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The Persistence of Marginalization?

Policies of Compulsory Schooling for Recently Arrived Migrant Students Facing the Challenges of their Implementation in Southern Europe

Virginie Baby-Collin and Luna Russo

ABSTRACT: *This article analyses the implementation challenges of compulsory schooling policies for recently arrived migrant students, questioning the tensions between projects and practices in several Southern European countries (France, Spain, Greece, Italy), where the arrivals of migrant children of compulsory school age have significantly increased since the beginning of the 21st century. It moves away from nationally centered perspectives, dominant in existing studies, and integrates the contributions of both social sciences on migration and compulsory education. While inequalities between native and migrant students in schools remain significant, we consider how national educational policies have been constructed and the tensions they reveal in debates and in the face of practices, balancing trends toward the separation of students and generalized injunctions for inclusion, implemented differently. We emphasize the persistence of forms of marginalization of migrant students, drawing from certain paradigms of emergency management.*

KEYWORDS: *Educational policies, School inclusion, Recently arrived migrant students, Southern Europe*

Introduction

The growth of migrations is accompanied by an increase in young people in migration situations, whether they arrive with their families or unaccompanied (OECD, 2019a). In Europe, the reception crisis has been the subject of numerous political debates, especially since the influx of 2015, even though the increase in arrivals is part of a longer-term trend (Baby-Collin and Souiah,

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2022). The issue of compulsory education for young migrants is crucial for host societies and has led to numerous international directives, which are relayed and implemented differentially by countries (Eurydice, 2019). The observation of education policies highlights how general principles reiterated by international bodies are interpreted within national frameworks rooted in specific migration histories and underscores the tensions between texts and practices, revealing persistent inequalities between the modes of education for native and migrant students and questioning the means employed to address them.

We focus here on the formulation and implementation of these educational policies for recently arrived migrant students at the compulsory education level. The starting point of our reflection is based *in primis* on research conducted in France on the challenges and modes of educating newly arrived migrant students (identified by the school administration as *élèves allophones nouvellement arrivés* (newly arrived allophone students – EANA). Several simultaneous research projects are conducted in Marseille: on one hand, Luna Russo's PhD¹ investigates the role of allophone students within school spaces. The study, conducted since September 2021, focuses on three secondary schools, where interviews with educational stakeholders, classroom situation observations, subjective cartography workshops (students and teachers), and guided tours within the institutions (students) are conducted. On the other hand, the research carried out as part of the ANR project on School Orientation of Young Migrants/Ojemigr², since 2021 in five academic regions in France, analyses the construction of middle school orientation for first-time migrant pupils in the French education system. This involves examining the production of institutional discourses, the practices of middle school students, and adults working with them. In Marseille, the team is conducting a three-year follow-up of cohorts consisting of fifty students (involving twelve schools). We illuminate our research through the examination of institutional documents and research produced by others in three European countries bordering the Mediterranean and gateways into the European Union (Italy, Greece, Spain). Therefore, our demonstration is limited by the inequality of data collection (fieldwork in France, research reviews in the other countries). Aware of the methodological challenges associated with comparative studies in education, we consider here

¹ <https://www.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/ampiric>.

² <https://ojemigr.hypotheses.org/>.

the insights provided by the literature in the three other countries, to the extent that it informs our more in-depth analysis conducted on the French case (Phillips and Ochs, 2004).

Despite a prolific literature that intersects approaches to migration processes, which has been internationalized for a long time, and the multiplication of studies on mobile students in higher education (Baby-Collin and Souiah, 2022) there is paradoxically little research that compares school policies regarding migrant children at the compulsory education age and their implementation. Existing research tends to be primarily national-centered in this field. There is a need to confront studies conducted in national contexts to better understand how international conventions and texts recalling the obligation of education for all children (UNICEF, 1989) and advocating for inclusive education for all (UNESCO, 1994) are translated and implemented in school systems.

