Education for a Segregated Society? An Ethnographic Approach to Educational Change in Catalonia

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Abstract

This paper addresses aspects of alternative proposals taking place in the public educational system, based on an anthropological, ethnographic, comparative study of alternative schools and educational projects in Catalonia. More specifically, it first explores educational change in Catalonia through time and on the present, with a special focus on the public sector, stressing its historical dimension and the process of its current depoliticization. Then, based on a specific ethnographic case and on daily dynamics of exclusion, school choice and parental involvement, attention is drawn to aspects of the privatization of educational innovation and the reproduction of inequalities. It is argued that, apart from a first-level educational segregation due to economic resources, a second level appears that divides families according to cultural criteria. In the end, the potential for social transformation such educational proposals hold is highlighted, along with a few factors that would facilitate its unfolding.

Keywords*: *alternative education, educational change, school choice, parental involvement, educational segregation

Introduction

The school institution has been questioned and changing in the context of capitalist societies' general transformation, marked by the crisis of the welfare state and the rise of neoliberal policies (Merchán, 2005). According to Beach and Arrazola (2020), market governance, public choice, decentralization and competitive funding have influenced state education leading to "education quasi-markets", which enable schools to be less controlled by the state and run by private providers. As a result, new policies have now changed the education system, which seems to be neutral and apolitical, based on freedom of choice and equality. In fact, existing inequalities got hidden or even fostered through, for example, spatiality and mobility that reproduced power differentials due to the unequal access to choices and markets.

This is directly linked to the dominant concern for economic productivity that is present in all industrial countries, calling for greater efficiency and influencing educational policies. However, as House, Altrichter and Elliot (2000) argue, such policies often result to be counter-productive, since they respond to national economic concerns without understanding and reflecting the way educational institutions actually function.

During the 20th century, various progressive educational movements were born, which are still alive through contemporary experiences, placing the student´s needs and role at the centre and respecting individual needs and paces (Ferri, 2020). Such movements and policies were also present in Spain. The main legal context that establishes the educational system's management in Catalonia at the time of the research was LEC (Catalan Education Law), following the framework set by LOMCE (Organic Law for the improvement of educational policy) of 2013 that expands upon the Article 27 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Although LEC does not contradict the laws set by the Spanish

government, it focuses on aspects less stressed by LOMCE, such as the promotion of the autonomy of the educational centres, innovation, family participation, as well as its competency-based character and the priority given to inclusion and equity.

This paper draws upon an ethnographic study to analyse how alternative educational proposals take place in the public sector. The paper is divided into three parts: first we will look at educational change in the Catalan context in the past, then we will focus on the present and the public sector. We further continue with a brief presentation of our ethnographic case and examples of the privatization of the public school, reproduction of inequalities, school choice, parental involvement and segregation. We conclude with notes that invite the reader to reflect over school as a political institution and examine its potential for social transformation.

Literature Review

Educational change in Catalonia

Research on alternative education in the Spanish and Catalan context has mostly focused on description, characteristics, and terminology, while some have adopted a historical perspective regarding how such schools and policies have developed through time. Here we will focus on the latter. Pericacho (2014) explains how the history of pedagogical renewal in Spain is both heterogeneous and parallel to each social and political context. Similarly, Carbonell (2016) argues that pedagogical renewal has developed in Catalonia in a non-linear and non-continuous way since the beginning of the 20th century and distinguishes three periods that he calls the "three pedagogical springs". The first one, the "republican spring", starts at the beginning of the 20th century and more significantly during the Second Republic (1931-1936), when there is much experimentation by both the public and the private sector and support by state

institutions. Various school networks and other educational initiatives were formed then, among which the Montessori schools' network, summer schools, school retreats called "colonies escolars", as well as some open-air public schools. Besides, the Modern School (Escola Moderna) was founded by the anarchist educator Ferrer i Guardia in 1901 in Barcelona, giving birth to a network of similar self-managed schools all over Catalonia and Spain. Both attempted to fight the state and religious dogmatism, replacing it with a scientific, integral and experiential education.

After the proclamation of the Second Republic (1931), more value was given to public education, which was viewed as the vehicle to the construction of a free, democratic society. Therefore, a significant investment in schools' creation and teachers' training occurred since they are recognized as the key actors of educational change. "Institut-escola" was born then, combining both primary and secondary education, and alternative pedagogical theories and methodologies from all over Europe were introduced to the centers. The commitment to the increase of schooling and the improvement of education was maintained even during the Civil War when the autonomous government of Catalonia created the New Unified School Council (CENU) with the collaboration of teachers' unions and collectives. It was a project based on the anarchist educational proposal that was implemented in the public school system and interrupted by Franco's dictatorship. More specifically, it was created in 1936, with the involvement of the anarcho-syndicalist confederation CNT and the contribution of the anarchist pedagogue Joan Puig i Elias. CENU aimed to plan and manage education in Catalonia during the Civil War and the social revolution.

The second period is what Carbonell calls the "spring of resistance", taken place under Franco's dictatorship. Francoist consequences were disastrous for schools

as many of them closed and thousands of teachers got exiled. There was a reorientation to a traditional school model promoting national Catholicism, gender segregation, and authoritarian relations. Catalan language and culture were banned, along with any activity that promoted diversity. Due to the restrictions of that period, activity related to alternative education was limited and clandestine. Such educational practices were developed through exile and mainly concentrated on private initiatives in the creation of cooperatively run active schools.

It is important to mention at this point the Pedagogical Renewal Movements (MRPs) that have managed to survive through time, providing a line of continuity in terms of pedagogical renewal (Esteban, 2016). Born between the 60s and 70s, they were self-organized groups of teachers who collectively exchanged reflections upon their practices. "Asociació de Mestres Rosa Sensat" was the first and most well-known, essential pedagogical institution created in 1965 in Catalonia, which took its name from the director of Escola Municipal del Bosc. Rosa Sensat was devoted to teachers' training for a new school, recovering progressive methodologies, and introducing new ones. It organized Summer Schools (Escoles d' Estiu) attended by teachers from all over Spain. Furthermore, it brought experiences from other countries, especially Italy and France, encouraging teachers to experiment, debate, and exchange ideas. From the Summer School held in Barcelona in July 1975 arises the document "Per una Nova Escola Pública" [For a New Public School] (X Escola d' Estiu de Barcelona, 1975). An important reference for the subsequent MRPs and the various agents that discussed the public-school model for the incipient democracy.

