrisse, 2009, 2013). The subject is considered singular, divided by his unconscious and in particular subject to various institutions

Data analysis proceed of cross-treatment, including quantitative and qualitative approaches trying to capture "radical imagination" (Castoriadis, 1975). Once exposed cases' singularity, convergence lines are lighten up. Comparison is not the point, but cases may be closed to help the analysis. By the end, such analysis is crossed with documentary one, to point out links between singular reports to education and the kind of figure papers expose

conclusions

It is by the time too early to conclude over questions we developed. However, expected results can be detailed in regard to thematics our work is related to.

Firstly, question of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2005) would be considered as a relevant thematic to observe and analyse migrants' figure. Intersectionality is here

considered as a concept allowing to consider UAM situation focusing on domination networks they are taken into. We will consider UAM figure construction as a domination process and would aim to describe and analyse such process structure.

Secondly, UAM situation, and particularly UAM figure construction would be analyse with the help of Oh's work upon transculturation concept (2011). Even if this work takes place in the USA, we consider it relevant in what concerns the analysis of migrants position between two cultures, and their strategies to adapt to this situation. We aim to point out how UAM discourse testimony of transculturation singular dilemma.

Last but not least, taking into account French specific situation, we aim to study how state pression upon UAM professional projects give clues to understand what a post-colonial politic is. Through this example, it should be possible to extend analysis to European level, affording to make links between History and actual political choices, and show what is the place UAM assume thorough this system.

As a conclusion we ask ourselves :

How can we avoid domination in our white european research in UAM subject?

how successful is our theoretical framework trying to cross psychonalysis and sociology, by the concept of imaginaire radical (Castoriadis 1975) in sciences of education and in UAM?

What about our position as subjective persons: female, white, militantes and researchers on this paper?

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