France is a long-standing immigration country where the education of recently arrived young migrants has been subject to specific institutional formalizations since the Sixties (Primon *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, Greece, Spain, and Italy have long been emigration countries before the situation reversed since the Eighties-Nineties, and immigration became a major societal issue in the XXIst century, raising questions about the education of newly arrived youth (Wihtol de Wenden *et al.*, 2015). In these four countries, where the foreign-born population now represents between 10 and 15% of the total population, the proportion of children under 15 in the migrant population is slightly higher than their proportion in the total population (Eurostat, 2022), and the number of migrant children to be educated has significantly increased since the beginning of the XXIst century.

While inequalities between native and migrant students in schools struggle to diminish, it is important to examine the conduct of educational policies targeted towards the latter, considering their developments, trends, and implementation modes. After recalling the sources of inequalities among students, we explore how national policies have been constructed and the tensions they reveal, depending on the countries considered. Finally, we question the gap between political projects and observed practices, which seem to disclose, behind inclusive educational projects, the persistence of forms of marginalization of migrant students in schools, particularly drawing from certain paradigms of emergency.

1. Striking Educational Inequalities between Native and Migrant Students

1.1. A Challenging Student Population to Quantify

The category of recently arrived migrant students is not homogeneous across countries, and difficult to quantify, as it is not subject to specific international statistical measures. Table 1 shows that the proportion of immigrants in national population is close to the European average, with Spain being one of the most affected countries. The growth of the immigrant population in Southern European countries accelerated after the Eighties (entry of Greece and Spain into the EU). In terms of inflow, the number of people who immigrated in 2021 is twice as high in Spain as in the other three countries considered. In all four countries, between 14.4% and 18.9% of migrants are under 15 years old, emphasizing the slightly higher proportion of children among immigrants compared to national populations, with the most significant difference in Greece. While the aging of national populations and the decline in European fertility contribute to these trends, they reveal the importance of children in migration situations (Baby-Collin and Souiah, 2022): globally, 12% of migrants are under 18 years old, with their proportion being much higher in Europe.

Identifying the proportion of recently arrived youth within this group is a challenge at the international level. In the case of France, national data indicates 77,435 EANA enrolled in the 2021-22 academic year. The growth is continuous, with their number more than doubling over twenty years (31,760 EANA

TAB. 1. *Young migrants in national populations*

	EUROPE	FRANCE	ITALY	GREECE	SPAIN
Foreign-born population 2022 (%)	11,5	12,7	10,4	11,5	15,5
Immigrants in 2021, per 1000 habitants (flow)	8,4	5	5,4	5,3	11,2
Share of children aged less than 15 years in the total population, 2022 (%)	15,5	17	12	14	14
Share of children aged less than 15 years in the total immigration, 2021 (%)	14,5	18,9	14,4	16,6	14,8

Source: Eurostat, 2022 (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database>).

in France in 2001-02) (Brun, 2023). This underscores the necessity of developing specific educational policies.

1.2. Academic Delays, Career Orientations, and Early Dropouts

In all European countries, students born abroad experience academic delays and higher dropout rates than the national populations (Eurydice, 2019). Spain and France require placement tests for students before assigning them to a specific grade level upon arrival. In Greece, students are placed in the grade level corresponding to their age regardless of their previous education (Eurydice, 2019), as well as in Italy, where only those over 16 undergo testing (Barthoma *et al.*, 2020). Academic delays are more significant when students arrive after the age of 12, i.e., at the secondary education level. Students' adaptation processes are often faster and therefore delays are less common, for those who arrive at a younger age (Koehler *et al.*, 2022).

Migrant students are also more often directed towards vocational education than native students and are less likely to pursue general education until the end of their compulsory schooling (Eurydice, 2019). In France, EANA in high school are 47% enrolled in vocational training, compared to 28% for the overall high school student population (Brun, 2023). However, the lack of long-term tracking of cohorts of recently arrived migrant students makes it difficult to establish a more comprehensive overview of their orientation.