Initiatives of that period that managed to survive would later form the Collective of Schools for the Catalan Public School (CEPEPC) that was created

during the Spanish transition in 1987. This consisted of about eighty schools, most of which were cooperatives run by groups of parents and teachers linked to Rosa Sensat. Their focus was to recover the use of Catalan culture and language in schools and the Catalan tradition of active pedagogies, while they were gradually integrated into the public system at the end of the 80s.

The "New" Public School

The third, ongoing pedagogical "spring of the civil society" (Carbonell, 2016) started at the beginning of the millennium, mostly with schools emerged on the margins, and increased during 2005-2006, especially during 2008-2010. It is marked by a tendency to form networks among innovative schools and the belief that educational projects matter more than legal frameworks. Therefore, school teams empower themselves and learn from each other through networks rather than the state's facilitation.

Ferri (2020) argues that this happens thanks to the Law of Education of Catalonia (LEC), which permits the creation of educational projects with a certain degree of freedom regarding the curriculum. Nevertheless, although the Catalan educational system promotes the autonomy of the centers, innovation, and families' participation, at the same time it is strongly competency-based, following the European example and stressing skills ignored by conventional curricula. This is important since, on one hand the continuation or creation of alternative educational projects with schools of new creation is facilitated by law. On the other hand, the whys behind such orientation that comes from above run the risk of losing their political dimension. We could say that such schools may be easily transformed into a via towards adaptation to the capitalist system's current needs. Thus, furthering a system that rejects the mere conventional transmission of knowledge, giving value to diversity only because

it needs a new type of workers; skilled with initiative, autonomy, teamwork, and all the so-called "competencies for life".

Vaira (2001) as cited in Fischer (2006) contributes to the discussion when he writes about how neoliberal ideology has resulted in the loss of the state's central role, the development of an "individualistic social ethic" and the business model as the basis for the organization of social activities. These changes had a massive impact on educational systems since schools started to be seen as an extension of the welfare state, sharing its limitations and defects. As a result, the idea of a more efficient and flexible school that corresponds to the demands of the job market, the wider society, and the students' families is now commonplace. This has given the school an entrepreneurial nature that focuses on responding to a variety of competing issues and ensuring the quality of the educational services and products offered. The central idea to all these new requirements is that the "autonomy of educational institutions" must govern schools. This refers to the wider margins for organizational or pedagogical decisions and choices over the curricula within some general directive and evaluative rules set by the ministry. Instead of a citizen's formation, schools are now expected to prepare individuals for an increasingly demanding and complex job market. As a result, rather than transmitting formal and standard knowledge, the school's new task is to adapt human capital to the new socioeconomic conditions.

This is the context that gives birth to the New School 21 (Escola Nova 21) in 2016, a platform of 30 innovative schools -23 public and seven private schools that are subsidized with public funds- and others that wish to transform their pedagogical practices following the 2030 agenda of the UN, UNESCO's call for educational change and OECD relevant calls. It was created by UNESCOCAT - Center for the UNESCO of Catalonia, the Jaume Bofill Foundation, and the

Open University of Catalonia (UOC), to be later joined by the "la Caixa" banking foundation and the Provincial government of Barcelona [Diputació de Barcelona]. An agreement of collaboration was also signed with the government of Catalonia's Department of Education that supports it as a secondary actor. New School 21's approach was articulated in Barcelona through Networks for Change [Xarxes per al Canvi], an initiative led by the Barcelona Education Consortium, whose purpose and goals are driven by the general local progressive and competency-based educational policies focused on diversity.

According to its official website[1]: Escola Nova 21 has proposed a transformation of the Catalan educational system to bring it fully up-to-date, embracing a purpose aimed at developing competencies for life. Thus, relevant to our historical context, and adopting learning practices based on existing knowledge of how people learn. The alliance's program has four principal actions, to a. support existing projects for transformation in schools and the system, b. engage in collaborative work for educational change, c. build alliances with education administrations and local governments, and d. generate protocols for system-wide change, with the ultimate goal being that all children, in all schools are able to enjoy empowering and relevant learning experiences which allow them to develop their life projects with dignity, meaning, and well-being.

What Carbonell (2016) mentions, among others, is the high visibility and popularity of these innovative schools which tend to have waiting lists, crowded open days, and pressure from middle-classed parents to enter. According to the author, school choice is no longer just between the public and the private, but also between different pedagogical models and projects in each sector. Problematically, the result of the word of mouth and increased information and propaganda set risks in terms of equity. Similarly, from a rather more critical

point of view, the research group GRES of the university of Girona has studied what they call the "third impulse of pedagogical renewal in Catalonia" (Feu and Torrent, 2020a, 2020b), which is marked by an increasing intensity of unconventional educational practices. After visiting 115 centers in Catalonia, Feu and Torrent (2020a) draw attention to the complexity of educational change today. The authors suggest that contrary to previous periods of pedagogical renewal, there is now a shift towards the concept of innovation, explained by the invasion of the neoliberal hegemonic discourse in education.

In other words, what educational projects in the third period of educational change seem to lack in their pedagogical debate is the explicit reference to the political dimension of education and its conceptualization as a vehicle for social transformation. According to Feu & Torrent (2020b), to understand such differences it is essential to remember that society was conceived in political terms during the first two periods, and power was visible. This is not the case in the "liquid", depoliticized, and individualistic post-modern reality where the contemporary individual transforms from an active citizen to a mere consumer. Especially during the second period of educational change, the movements fought for a public school of freedom, social justice, and democracy as opposed to something concrete: Franco's dictatorship. On the other hand, educational change is now placed within the Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM) and its neoliberal agenda. At this point, we could remember Bauman's work (2007) when he refers to what sells now in terms of the liquid modernity; difference instead of similarity, advisors that teach how to advance instead of teachers who show an only way.

Therefore, two things should be kept in mind. Firstly, alternative schools and policies in Catalonia are not new, either clandestine or integrated into the public school system. They have always had a significant role. This legacy is evident

in Barcelona in many ways: exhibitions organized by the town hall, frequent syndicates' related courses, informal conversations taking place in squats and ateneus, many families or teachers whose imaginary is marked by CEPEPCs, and other progressive schools they have attended as students or teachers. Secondly, the purpose of educational change in Catalonia through history was to fight the church and the state or bring Franco's regime to an end. However, its current political agenda is somewhat blurred and unclear, ignoring the relationship between innovation/renewal and social change and individualizing the learning process while prioritizing methodological aspects. It is what Solé and Moyano (2017) have called the "psi colonization of the educational discourse" that has replaced the cultural transmission with individual emotional and behavioral aspects, ignoring the socio-political reality.

