

## Abyssal lines and cartographies of exclusion in migration and education: towards a reimagining

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# Abyssal lines and cartographies of exclusion in migration and education: towards a reimagining

## Abstract

Educational institutions across the Western world, from schools through to universities are increasingly being drawn into highly ideological spaces of immigration control, integration and securitisation. This paper outlines the complex contours of this 'education-migration nexus' and contributes to the critique of the way that education is becoming yoked to different political and social agendas. It also seeks to offer an analysis of the way in which the experiences, knowledges and practices of those from non-western contexts become disqualified and rendered non-existent. Drawing on the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos I develop a postcolonial analysis which exposes the partial and distorted framing of migration, migrants and integration, a framing which gives rise to the current highly restrictive role of education. The paper concludes with a reimagined conceptualisation and suggests a draft agenda for education and migration studies. This calls for a more dynamic understanding of education which is open and flexible, and prepared to enter into dialogue between different knowledges and practices, rather than seeking only to assimilate and construct learners according to some pre-determined image.

**Keywords:** Education, migration, integration, postcolonial, Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

## Introduction

The unprecedented speed and scale of transnational migration has become one of the defining social, political and economic issues of the 21st Century. There are an estimated 244 million transnational migrants in the world, accounting for about 3.3 per cent of the global population, and around 157 million reside in high-income countries (IOM 2017). The figures conceal the huge diversity of migrants, from highly skilled, highly educated, hypermobile migrants through to those with little or no formal education; and also the diversity of motivation for migration which include economic, family, study and humanitarian protection. Alongside 'voluntary' migrants, there are an estimated 65.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide; despite the 'European refugee crisis' which gained so much attention in 2015 and 2016, the vast majority remain in countries in the geographical south, and in particular countries neighbouring conflict-affected areas. Just 17% of refugees are hosted in European countries with the largest number, almost 3 million, in Turkey (UNHCR, 2017). According to Eurobarometer survey data, immigration is the second 'most

important issue facing the EU', with 38% of respondents citing this response; behind terrorism which is cited as the most important concern (44%) ahead of the economic situation (18%) and unemployment (15%) (EC, 2017: 4). In the 2016 European Union (EU) referendum in the UK migration and control of borders became the defining issue, with the vote to leave the EU unleashing a torrent of 'celebratory racism' (Khaleeli, 2016) towards migrants and anyone suspected of being a migrant. Hall (Hall and Back 2009, p.677) has remarked that part of England's colonial legacy is a 'reservoir of unconscious feelings about race' in British culture. Lying just beneath the surface of tolerant multiculturalism it appears that these sentiments were brought to consciousness, emboldened and found expression in the Brexit vote.

The securitization of national borders and national identities has become a major theme in the contemporary world. Fears that culturally different communities are not only a threat to Western ways of life, but also pose a threat to security have escalated and coalesced around the figure of the migrant, and in particular Muslim migrants who are viewed as posing a terrorist threat. The ideological assumption that lack of shared cultural values and identity is linked to extremism and terrorism has seeped, unchallenged into public and policy discourses. One of the most vivid illustrations being United States President Trump's attempts to block visas for citizens from seven majority-Muslims countries, and to severely curtail the resettlement of refugees to the US on grounds of protecting the nation from foreign terrorists. (BBC News 2017)

Educational institutions across the Western world, from schools through to universities are increasingly being drawn into these highly ideological and politicised spaces of immigration control, integration and securitisation. Focusing primarily on the UK and Europe, this paper outlines the contours of this 'education-migration nexus' and contributes to the critique of the way that education has become yoked to different political and social agendas (for a powerful critique of the thesis that lifelong learning alone can solve a range of social, political and educational ills, see Coffield, 2006). It also seeks to offer an analysis of the way in which the experiences, knowledges and practices of those from non-Western contexts become rendered invisible and non-existent. Drawing on the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016a) I develop a postcolonial analysis which exposes the partial and distorted framing of migration and integration, a framing which gives rise to the current highly restrictive role of education. Santos' framework of global abyssal lines and cartographies of exclusion reveals how the current policy imperatives and discourses in migration and education derive from colonial ontologies which classify, sort and govern relations across the globe. As a result of transnational migration and growing inequality both across the globe and within countries of the global north, the world is no longer so clearly divided on geographical binaries of north and south. I will argue that this necessitates a rethink of our approach to integration away

from the current dichotomous focus and ever more vigorous attempts to stabilise national identities. It also provokes a response from education away from dominant epistemological canons which disqualify and make invisible the knowledge and skills of some learners, towards acknowledgement of the incompleteness of all knowledges. In the penultimate section I will extend the analysis to migration more broadly, and the processes for sorting, sifting and excluding people, not only at national borders, but also through everyday bordering systems and practices by non-state actors in civil society and private organisations. Building on the theoretical critique of the current framing of both integration and the education-migration nexus developed, in the concluding section I offer some suggestions for how the intersection of migration and education might be re-imagined, and what a new agenda for studies on migration and education might look like.