The prevalence of school dropouts also reveals inequalities between migrant and native students. Although statistics are lacking for minor students, Euro-

TAB. 2. *Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24) (%)*

	EU		FRANCE		SPAIN		GREECE		ITALY	
	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021
Total population	13	10	12	8	26	13	13	3	18	13
Natives	11	8	11	7	23	11	9	3	15	11
EU-born	25	21	24	13	39	28	26	-	30	21
Non EU-born	31	22	23	12	42	22	48	30	43	35

Source: European Commission, 2022.

pean data provide dropout rates for young people aged 18 to 24, with rates of 15% in France and more than double in Spain and Italy, which rank among the worst performers in this regard (Eurydice, 2019), even if progress has been made in the past decade (Table 2). Situations vary depending on the origins, with students from non-European countries often experiencing higher dropout rates than those from EU countries.

1.3. *Disparities in Academic Performance and Inequalities*

Although situations vary from country to country, the academic results of migrant students are lower than those of native students, as evidenced by international assessments such as PISA (OECD, 2019a), particularly regarding reading performance evaluations (Table 3). Migrant students perform less well than students from immigrant backgrounds (second generations), who themselves have lower results than native students, even though studies highlight the resilience of migrant students (OECD, 2018).

Academic performance of migrant children varies according to several factors: cultural capital (educational level of parents, family social background), pre-migratory history (including the modes of education for youth before migration and during the migratory process, which may involve periods of interrupted studies), conditions of settling in the destination country (time and age of arrival, legal status, socio-economic level, access to rights in general, type of residence), individual and family resources (spoken languages and the proximity between the mother tongue and the official language of instruction in the host country, psychological and socio-emotional well-being, children's responsibilities within the family), migration and school policies, such as the conditions of schooling in the destination country.

In general, migrant students come from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds than native students. International statistics thus converge towards their lower academic achievement, although some countries, where the socio-economic level of migrant populations is generally higher, are exceptions (e.g., Finland). Socio-economic disparities are further accentuated for recently arrived students, many of whom experience precarious situations (Armagnague-Roucher *et al.*, 2018), residential instability, psychological fragility as well as

cultural adaptation difficulties inherent in migratory processes (varying according to origins).

However, as shown in Table 3, the disparities in academic achievement remain significant between migrants and natives, even after taking into account these socio-economic differentials, i.e., controlling for all other factors. Thus, migration policies and educational policies play a crucial role in the conditions of schooling, academic trajectories, and the success of migrant children.

TAB. 3. *Performance in reading: scores for natives, first and second generations immigrant students*

	OECD AVERAGE	FRANCE	GREECE	ITALY
Non-immigrant students	494	502	465	482
2nd generation immigrant students	465	461	420	445
1st generation immigrant students	440	425	397	433
Score point difference associated with immigrant background after accounting for gender and students' and schools' socio-economic profile	-24	-13	-2	-22

Source: OECD, 2019 (PISA 2018). Note: Data is incomplete for Spain.

2. Between Separation and Inclusion: School Policies for Recently Arrived Migrant Students

2.1. Diversity of National Contexts

Due to the longevity of its migration flows, France is one of the countries that established specific reception programs for migrant students earliest, in the Sixties. Local or scattered initiatives, involving the grouping of foreign children in classes for learning French, were formalized in the Seventies, separating newly arrived students from others. The ultimate goal remained integration into regular classes, but studies have shown that numerous placements in specialized or adapted classes, as well as obstacles to the reintegration of these students into regular systems, have generated significant forms of segregation, constituting forms of institutional discrimination (Schiff and Fouquet-Chauprade, 2011).

With the creation of *Centres de formation et d'information pour la scolarisation des enfants de migrants* (Centers for Training and Information for the Schooling of Migrant Children – CEFISEM), which became *Centres académiques pour la scolarisation des enfants allophones nouvellement arrivés et des enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de voyageurs* (Academic Centers for the Schooling of Newly Arrived Allophone Students and Children from Itinerant or Traveling Families – CAS-NAV) in 2002, educational policies are structured at the academic level. In 2012, a circular confirmed the discontinuation of reception classes in favour of the principle of inclusion in regular classes, which should be the «main modality of schooling» (BOEN, 2012). Students, no longer identified by nationality but by their allophony, can be placed in *Unités pédagogiques pour élèves allophones arrivants* (Allophone Students Arriving Pedagogical Units – UPE2A) alongside their immediate admission to regular classes, according to their needs. Equipped with a specific hourly volume – a minimum weekly duration of 9 hours in primary and 12 hours in secondary education – these programs are supposed to allow the definition of an individualized path so that each student can, at the end of one or two years at most, be fully integrated into regular classes. The purpose of these transitional programs is thus the acquisition of French as the language of schooling.