Today, educational change is often conceived as an adaptation to the neoliberal, liquid society and market requirements instead of resistance or social critique. Critical renewal or anarchist pedagogical proposals are limited, whereas innovative, alternative education is expanding. A fact that makes many radical leftists talk about Ferrer's Modern school and other similar experiences with a certain nostalgia. This specific character the current period has taken is, of course, promoted by global influences such as GERM's neoliberal agenda and the value given to difference in our liquid changing societies.

Having contextualized the research historically and understood educational change in Catalonia through time, we will now turn to the theoretical framework that will be used for the analysis of the findings.

Theoretical Framework

To analyse the pedagogical practices met in our ethnographic case, we will focus on the politics of everyday life in schools, about which Bernstein (1991 [1975], 2003 [1975]) can offer us some important insights.

More specifically, due to our interest in the authoritarian character of the pedagogical relations, we will look at Bernstein's types of pedagogic practice, the visible and the invisible. When rules and control over the child are explicit and emphasis is placed upon the student's performance, the pedagogy is visible and stratifying differences among children are produced. When rules and control over the child are implicit, known only to the transmitter, the focus is upon internal procedures, and the differences among kids reveal uniqueness instead of being used for comparison, the pedagogy is invisible[2].

In such a context, power relations between home and school change radically: mothers need to be re-socialized and viewed as other pupils. If the mother wishes to understand the theory of the invisible pedagogy, then she may find herself at the mercy of complex theories of child development. Indeed, whichever way the working-class mother turns, the teacher has the power. On the other hand, from the point of view of the middle class, there is at least an intellectual understanding of the invisible pedagogy, if not an acceptance of its values and practice. What is more, if the middle-class child is not obtaining the basic competencies at the rate the mother expects, an educational support system can be organized through private coaching or through the mother's own efforts. The power relationships between the middle-class mother and the teacher are less tipped in favour of the teacher (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 119).

Regarding the sociologist's social class assumptions of an invisible pedagogy, there is one that interests us more: Invisible pedagogies imply a smaller class of

pupils and a higher material cost of space[3]. Freedom of movement needs an open-plan architecture and fewer kids. Such spatial demands that are generated lead to economic demands as well. After all, "it is an expensive pedagogy because it is derived from an expensive class: the middle class[4]" (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 119).

At this point we can remember Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), according to whom we keep considering the school system as a social mobility factor while it reinforces social stability legalizing and perpetuating social inequalities. More specifically, each family transmits a specific educational capital and a particular ethos, a value system that influences kids' attitudes at school, determining their behavior and level of inclusion. Focusing on inequality in education, the sociologists conclude that the dominion of equality over the traditional pedagogical practice, in fact, legitimizes inequality in favor of students whose educational capital fits formal educational requirements privileging the elite. Therefore, success seems to be bound with the position in the social hierarchy and -paradoxically- in line with democratic ideals making education a field of symbolic domination.

Lerena (1976, 1983) also adopts a critical perspective, questioning education's ideological representation as a simple dualism of oppression vs. liberation and showing how "school-jails" are not contrary to 'school-gardens' but complimentary. Drawing from educational experiences and Marxist scholars, he argues that natural, liberating, or non-directive education cannot exist by definition. "Pedagogical relationships are not relationships of communication but of imposition, dominion, and power, which may be exercised in a thousand different ways that might seem hateful or reasonable and human" (Lerena, 1976: 105).

Moreover, since the ethnographic case we examine aims to create a community, values and their transmission have a special interest. This happens, most times, through a hidden curriculum in the case of formal schooling which includes "all the unstated norms and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content and the social relations of school and classroom life" (Giroux and Penna, 1979).

Giroux and Penna (1979) point out specific features which may offer students the opportunity to experience the dynamics of participatory democracy. These include a) the use of peers and b) modified self-pacing. By the use of peers, the authors refer to the group interaction that permits students to learn collectively in a context of "diffusing authority along horizontal lines" (p. 36). The key element of such a process is group dialogue which replaces the traditional hidden curriculum's emphasis on individualism and competition. Modified self-pacing has to do with an alternative vision of the concept of time, which Giroux and Penna characterize as "reminiscent of life in factories with its production schedules and hierarchical work relationships" (p. 37). Therefore, according to them, non-hierarchical relationships among students and teachers demand another concept of time. A modified self-pacing would enable the actors to mutually agree upon the pace, facilitating participation and democratic processes in the classroom’s daily routine. With the use of peers and modified self-pacing, democratic classroom relationships are developed and the one-dimensionality of traditional classroom social relationships gives way to the possibility of infinitely richer classroom social encounters. These classroom social encounters are reciprocally humanizing and are mediated through an emancipatory conceptual framework (Giroux and Penna, 1979: 38).

Soto (1999) draws attention to the importance of the hidden curriculum as well. Relationship models, verbal and behavioural languages are the mechanisms that

transmit school culture to the whole educational community. This is where the transformative action begins; by explaining its assumptions we can ultimately change both the prevailing relationship models and consequently educational interaction and communication. The anthropologist then defines a series of "basic transformative premises" for the educational transformation. Here is one that interests us more in terms of the paper: "Reflect on the role of school and educational intervention in a context of social inequality" (p. 140).

Another topic that interests us for the analysis is school choice. Roch, Dean, and Breidenstein (2018) show how school choice in Germany cannot be explained by institutional differentiation or parents' beliefs and dispositions only. By gathering into one class through group enrolment, "a milieu of like-minded, perceived leftist and cosmopolitan parents emerges" (p. 150), who are comfortable with the cultural diversity. Therefore, group enrollment as a practice forges a sense of belonging into a group of parents that have the interest in their children's education in common. Nevertheless, belongingness and segregation are two neighboring realities. In fact, "an unregulated school choice system could lead to a progressive breakdown in shared cultural resources, as groups of parents form educational environments conducive to promoting their beliefs, practices, and conceptions of the good" (Gintis, 1995: 506). As a result, according to Gintis (1995), school choice could lead to "an explosion of alternative school cultures" that could be interpreted in varied, contrasting ways.

Such aspects may be approached by studies related to school choice, yet they remain incomplete if we ignore parental involvement (PI). Doucat (2011) interprets PI as a highly ritualized practice that socializes parents to cultural expectations regarding their roles in their children's education. After her research with Haitian parents in the USA, she shows how PI creates a group identity among some parents. At the same time, it marginalizes LSCD families -

linguistically, culturally, and socio-economically diverse-, who become less likely to participate in schools and are often viewed as apathetic.

Before looking at our ethnographic case, we will conclude with some insights from the USA context. Fillion (2015, 2017), based on her ethnography in a Sudbury school in California, argues that anthropological studies of democratic schools would shed light on neoliberal ideology's ruling and adaptable nature, which increases segregation by race and class but is compatible with the concepts of autonomy, choice, and freedom that underly their philosophy. According to her, democratic education both resists and supports the neoliberal agenda. Nevertheless, the author does not ignore radical potentials which could be unwrapped in public educational contexts. Unlike Fillion's prediction, the realities encountered at the field were far more complicated since segregation finds ways to be reproduced there too.

Methodology

The present paper originates from the presentation 'Alternative Education for a Segregated Society? An Ethnographic Approach to Educational Change in Catalonia' prepared for the VIII. International Conference on Critical Education (UEL, London, 2018), and the PhD thesis entitled "Rethinking "Educació Lliure": An ethnographic and anthropological study of three alternative schools and educational projects in contemporary Catalonia". The thesis was written in 2021 in terms of the PhD program in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. It consisted of an empirical, descriptive, ethnographic study of alternative schools and educational projects in contemporary Catalonia based on three cases: a private school, a public school, and a self-managed educational project.

The research project was primarily conducted within the framework of anthropology, inspired by critical approaches and keeping an open, creative attitude towards theory (Woods, 1987). Through a micro-ethnographic and multi-sited perspective (Marcus, 1995), it attempted a contextualized analysis that considered broader societal and historical factors, although not deepening in such.

During that time, the main methods used to collect data were qualitative and the primary strategy of research was ethnographic fieldwork that included a regular displacement to the research spaces and participation in the daily life of participants. The study further incorporated participant observation, semi-structured interviews and school documents (e.g., educational project, magazines, books, webpages, blogspots, videos), all of which took place simultaneously. The information gathered was written daily in the form of ethnographic fieldnotes kept in diaries. In addition, interviews were conducted with mothers, fathers and stakeholders related to the public school.

Research Site

During the second stage of the research, I lived with a family and fully participated in the school's ongoing activities spending approximately four hours on a daily level as a general teaching assistant from the 4th of April 2018 until the 22nd of June 2018. In total, I observed and participated in 40 school days and three excursions, two of them at the nearest field and one at the theater. The ways I got involved in school settings had been set and explained to me in advance, in terms of my official volunteer role at the school as an assistant teacher at the community of grans[5], with a class of 10-year-old kids as a reference point.

Participants

My day would typically start at 9 a.m. when I attended the morning group meeting in the reference room. Then, I would move to another space or stay there with a group of kids, depending on the needs, from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m., when I would return to the room of reference for breakfast. Afterward, I would stay with another group from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. when I would normally help one kid with reading. Besides, I assisted school events and kids' shows and helped an intern with the rehearsals for a theatre play.

Methods

Apart from the school fieldwork, fieldnotes from that period included observations and dialogues held in the house and the neighborhood in case they were related to the scope of the thesis and observations during my work as a nanny with some families. In addition, I attended teachers' and parents' meetings and some important events like the pedagogical sessions, a wedding, and a school celebration. These out-of-school relationships I established contributed a lot to the data collection and triangulation.

Moreover, in-depth, semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions helped me strengthen the interpretation of the information collected by participant observation. They were conducted individually to reassure the total anonymity of the interlocutors and had a semi-structured character that allowed me to collect comparable data for the analysis. Therefore, although I gave them the freedom to share whatever they want, pre-made interview guides with a core list of open-ended questions were used to ensure the later comparison. During this research stage, ten interviews with mothers and fathers from the school were conducted, one with an inspector of its geographical zone and another with a Senegalese mother that was not recorded, after her request.

Data Analysis

My analysis was mainly descriptive and qualitative. My aim was a contextualized description and interpretation of the data. At the same time, taking into account the considerable variety among the participants' identities, I tried to adopt a phenomenological approach to interpret their experiences and understandings of reality and keep a reflective attitude, thinking on the ways I interact with them. Of all the ethnographic data gathered and analysed with the help of descriptive categories, four aspects were chosen for the subsequent comparative analysis: a. pedagogical proposal, b. power relations, c. belongingness and d. transmission and learning.

Although to a lesser degree, quantitative data such as graphics and statistical data were also used, offering important contextualizing information about the school's neighborhood, such as the number of residents born abroad and school offer in the municipality.

Now that we looked at the methodology used, we will examine the main research findings that interest us in terms of this paper.

Findings

Pardal[6] is a public school placed in Catalonia. It is also the ethnographic example that will help us explore the current educational change in the public sector. More specifically, we will start with some basic facts about the creation and history of the school, before approaching specific examples that will invite us to reflect on privatizing the public, reproducing inequalities, as well as school choice, parental involvement and segregation.

The history of Pardal

Although Pardal opened its doors in September 2004, it was a project "dreamt of" long ago by a group of eight teachers. All women, six of whom used to work in a public school that was similarly connected to the educational innovation of the era's Catalan context (the 80s and 90s)[7], in a municipality close to Ústria. When they heard that a new school was about to be built in Ústria, they decided that this was the perfect opportunity to make their pedagogical plans come true.

As a result, the group continued working while meeting once per week in the house of one of them, reading books, thinking and talking about the project. At the same time, they started visiting alternative educational projects to get inspiration, a practice continued even after the Pardal's opening. Such schools were primarily rural, with a small number of kids, and although very interesting, they were far from what the group had in mind; a public school which everybody can access. The ultimate chance for the school's creation was given during the course 2003-2004 to satisfy the municipality's needs for schooling, when the Department of Education made a call for project proposals. The pedagogical team presented theirs, which got accepted, and a dream came true; an expression often used by the teaching staff when referring to Pardal's history.

In the beginning, there was no building, Pardal was hosted at a nearby school. Teachers back then used to meet with parents who were planning to pre-register in a room that the town hall offered to inform them about their pedagogical ideas. They showed pictures of other Reggio Emilia[8] schools to convince them that there are experiences similar to what they want to create, which have successfully survived through the years. Later, when the construction of the building started, the pedagogical team and parents actively participated in decisions made for spaces, both interior and exterior ones.

The school is based on Reggio Emilia and perceives the environment as the teacher. Therefore, the focus is on spaces where the material is abundant, and learning is project-based, experiential and holistic. Through learning activities, architectural aspects, and shared material, collaboration is developed, along with independence, and the ability to make own decisions. Although learning proposals are based on the official curriculum, there is no use of official school books. There is also frequent contact with nature through the time spent outdoors, both at the playground and in terms of many excursions.