In the other three countries, immigration is more recent and only becomes significant from the Nineties. In Italy, separate classes existed until the Seventies, mainly for students from internal migration, which was significant in the national history. These classes grouped students considered culturally and economically 'backward' in separate classes. Faced with the rise of movements for equal education for all, these classes were abolished in 1977 (Laws *integrazione scolastica*, i.e., educational integration), and the State made the schooling of all students in regular classes compulsory, including students with disabilities. Italian legislation stands out as it does not provide for preparatory classes for migrant students, who are systematically included in regular classes (Migliarini *et al.*, 2020). However, they can benefit from language support based on teachers' assessments, through the implementation of Individualized Educational Learning Plans, the help of multilingual teachers (Ljudska univerza Ptuj, 2021), and the establishment of linguistic support groups. Since 2014, Italian language labs for foreign students can be held for 8 to 10 hours per week for a maximum of 16 to 24 weeks.

In Spain, where education is managed in a decentralized manner by the autonomous communities, it is difficult to discern a national model, as revealed

by the absence of specific directives or programs. Forms of compensatory education are locally implemented, and linguistic classrooms (*aulas lingüísticas*) are gradually established from the 2000 in most autonomous communities, where, in addition to regular classes, students receive Spanish language instruction within or outside school premises (Goenechea Permisán *et al.*, 2011). In several autonomous communities (Catalonia, the Basque Country), migrant students must also learn, in addition to Spanish, the regional language of the autonomous community of reception.

In Greece, the first adaptation classes for newly arrived students were established in the Eighties in Athens and Thrace. In the Nineties, other *Reception and support classes* were developed to accommodate young Albanians and Russian speakers (Mitakidou *et al.*, 2009). However, it is mainly the massive arrival of migrants following the 2015 reception crisis, that contributed to the establishment in 2016 of an *Emergency Action Plan for the Education of Refugee and Migrant Children*, aiming to systematically include refugee children in the national education system, now enshrined in legislation (Law 4547 of 2018). This plan establishes the *Reception Facilities for Refugee Education* (DYEP), operating in primary and secondary schools near refugee accommodation sites, offering Greek language courses in the afternoons; and the Reception Classes, parallel classes mainly present in urban areas in Educational Priority Zones (ZEP), aimed at children who do not have the necessary skills in Greek to fully integrate into the education system without additional support. These students follow the school curriculum of their Greek peers in the morning and attend preparatory courses focused on the Greek language for a maximum of one to two years (Crul *et al.*, 2019). Newly arrived students, however, are not identified as a specific group, and the durations of language learning devices in Reception Classes are longer than in other countries – up to five years (for students moving from ZEP I to ZEP II)³. The Greek policy, developed in connection with asylum-seeking children who arrived after 2015, is not, as in France or Italy, based on a broader criterion of ‘newly arrived’ children, which, in France, is constructed on the specific categorization of allophony.

³ ZEP I (no knowledge or basic knowledge of Greek), lasting one to two years at most; ZEP II (average knowledge of Greek), lasting two to three years at most.

2.2. Separation or Inclusion?

The policy orientations discussed so far reveal hesitations regarding the methods of integrating recently arrived students into regular classes, reflecting ongoing debates. Separating certain students from their peers in specific classes, even if considered temporary, leads to exclusionary processes, making it more challenging for them to return to regular classes for standard educational follow-up and increases the likelihood of these students pursuing shorter, vocational, or perceived as lower-tier educational paths (Crul *et al.*, 2019; Eurydice, 2019). In France, this was evident in the research on reception classes, seen as segregative programs in place until the early XXIst century. In Italy and elsewhere, concerns were raised about specific classes for internal migrants and classes for children with disabilities.