It could be said that Pardal is a public school, but it does not look like it. A difference that marks it from Catalan conventional schools is the respect for individual paces, according to which kids learn naturally when they are ready. Teachers' role is not to transmit knowledge, but to provide kids with all the necessary tools to explore their interests. Having said that, there is still specific curricular learning expected to be obtained by kids, and an imposition to work on it in cases there is no interest shown.

Considering the above, Pardal's public institutional identity does not make things easy, causing unrest to the educational community and the local authorities while bringing the two parts into frequent conflicts and negotiations. One of these examples is the school garden case in 2010. Briefly, according to the Catalan legislation, all school playgrounds must be cemented. However, Pardal's parents had a different plan. They wanted to remove the cement, cover the whole yard with soil and create a biological orchard and a playground with a hedge maze. The idea soon became real, and the town hall's reaction was immediate: they intervened, removing the soil and stopping the project. The official reason given was the need for the space to carry out sports activities.

Just like in similar cases, parents' response was not late. They created a committee called "Let's make the garden", started a petition, and wrote a letter to support the garden project in front of the local authorities. Although the committee failed despite the persistence, parents still got the soil back and placed it around the cemented playground, improvising a hilly playground. As a teacher said, commenting on the case, "one must fight to achieve things instead of accepting the no's".

As years go by, fewer visits are paid to check if the official school curriculum is followed. There are still some issues that are hard to be resolved, mostly related to evaluation, but adults in Pardal are experts in developing alternative strategies. All these games with the official norms make Pardal's situation vulnerable since the staff is aware of the dangers hidden in case certain information reaches the Catalan government's Department of Education. Therefore, they are cautious and protective, partly because of the certain "illegality" embracing some of their practices.

Yet, many goals have been gradually achieved, mainly due to the directive team's devotion and capacity to justify decisions and changes, using semantics for their benefit. This strategy was followed from the beginning, when teachers, divided into small groups, read the official curriculum and developed the educational project based both on it and their wishes. Nevertheless, people apply the laws, and the key people in our case are politicians and inspectors. According to a teacher, "depending on the inspector, you must say what he wants you to say … you have to express things with their words, then what you do within the words is another thing".

Following this basic information about the school's history and features, we will now focus on aspects that contribute to a better understanding of both the

potential and the dangers hidden behind the current educational change that is taking place in Catalonia.

Privatizing the public

Pardal might be a public school, but it is not completely free of charge; parents pay annual fees. The cost depends on the group age of the kid and is destined to cover the necessary pedagogical material and excursions. What is more, considering the chosen materials and their complete absence among the objects sent by the Department of Education (desks, books, etc.), as well as frequent excursions, such cost is relatively high for a public school. Although there is the possibility for certain flexibility and scholarships, these are only received by families whose economic situation is very bad. According to some parents, this is a logical cost compared to other schools, while according to others:

> it is offensive to ask for such fees in a popular neighborhood like Núvol. In theory, you do not pay, and you may not pay.. in practice, there is pressure to do so.. there is some flexibility when there are people who cannot pay fees, some may exchange fees with work and others pay more to help give scholarships to people.. there are also the state scholarships. But there is a waste of money.. in pictures, books or the colored papers used and all the plastic spent to wrap any crap children make.

At the same time, Pardal belongs to Escola Nova 21's [New School 21] list of "impulsion centers and training references". Escola Nova 21 may be viewed as another aspect of the privatization of educational innovation, and there are many people skeptical towards it, including interviewed parents.

> ..It is all about selling an image that we are European, democratic, progressive.. and it is like a smokescreen to try to justify that something is being done to change an educational system that doesn't work, without thinking why.. now you have to learn to work in a group.. but why? To respond to the big company's interests? If this is what

> we are innovating, it is honestly not necessary. I prefer the classic model, which is easy to see that it sucks.

Last, not all schools belonging to the network can ultimately support the innovative character promoted, due to the incompatible infrastructure and facilities or the educational community's needs. This was revealed through the words of a teacher visiting Pardal who argued that her school is culturally different due to the immense majority of Romani families. Therefore, according to her, although they work based on projects, they must also work on how to read, write and traditionally do maths since kids do not have help at home, contrary to kids attending Pardal.

Reproducing inequalities

Maths is a field of knowledge practiced through various activities in Pardal, but kids still work on it as an independent activity, either individually or in groups. When help is needed, a teacher, intern, or volunteer accompanies them and once they finish, their work is corrected by an adult as well.

It is not uncommon that kids of the same age have completely different levels. This is something expected and understood by teachers who do not insist on covering a specific curriculum during a certain period. Nevertheless, some results are expected, and problems arise when time passes, and they are not met. This is uncommon to happen if kids receive help from their families. However, it is somewhat problematic in the case of kids coming from less privileged families, leading to conflicts between teachers and kids, as we can see in the following example:

> Beth asks Àneu[9] about an operation, but she does not know the answer. After asking a few more times, Beth looks at her notebook and starts writing down. Then she tells her

> to concentrate and comments on her tendency to escape reading, maths, and English. "You are at the community of grans now, not at mitjans[10]", she adds. Beth leaves the table, and Àneu starts crying. She says she gets ill quite often. Besides, her mother is learning how to drive, and she usually must help her, so she skips school, but it is not true that she escapes. Sira agrees; her mom has told her that Àneu's mom ran out of money. Àneu keeps complaining about her family, and the girls say they don't like Beth because she doesn't support Àneu as the previous teachers did. When they leave, Beth asks if they finished what they had to do and talks about Àneu, who has no support out of Pardal and therefore must do her best while being there. She then refers to her mom, commenting that she shouldn't give the girl so many responsibilities; she is just a kid.

Although teachers recognize the vital role of the family in cultural transmission and kids' learning, they sometimes show little understanding. Instead, some of them even tend to insist on a rather Rousseauian -if not neoliberal- vision and discourse which legitimizes such inequality by attributing the level differences on kids' effort and characteristics. This was also revealed during a school's pedagogical days when a teacher talked about the difference among kids, some of whom are more academic than others, adding that "everyone is different".

It should also be mentioned that, as frequently commented during teachers' meetings, there are often doubts about kids' learning processes and teachers' consciousness regarding them. These meetings are also the space where the pedagogical team frequently refers to the "invisible" kids, as they call them. These kids make their job demanding when it comes to discover their level or detect learning difficulties like dyslexia.

Such concerns are connected to documentation. Committed to "children and their culture" documentation is an important process that occurs daily at Pardal. On the one hand, it is a key element that allows teachers to follow kids' learning processes. In addition, it opens a dialogue with families letting them know what

happens at school. Last, it enhances Pardal's public visibility. For the needs of documentation, teachers usually move around with a belt pouch where they have a notebook and a pen, sometimes with a hanging camera and few times a video camera or voice recorder, equipment that permits them to register certain activities taking place. Teachers perceive this daily activity as a learning process for themselves; learning how to document is to learn how to look and show "kids' value" to the rest.