The generalization of the inclusion paradigm originated from reflections on students with disabilities, now grouped under the banner of Special Education Needs (SEN) – *élèves à besoins éducatifs particuliers* (EBEP) in France, *Bisogni Educativi Speciali* (BES) in Italy, *Necesidades educativas especiales* (NEE) in Spain. This categorization is often applied to migrant students except in Greece where they are covered by *Support measures for learners in early childhood and school education*, which are programs to support vulnerable student groups (including Roma, refugees, asylum seekers) and to ensure access to education (European Commission, 2022). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and declarations from the Council of Europe (Bauer *et al.*, 2019) play a significant role in the development of inclusive policies. They aim to eliminate forms of school discrimination to ensure quality education for all, respecting the diversity of students' learning needs and promoting a more just and equitable educational environment. The latter involve the school covering the specific needs of children on an individualized basis, in contrast to integrative policies where it is the student who must adapt to the school system. This requires specific training for teachers who are expected to manage a greater diversity of students in their classrooms. However, the alignment between students with disabilities and migrant students is not straightforward (Bauer *et al.*, 2019; Migliarini *et al.*, 2020). By associating migrant students with those with special educational needs, an educational model of compensatory nature continues, acknowledging a certain deficiency in migrant students and attributing it almost exclusively to linguistic issues rather than cultural differences. It therefore reinforces processes of stigmatization.

The issue of language proficiency is indeed at the core of most specific educational programs for migrant students, referred to in France as allophony, as revealed by the terminology used for EANA, which has no equivalent in the other countries.

Key studies have shown that 4 to 8 years of practicing a new language for allophone students are required to achieve the same chances of success as native students (Collier, 1987). The duration of the programs designed for this learning is much shorter (a few months in Italy, one to two years in France, more variable in Spain), with Greece being an exception due to the greater flexibility of the duration of its programs. The lack of specific consideration for their allophony beyond the time allocated by transition classes is an oversight in educational policies. It operates as if the resolution of differences in language proficiency is achieved within the designated timeframe.

The equation to balance the time students spend in regular classes and the time dedicated to specific programs for learning the school language is subject to numerous difficulties. While education stakeholders now agree, along with researchers, that inclusion in regular classes is the best path for students to succeed in school, the existence of specific spaces to build linguistic skills is also necessary to facilitate this integration (Koehler, 2017).

The often-established relationship between migrant students and students with disabilities, under the category of special educational needs, also tends to overlook the fact that the student's language(s) can be an asset for learning the school language. Studies show that considering the linguistic and cultural specificities of students and viewing them as a resource rather than a hindrance has a positive effect on academic progress and well-being (Collier, 1987).

Taken seriously in a minority of European countries, these results are integrated into educational programs in Italy and some regions of Spain, where collaborations are established to incorporate teachers from certain countries of origin of young migrants into student training (Eurydice, 2019), allowing young people to value their original language.

In general, the differentiated origins of students have little place in national school systems that remain largely indifferent to differences, even though the cultural practices and educational systems of the countries of origin of migrant students are very diverse. The sudden arrival of many Ukrainian students in French schools after the outbreak of war in 2022 marked a turning point. Wel-

came in regular classes and UPE2A, students were able to continue their education remotely in Ukraine, using resources provided by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, so that they could «benefit from continuity in learning in their mother tongue» (Ministère de l'éducation nationale)⁴. This practice, which also concerned other European countries, was, however, designed within the framework of mobility conceived as more temporary than lasting. It reflects a difficulty of school systems to consider student mobility other than in terms of a temporary/durable dichotomy, even though numerous scientific studies show that many mobile students may reside in several countries during their schooling (Mazzucato and Haagsman, 2022). It would be beneficial for educational systems to not only recognize the knowledge acquired by migrant children in multiple languages but also to acknowledge and appreciate their skills in navigating between different languages and cultures. These insights could also contribute to enriching native students and improving school systems (Chnane Davin *et al.*, 2022).