The results of such documentation are aesthetically compatible with the educational project, stiff paper, carefully selected photographs and poetically written texts accompanied by an author's quote that reflects what the teachers want to transmit. Artistic and creative moments are magnified, while moments when kids get bored or frustrated are absent. In addition, kids' visibility is not the same for all. Just as in everyday life, teachers recognize that this process captures the "visible" kids, those who have a protagonist role, while the rest appear mainly in the background. As a teacher says: "We try to include all kids although parents know that everyone is located through their way of being... There are children who are always blurred, sitting on the periphery, or not appearing at all".

All in all, exploring the daily dynamics in Pardal, we find exclusion to be normalized and attributed to individual traits rather than social conditions. Teachers recognize the differences regarding the help kids receive from home, but they tend to individualize their involvement (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]), and attribute their failure to meet learning expectations upon students' efforts and personalities. In this context, non-directivity and respect of learning paces set important limits regarding inclusion. Contrary to what Giroux and Penna (1979) propose, modified self-pacing does not facilitate participation and democratic processes in the classroom. Of concern, such perception ignores the fact that

children may access different socio-cultural resources. Focusing on the individual, this way, perpetuates social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) by the simple act of ignoring them. The same goes in case kids do not meet other expectations such as teamwork and socializing when exclusion and alienation experienced is also attributed to them. This brings us to the next important topic I'd like to stress; belongingess.

The sense of belonging is a key feeling constructed in Pardal. But this is not the case for everyone. While most kids, especially those whose families have consciously chosen the school, do experience such feelings, others feel excluded and exclude themselves from the school environment. These are mostly kids who live in the neighborhood, most times coming from less privileged families. They have no affinity group, they do not participate much in school excursions or celebrations, they do not feel accepted by others, and they are frequently excluded, self-excluded and alienated. The reference teachers make efforts to change such situations, almost obligating them to socialize with peers. Yet, they tend to attribute the responsibility of this exclusion to excluded kids and their lack of effort. What is more, both they and their parents rarely interact with their classmates and their families out of Pardal. We can understand more these dynamics of exclusion if we explore the parental profiles met in the school and the consequences of school choice and parental involvement.

On school choice, parental involvement and segregation

Parent profiles at Pardal have been changing as the years go by and are linked to the public imaginary around Pardal. In general, we could divide Pardal's attraction to families in three main phases:

a) The initial "autochthonous" period when there were families living in Ústria only.

b) The intermediate "boom" period when the school got famous and started attracting more and more people from other neighborhoods, while locals began to attribute Pardal a negative meaning leaving their place for the families attracted instead.

During these years, there was much prejudice towards the school. Rumors were frequently transmitted among neighbors who were talking about Pardal's "dirty", "naked", "savage" kids, who "have no limits" and "only play instead of learning", which is what should be done at school. This is why many kids massively changed school after their families' decision or even when the Imam of Ústria intervened and called the Muslim community to move to another neighborhood school, as a father narrates. Therefore, many families of the neighborhood -Moroccan and sub-Saharan mostly- left Pardal due to the negative meaning attributed to the school.

At the same time, some were attracted and started to "occupy" the school, many of whom knew each other from other educational projects and for whom education is not only school's but also families' responsibility. As a result, a distinction started to arise among the population. Due to the legal system's restrictions, interested families proceeded to strategies that prioritized them in Pardal's waiting list, such as the census certificate, with the help of other families. In brief, while in theory they stated that they live in the municipality to local authorities, they lived in others.

c) The current "mixed" period when Pardal recovered its fame among the locals, and it, therefore, became more difficult for others to enter.

During this period, there are both local families and families from other municipalities, either moving to Ústria or remaining in theirs. According to

some parents and teachers, this change of attitude might have happened due to the general public acceptance of alternative educational projects or students' continuation to secondary schools. The census certificate, much prevalent during the second period, started decreasing in the third phase due to the school's high demand combined with ever-increasing controls by local authorities. It is when local families started even denouncing others for not living in the municipality and thus illegally occupying school places.

Although there now seems to exist a balance, the "visible" families who have consciously chosen the school for their kids' education, most of whom have migrated to the neighborhood, are middle-classed in their majority. In other words, what is common among those "educational migrants"[11] is their social class that removes concerns regarding academic results and permits such high involvement, which is demanding in terms of time (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bernstein 2003 [1975]), along with the importance attributed to the education of their kids which leads them to a series of "sacrifices" and a change of "modus viviendi" in a teacher's words.

This "modus viviendi" or lifestyle is another significant similarity among families choosing Pardal, who could generally be described as "alternative". Most mothers differentiate themselves due to their "awaken mind", "open mentality", "unwillingness to follow the norms". At the same time, the "open mentality" shared among families brings them together in various spaces like biocultural fairs, and the encounter with "alternative lifestyles" often leads itself to the questioning of educational aspects.

Such "sectarian" lifestyle introduces us to another topic: feelings of superiority. As a few parents observe and interpret, some regard themselves as unique, (morally) superior to others, whose way of doing things, way of thinking, and

way of being, in general, is the correct one; a common issue in alternative movements. According to a father, the differentiation from the majority and positive valuation of oneself based on it unites many parents involved in Pardal who respond to a specific pattern, generating, in a mother's words, an "urban tribe".

Although the process of choosing Pardal and each family's path differs, the primary initial sources of information are social networks of families and information available on the Internet. Most parents are already aware of the project through information they get from the XELL (Xarxa d'Educació Lliure[12]), parenting groups, or other alternative educational projects, while the fact that it is the first public referent on alternative pedagogies has made it quite popular among these groups.

Motivation to choose Pardal varies. Sometimes it relates to what it is thought to offer kids individually. Others it is more bound to its potential for social change. In most discourses, there is a reference to both. But why do they decide to choose Pardal instead of other similar educational projects? In many cases, this is related to the school's public character, which makes it economically accessible, the medium level of parental involvement and encouragement of parents' presence at school. At the same time, there are also references to diversity. While the industrial zone that hosts it has a negative meaning to some, the school's location makes it unique in many parents' eyes. This offers possibilities non-existent in most alternative educational projects to get together with people who do not think in the same way and avoid creating a "ghetto".

Nevertheless, despite the positive value attributed to diversity, families who have chosen Pardal tend to socialize mainly among them. Thus, they get engaged in the same leisure time activities, and support each other with

upbringing and any other needs they might have. In these groups, which become their new core of sociability, mothers create strong links that last in time. Above all, there they find an affinity group, a mutual aid network, an extensive family which helps them cope with emotions of loneliness, isolation, impotence, sadness, or tiredness they might experience.