This dimension points to the weakness of intercultural education, often emphasized in a French school system built around a republican model of integration that supposes assimilation (Primon *et al.*, 2018). Although covering very broad dimensions and capable of being implemented in various ways, intercultural education expresses a school's attention to diversity and cultural exchange among students of different origins. It also involves the teaching of students' mother tongues. In this area, Greece has few initiatives, Italy is developing some, including the valorisation of the mother tongue and the recognition of cultural differences, turning the singularity of students into a richness for all, as well as recommendations for recruiting cultural mediators in schools (Crispi, 2020). However, Spain is generally highlighted in international comparisons for having pioneered a genuine intercultural approach to schools: the implementation of official intercultural mediation programs in the policies of most autonomous communities to facilitate school integration, reception, through intercultural school mediators and teaching assistants accompanying migrant students, fostering links between school and family, with a more comprehensive consideration of the child beyond the simple cognitive dimension (Goenechea Permisán, 2016).

⁴ <https://www.education.gouv.fr/accueil-et-scolarisation-des-enfants-ukrainiens-340790>.

3. Testing Practices: Insufficient Means and Emergency Management?

The implementation of inclusive and intercultural policies faces numerous challenges on the ground. Our observations in the French context will guide the discussion, supplemented by research findings from the other cases considered.

3.1. Uneven Implementation of Compulsory Education

Although a European directive (2013/33/EU) obliges states to enrol migrant children, regardless of their status, within three months of their arrival in a territory, among the four countries considered, only Greece has set a maximum deadline for the schooling of newcomers (84 days). In practice, delays or the absence of schooling affect a significant proportion of children.

In France, between 7% and 9% of EANA at the secondary level and between 8% and 17% at the high school level are still not enrolled six months after their arrival. Less than two-thirds of them are enrolled within a month of their arrival (Brun, 2023). Reasons for these delays include waiting for students to take the required language proficiency tests before enrolling; the saturation of UPE2A, which are insufficient in number given the needs; resistance from some institutions to accept students arriving throughout the year and integrate them into regular classes that are already crowded (note that the class size in France at the secondary level is one of the highest in Europe – OECD, 2019b); and delays in the enrolment of unaccompanied minors, whose care by the departmental *Aide sociale à l'enfance* (child welfare services – ASE) suffers from long delays, and whose age assessment is sometimes challenged by authorities (Bailleul *et al.*, 2023). In this regard, the responsiveness of educational authorities regarding the schooling of Ukrainians in 2022 contrasted with the enrolment delays observed for other groups of newly arrived students, leading to criticism from field actors who pointed out dual-speed policies and forms of injustice in the implementation of compulsory education, not only between migrants and natives, but also among categories of migrants.

Finally, a certain number of school-age children are not (or very rarely) enrolled. One-third of refugee students in Greece are not enrolled in any formal educational structure (Greek Council for Refugees and Save the Children In-

ternational, 2021). Studies also emphasize that the complexity and slowness of administrative procedures are obstacles to smooth integration processes in schools (Koehler, 2017).

3.2. *What Realities of Inclusive Education?*

The implementation of inclusion itself faces several shortcomings. In Italy, studies highlight the discrimination faced by some children with special educational needs, including migrants, willing to exercise their right to education in mainstream schools (Bocci, 2017).

In France, inclusion is generally effective within secondary schools within the limits established by the 2012 circular. It is progressive, based on students' acquisition of skills, both in terms of French language proficiency and the subjects taught. However, inclusion is generally absent for students who were not previously or had limited prior enrolment before migration. Specific programs keep them apart from regular classes due to a dual difficulty: a lack of language proficiency, coupled sometimes with a lack of reading and writing skills. Inclusion is also rare in general high schools, and most existing programs operate in vocational institutions in a closed manner, with 15 hours of weekly instruction, primarily for students over 16 years old. Nationally, 15% of EANA enrolled in high school are in a specific (French language) program without inclusion.