But what happens with the rest of the families? The few times they coincide, their interactions are limited or non-existent. There are differences in lifestyles, challenging communication, and "lack of affinity, both at an emotional level and regarding the way of thinking" in a mother's words. Therefore, these families are excluded and exclude themselves, becoming invisible, in the same way kids do in school settings. Despite the respect and a few encounters, there is no systematic cultural understanding and exchange so that bonding and mutual aid can expand beyond one's affinity group and LSCD families do not participate in the support networks mentioned before. A few tend to naturalize this exclusion explaining it with our tendency to get together with the ones we have more similarities, although many would prefer it to be different. In any case, what is certain is that such cultural differentiation leads to a form of self-segregation which most are aware of, even self-defining themselves as an "endogamous sector". Such differentiation is also reflected on parental involvement.

Parents in the community of grans are usually seen in the spaces upon arrivals and exits only. Many of them, mothers in their majority, walk up the stairs to accompany or pick up kids from their classes of reference when they get the chance to meet, hug and interact with teachers and fellow parents – a possibility much appreciated by them. The primary way parents get involved is their attendance at interviews and meetings and their participation at the committees of the school's families' association, getting engaged in various activities related to the school and contributing in the ways they can. There are times when

mothers are observed in the pedagogical team's room helping in their free time if there are needs. Help is varied, from administration work and printing to painting figures for the space of symbolic play. Other times, parents -especially fathers- are also seen outdoors on the playground, getting engaged in tasks such as constructing tables or moving furniture.

The pedagogical team encourages parental presence at school and even organizes gatherings, debates, seminars, talks, etc., with professionals of education, psychology, and related disciplines in the evenings for them, most times with a cost of attendance. In addition, parents organize school celebrations in which they sell handmade artisan products such as soaps, jewelry, dolls, perfumes, cosmetics, and food and drinks, destined to fundraising for the school. During the celebrations, parents share all roles; they present, welcome new families, cook, and perform dancing and singing.

Last but not least, once per week after lunchtime, mothers gather at the dining room for the so-called "riquezas compartidas" (shared wealth), a parents' initiative, organized by them since 2011. The idea behind these gatherings is that there is an amazing wealth among parents, and therefore mothers share something they know or think that would enrich the rest. Examples include chakras workshops, homeopathy, sexuality, menstruation cycles, minerals, astral projection, contemporary dance, or life stories, while two key aspects are the central concept of nature and the questioning of professionals. This space is highly potent regarding the bonding developed among the participants who use the school space as both mothers and learners, reinforcing their mutual aid networks.

Nevertheless, teachers make sure to set the necessary limits not only for kids but also for parents, who are indeed the biggest challenge in such projects that

propose a shared educational responsibility. This is best shown through the example of the "family space"; a room initially destined for parents, where they could stay during school hours. However, due to the tendency of some to stay the whole day without taking care of it and excluding others, the school decided to close it.

It could be said that parental involvement at Pardal is both encouraged and expected as long as it benefits the school and is not a problem to its function. Besides, parents generally appreciate it, although it usually decreases as years go by and they get tired. This high involvement makes Pardal a communal learning space for some parents as well. Apart from aspects of the pedagogical proposal, they learn to live in a community, collaborate, fight, help each other, self-organize, and develop mutual aid networks. This is made explicitly clear in the words of a mother, "it is a learning process at all levels. If you don't want to take advantage of it, you don't, but if you want to, it is super enriching".

But are all parents present at school and implicated to the same degree? "If kids have no learning or family problems, I can guarantee that they are gonna shine", says a mother at a school celebration shedding light on an important aspect: cultural discontinuity as an exclusion factor. In the same way some kids become invisible or develop distancing strategies, some parents avoid events, meetings, gatherings, or any other kind of involvement and are rarely seen at Pardal. They do not enter the building to accompany their kids to their reference room but instead, wait outside or let their kids go alone, especially at older ages. Although invisible kids do not always come from these families, it is very common.

According to a mother, apart from the language barrier, non-privileged families have different needs than looking for the best school for their children:

> Many of them have lots of children or work.. they are different realities and needs. I met an African mother who needed her children to learn reading quickly because she could not read, neither in her language nor in any language. So when she got the chance, she took them out of Pardal and put them in a traditional school.. these families have not chosen this school because they want to.. and their perception is as true and as important as mine.

Language barriers are not only experienced by non-Catalan or Spanish-speaking families, but also due to the school's special language code, which is key to the shared culture of specific families and exclusion of others, as revealed through an example given by a mother:

> A family that did not choose the school participated in a meeting. The father asked about a verbal term used a lot, like from the ghetto, "accompany". He said, I accompany my daughter every day, I leave her to school and pick her up.. he made this reflection, why do they all speak this way. It is like the assumption that when I say sustain, everyone understands that I mean emotionally sustain, because I assume that everyone who comes has this way of seeing life ... I think that for immigrant families, it is much more complicated than any other center because it has the complexity of understanding the project, understanding the reasons why.

Families whose home culture does not meet school culture are probably not familiar with the language code used by Pardal's educational community. Although there are cases when parents get interested and learn it, others do not. Therefore, not having access to it, their participation and involvement are prevented while their exclusion is rather facilitated.

Last, perceptions of education and family might be the reason for significant discontinuities regarding what happens at home and school, or what is expected to happen and what actually happens at school, that influence some parents' presence. As another mother explains:

> To them, family is something else; it is the care of the siblings, attention, housework ... education is deposited in the school ... they have a different way of thinking.. they would prefer to teach them in a traditional way. Many of them are also Muslims; they go to the mosque to learn reading and writing ... there is a difference between what they do at school and out of it.

All in all, one of Pardal's failures is its inability to adapt to all its members' needs and help certain families develop their sense of belonging, an opinion shared by many parents as well. Although diversity is valued and there is an effort to respect them -by not celebrating festive religious seasons, for example-, there is little work done in practice to meet the needs of LSCD families whose imaginaries are informed by different values, perceptions and expectations (Doucat, 2011).

A discussion with a Moroccan mother shows us the teachers' failure to communicate with these families and make the necessary cultural adaptations. The mother explains how both she and other Moroccan mothers used to attend meetings at Pardal but stopped because they could not understand Catalan and teachers would not switch to Spanish. Some of them got angry with the school, while she just stopped going. As she says, "I'd rather be doing the dishes than staying there like an idiot".

Inclusion attempts made by teachers, such as discussions with parents with kids translating, are usually interpreted negatively. At the same time, parents who have chosen Pardal or have positive perceptions, sometimes interpret such resistance as an aspect of their traditional lifestyle, which includes -in their imaginary- values and behaviors contrary to theirs, such as beating their kids or limiting their freedom. A mother asks herself, "If I was Moroccan, and I wanted

to continue with my religion, would I go to a school that they allow you to be who you want? Maybe they do not want children to be so free".

But even among kids, community building based on otherness is especially evident. Due to the continuities experienced between the values and lifestyle transmitted at home and school, some kids develop feelings of superiority, and build peer alliances, bonding, and a sense of belonging upon this differentiation. At the same time, they contribute to the exclusion and alienation of kids from less privileged families, who already struggle due to the discontinuities between home and school.

Summarizing the above, we could say that after a first level of segregation based on economic resources that divide families in Catalonia in public or private, publicly-funded private and self-organized schools, a second level appears – cultural segregation – that is linked to the pedagogical proposal and similarly divides families according to cultural criteria. Apart from daily dynamics in school settings, school choice and parental involvement are also decisive in maintaining such segregation.

Discussion

Despite the past of educational change in Catalonia, today it is often conceived in neoliberal terms. The ethnographic case we examined can shed some light on this process. Pardal proposes an alternative perception of education, schooling, childhood, relations, learning. As a public school in a working-class municipality, it is marked by diversity, which makes any attempt of studying it challenging. At the same time, what it brings to light has great value since it reveals and helps us explore dimensions and contradictions absent in other alternative schools.

First of all, Pardal is considered to be a politically neutral school and kids disconnected from the political sphere. I argue that education is always political and never neutral, both in schools and out of them. Therefore, not only should we view kids as active cultural agents, but also political, who have the right to understand the social context they find themselves in. In the words of Snyders (1971), schools are not separated from the world:

> To teach Latin to Juan,.. one must know Latin and Juan. But something else is also needed: to know why one wants Juan to learn Latin, how Latin will help him position himself in today's world.. what the objectives of education are. And there is at least a political component to any answer given (p. 205).

In addition, precisely due to its profoundly political character, education has been a privileged field to examine power relations and sociocultural reproduction among theorists. But dominant cultural production and reproduction and consequently social reproduction is not the whole picture. Although it is important for every critical analysis to look at the first, Willis (1986) writes that we should consider both reproduction and radical transformative possibilities. From my point of view, not only should we stand between those two concerns, but we should rather start shedding more light on the second one, recognizing the spaces of and for emancipation that are created daily and escape academia's and society's pessimistic safe zone, comfortable with "critical analyses" that tend to reveal contradictions without proposing how they might be surpassed.

Many similarities regarding their lifestyles connect families who actively participate in Pardal. They already know each other from previous educational projects, and they have a shared culture with similar perceptions of upbringing, education, and childhood. There is continuity between home and school, and

this is also revealed from Pardal's home-inspired character that informs space with symbols connected to it. As a result, daily dynamics, some of which were mentioned before, invisibilize and exclude a big part of kids and their families, both in school contexts and out of it.

We could, therefore, observe what Doucat (2011) also did in another context; that parental involvement creates a group identity and sense of belonging among some parents with similar profiles, while marginalizing LSCD families. At the same time, cultural superiority is sometimes expressed by the latter, who differentiate themselves from the rest. Although diversity is in theory valued, little work is done to meet the actual needs of those whose imaginaries are informed in other ways. Such dynamics lead to cultural segregation that divides families according to cultural criteria, reinforcing the already existing segregation based on economic resources.

Despite these contradictions and many more that exist, Pardal stands against adultism and proposes that learning should be holistic and experiential, in contact with nature. Through its architecture, learning activities and hidden curriculum, it promotes peer relations, collaboration, learning to live in a community, share, support each other and grow together. Belongingness is developed, and affinity groups of mutual aid with their own rituals, symbols, spaces, and times emerge, based on a shared culture. Positive schooling experiences seem to be directly connected to this sense of belonging, which applies not only to kids but also to parents and teachers. And this sense of belonging is vital for kids' learning as their interests and choices depend on their affinity group. Therefore, alternative cultures emerge built on values like cooperation and gender equity that, at least to a degree, reject those that uphold capitalism and patriarchy.

Although this is true, it is also true that perceptions and shared cultures tend to form closed homogeneous social groups of mutual aid that could be described as "urban tribes". The non-inclusive character discussed, and limited attempts to overcome it, sets significant challenges regarding transformative potentials.

I argue that if our goal is social transformation, we need to explore the collective dimensions of existence, but we also need to find ways of embracing and bridging our differences, fight inequalities and expand our mutual aid towards all. For this to happen, we must first broaden and politicize the concepts of education and culture. Only then will we be able to transform knowledge into consciousness and a vehicle for emancipation that will allow us to collectively answer how we want to educate ourselves and live (Garcés, 2020); to inform our social imaginary with what benefits all of us, other species and the Earth.

Notes

[1] https://www.escolanova21.cat/ (Accessed: 18/07/2021).

[2] Nevertheless, I should note that, according to Bernstein, an empirical study of invisible pedagogies would reveal a stress on the transmission of specific competencies. "Thus the 'hidden curriculum' of invisible pedagogies may well be, embryonically, strong classification, albeit with relatively weak frames" (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 122).

[3] The other three are: a) a middle-class conception of educational time and space, b) an elaborated code of communication and c) a middle-class mother who is an agent of cultural reproduction.

[4] Bernstein regards the new middle class "as being represented by those who are the new agents of symbolic control, e.g., those who are filling the ever-expanding major and minor professional class, concerned with the servicing of persons" (Bernstein, 2003 [1975]: 126).

[5] Kids aged from 9 to 11 years old.

[6] Nicknames are used to ensure the anonymity of the school, neighborhood, municipality, and all participants mentioned.

[7] CEPEPC (Col·lectiu d'Escoles per l'Escola Pública Catalana).

[8] The educational movement of Reggio Emilia started at the end of the Second World War (1945) in Italy when a few women created the first nursery schools so that they could go to work. Led by Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994), it focuses on creativity, observation, and documentation of the learning process, the active participation of families, and the quality of the space-environment, which is considered the third teacher after teachers and families.

[9] Beth is the pseudonym given to the teacher and Àneu to the protagonist. The rest of the names mentioned are also pseudonyms attributed to kids.
[10] Kids aged from 6 to 8 years old.
[11] The certain term is emic, used by a mother for self-definition.
[12] Catalan Network of Libertarian Education.

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