Our field observations in Marseille show that out of 12 EANA programs in high schools, only 2 are in general high schools with an inclusive dimension, while the other 10 are closed programs located in vocational institutions. Besides the fact that these students thus have fewer school hours than their high school peers, this exclusion resembles forms of school segregation denounced by many stakeholders. Institutionally, this non-inclusion is justified in several ways: difficulty in reconciling the schedules of regular classes and specific programs; difficulty in placing non-French-speaking (and possibly non-writing and non-reading) students in vocational classes where questions of risk prevention arise due to students using machines in technical and manual fields; difficulty in targeting regular teaching spaces for students who have not yet chosen their field, especially when general education courses are not numerous in vocational institutions. One consequence of the non-inclusion of certain groups is their

almost systematic orientation towards vocational education programs at the end of their transition year. The rates of orientation of students benefiting from inclusion towards general programs are indeed much higher than those of students from closed programs, consistent with the results of the research mentioned earlier.

On the other hand, teachers denounce the fact that certain allophone students do not benefit from any linguistic support and experience great difficulties in following regular class instruction. However, in rural areas or in spaces where specific schooling facilities are non-existent due to insufficient enrolment, recently arrived students may not have access to any linguistic support. In France, one out of ten EANA does not have access to a French language learning program (Brun, 2023), even though it is planned for some teachers to travel to rural areas to provide individual support. This contributes to forms of territorial injustice, which are similarly found in other considered countries. In Greece, the issue of transportation to reach educational facilities is acute in certain areas, especially near refugee camps often located away from urban centers (Koehler, 2017).

3.3. *Insufficient Teacher Training*

Another major challenge faced by educational policies relates to the inadequacy of specialized teacher training for welcoming recently arrived student populations. While 18% of teachers in Europe work in classes where at least 10% of students have a different mother tongue than the language of instruction (OECD, 2019b), very few teachers have received specific training. In France, one of the worst performers in Europe in this regard, only 12% of teachers have been trained to teach in multicultural or multilingual contexts during their initial training, and only 8% of teachers feel prepared to teach in such settings upon completing their studies (Mendonça-Dias *et al.*, 2020). On average across OECD countries, two-thirds of teachers believe they can 'to some extent' or 'a lot' cope with the challenges of a multicultural classroom (OECD, 2019b). A recent report recommends that all teachers in UPE2A programs be recruited based on a Second Language French (FLS) certification, which is not currently required (Cour des Comptes, 2023). Even though CASNAV has the mission of

developing training actions for teachers dealing with EANA, studies highlight the frustration of teachers torn between a strong pedagogical desire and significant obstacles to implementing tailored teaching, including the lack of tools, 'psycho-pedagogical overload' and the isolation they experience (Armagnague *et al.*, 2019).

In general, calls for the development of inclusive policies are not accompanied by dedicated training for teachers. In France, only 25 hours of mandatory initial training have been included in the national teacher training curricula since 2021, and the effects of this recent policy are not yet visible in classrooms. In Greece, in addition to creating educational material in many languages, training in intercultural education is now mandatory in most university pedagogy departments, even though it remains fragile (Ljudska univerza Ptuj, 2021). In Italy, *La Buona Scuola* law (2015) encourages academic qualifications to teach Italian as a second language in teacher recruitment processes and promotes training in inclusive education, awareness of migration issues and human rights, as well as linguistic and cultural mediation (Grigt, 2017). In 2017, the Italian Ministry of Education allocated 4 million euros to fund training for teachers working in contexts characterized by a high number of foreign students. In Spain, training in intercultural education, as well as in the overall care of the child beyond simple academic dimensions, is among the most developed in OECD countries. Furthermore, Italy and Spain also recruit some teachers from the countries of origin of certain students to promote inclusion.

3.4. *Lack of Resources and Emergency Management: Political Responsibility*

Current educational policies for recently arrived migrant students in the four considered countries suffer from a widespread gap between the proliferation of principles and good intentions on one side and the inadequacies in their implementation on the other. Both research and reports lament the lack of political will as well as limited financial resources allocated.

In France, policymakers at the academic level justify the non-opening or non-sustainability of specific programs by the impossibility of predicting the influx of entrants and their variability. However, the number of EANA has been

steadily increasing for twenty years (§ 1.1). Our field observations show that when student mobilization becomes a public demand or when lawyers file appeals to administrative courts for the non-enrolment of young migrants, then the school administration can urgently place students in classes or open specific programs (such as the sudden opening of five specific programs in the Marseille academy in 2017, in such a context). Similarly, the exceptional mobilization observed for the reception of Ukrainian children in schools in the winter of 2022, teaches us that political will can allocate resources.

When mobilization pays off, it results in temporary, non-permanent programs being created, with untrained contractual teachers. This emergency management, by ad-hoc mobilization of budgets without genuine anticipation of needs, invoking arguments of volatility in enrolments that contradict underlying trends, is a political choice. Some authors (Shuayb and Crul, 2020) also argue that the management of educational policies toward young migrants reproduces modes of functioning of emergency humanitarian management in the face of what is called the ‘migration crisis’, aiming to heal wounds rather than build a sustainable policy. This paradigm of humanitarian emergency, which tends to take precedence over long-term policies, is in contradiction with the very essence of education, which should lead to building training and support paths over the duration of young people’s education to guide them into adulthood.

Conclusions

Apart from international studies conducted by major organizations (OECD, European Commission, Eurydice, UNHCR), or international statistics related to the evaluation of educational systems (PISA, TALIS, TIMMS studies), and aside from a few scattered comparative analyses, there is still a lack of comprehensive international research on the methods of educating migrant students, especially those who have recently arrived. While the literature in social sciences is highly internationalized when it comes to thinking about international migrations, the literature on educational issues, particularly at the compulsory education age, remains very national-centered and often published in national languages.

However, facing the increasing transnationalization of children's life paths and the significant rise in the number of migrant children, it seems essential to better understand, compare, and establish connections between educational spaces at the compulsory education level. In this regard, we can only endorse the numerous international recommendations in favour of implementing policies to long-term tracking on recently arrived migrant students over time, which are currently non-existent. This lack also harms the students themselves, who become invisible in school populations once the time allocated to them in specific programs has passed, even though it has long been known that this time is insufficient to overcome academic, cultural and linguistic distances.

Reducing educational inequalities between migrant and native students also requires the implementation of educational policies. While the segregative and exclusionary risks posed by forms of sidelining students have been denounced and addressed by international legislations, the paradigm of inclusion still faces implementation difficulties both at national and local scales. Its compensatory register struggles to be replaced by the promotion of intercultural education models that value the richness of cultural differences in the service of better education for all, although, from this perspective, Spain seems able to set an example. The comparison of some Southern European countries reveals many common processes, illustrating how international recommendations gradually permeate policy implementation. It also sheds light on the French case, still largely resistant to intercultural education and heavily marked by a historically ingrained assimilationist prism.

To implement holistic and inclusive educational practices that address the academic, social, and emotional needs of migrant students, it is crucial to no longer view migrations in a binary manner. Instead, it is important to consider the increasingly complex mobilities of students, value their native languages and prior knowledge rather of ignoring them and provide them with necessary and flexible time to support their learning of a new language and education system. It also involves moving away from an adult-centered position and giving space to the experiences of the young individuals concerned in the design and implementation of these policies.

This cannot be achieved without the commitment of states to the implementation of specific recurring means over the long term, teacher training, and educational structures, beyond policies that sometimes rely on emergency

patches for situations presented as crises, reproducing humanitarian emergency paradigms, even though they are part of observable long-term processes, and the education of tomorrow's adults cannot be satisfied with policies that refuse to look beyond the immediate future.

Amidst increasingly stringent migration policies, exemplified by the 'immigration' law in France in January 2024 and the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, there is an urgent need for education systems to actively establish conducive conditions for the sustainable reception of young migrants, who face heightened threats in light of reinforced repressive policies.

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