### **Postcolonial binary logics and modern day abyssal lines**

Santos describes colonialism as

... a system of naturalizing differences in such a way that the hierarchies that justify domination, oppression, and so on are considered the product of the inferiority of certain peoples and not the cause of their so-called inferiority. Their inferiority is 'natural', and because it is natural, they 'have' to be treated accordingly; that is, they have to be dominated. (Santos 2016b, p.18)

Postcolonialism claims that colonial discourses, domination and oppression continue beyond the end of historical colonialism, that there is an ongoing legacy of colonial relations of inequality and Western privilege. Abdi (2012) points out that '... colonialism was first and foremost, psycho-cultural and educational.' It was only after these 'critical points of conquest' that subjugation and oppression of people in economic, political and technological domains could spread (Abdi 2012:3). The modalities of postcolonialism might shift and change, and there are different ways of 'staging the encounters' between the colonising societies and their 'others' (Hall 1996, p. 247), but the logic and grammars of postcolonialism are ever present. One of the most influential writers to demonstrate how Western power is maintained and perpetuated is Edward Said (1978/2003). Said argues that knowledge is framed through the construction of binary opposites - Orient/Europe, self/other, north/south. He describes Orientalism as a 'style of thought' or way of thinking based on ontological and epistemological distinctions between the 'East' and the 'West' (1978: 2). His work sets out to demonstrate how European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient (the East), which is represented as inferior and primitive in contrast to a superior Western (Occidental) culture and thinking. Orientalism is

... a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. [It has become] ... an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness. [...] The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony (1978, p. 6 and 5).

One of the principal contributions of postcolonial scholars such as Said is to demonstrate how this over-arching binary, 'the West and the Rest', continues to play a pivotal role in constructing and maintaining inequalities in both coloniser and colonised societies. As Hall argues, postcolonialism focuses our attention

... to the many ways in which colonisation was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis. It was always inscribed deeply within them - as it became indelibly inscribed in the cultures of the colonised. (Hall 1996, p.246).

Hegemonic Western thinking continues to operate through dichotomies which classify and sort the world and its peoples, and governs interactions, just as in the colonial period. Santos uses the concept of 'abyssal lines' to capture Western thinking which continues to structure modern knowledge and modern law, and which divides the world into 'this side of the line' or 'the other side of the line'. He argues that historically abyssal lines were territorial, dividing North/South, East/West, colonised/coloniser; what happened on the other side of the line (in the colonial zone) was not subject to the same ethical or judicial principles applying on this side of the line (the colonial centre). On one side of the line there is regulation and emancipation, and on the other appropriation and violence; these tensions can co-exist and are not contradicted because western abyssal thinking renders the other side of the line invisible and absent as a reality. Abyssal thinking

... consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions ... that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line." The division is such that "the other side of the line" vanishes as reality, becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. (2016a, p. 118).

Transnationalism and the migration of people from the formerly colonised periphery to the colonial centre has broken down the binaries based on geographical territories and given rise to a 'messy

cartography' (Ibid., p. 128). Migrant bodies in the north are a highly visible and daily reminder of the legacies of a colonial past and enduring relations of power inequalities. Santos problematizes the notion of the global south and instead suggests the notion of the 'north in the south' and the 'south in the north' as it shifts the focus from territorial borders and facilitates analysis of how abyssal thinking operates in the contemporary world (2016a). Pointing to the pockets of wealth and privilege existing in the geographical 'south', alongside the excluded, poor and marginalised populations in the geographical 'north', Santos argues for an understanding of the global South as a metaphor '... for the systematic and unjust human suffering caused by global capitalism and colonialism' (2016a). The abyssal global lines shift historically, but they continue to structure modern Western thinking and modern law, and at any given moment their position is heavily surveyed and guarded against incursion from those on the other side of the line. He suggests migration to the north represents a

... trespassing on the metropolitan spaces that were demarcated from the beginning of Western modernity as this side of the line ... The line must be redrawn at as close a range as is necessary to guarantee security. What used to be unequivocally this side of the line is now a messy territory cut through by a meandering abyssal line. (2016a, p.126).

In the following sections these ideas will be used to analyse migration and education discourses to reveal how they are shaping and informing responses to migration and integration in Europe. In particular I will draw attention to the ways that education is being enlisted to do the work of maintaining and strengthening abyssal lines based on colonial models of exclusion and control.

### **The problem with integration**

The challenge of migration and concern to ensure the successful integration of migrants accepted to the new culture has leapt to the top of national government and EU political agendas. Although there is no consensus on the definition of 'integration' or what an integrated society looks like (Castles et al. 2002); it is generally understood as a process or processes and not an end state, is multidimensional and takes place across different spheres: economic, social, cultural and political. Crucially, it is a two-way process, involving adaption on the part of the migrant and host society (Penninx and Garcés-Macareñas, 2015; Portes, 1997; Zetter et al., 2002). In acculturation psychology (Berry 1992; 1997) integration is one of four possible outcomes from prolonged contact between different cultures, and occurs when individuals maintain their original cultural identity whilst also interacting with the host society. It involves the mutual adaptation of the host population and the

state, as well as that of the migrant, and contrasts with assimilation where individuals are expected to relinquish their cultural identity and become absorbed; separation where original culture is maintained and host society rejected; and marginalisation where the migrant does not identify with either host or original country. Despite the recognition in integration theory and acculturation theory of the role of institutions and the host society in adapting, most attention has focused on the migrants, rather than the host society (Phillimore, 2012; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2017). The existing socio-cultural order is assumed to prevail virtually unchanged, and increasingly integration and assimilation have become blurred as policy and public debate shift towards a more assimilationist understanding of integration. Indeed, in the face of growing diversity and the acceleration of global transnational migration the response of Western societies has been to promote the homogeneity, authenticity and longevity of their national identities, a project in which education is given the key role.

Before coming to the growing assimilationist approach in education I want to further problematise the concept of integration and the dichotomous framing the concept implies. The language of host/migrant cannot help but underline the power imbalance in the relationship: the connotation of 'host' as at best entertaining 'guests', and at worst being invaded by swarms and parasites, suggests a benevolent and benign relationship in which the migrant is only temporary. There is also an assumption implicit in the binary that there is a single, dominant majority culture into which migrants can be expected to assimilate or integrate. Yet it is clear that cities across the globe are becoming increasingly diverse, not only are more recent migration flows far more varied than in the past, but the communities in which they settle are increasingly diverse. Vertovec has described this as super-diversity (2007), a term which attempts to not only capture the increasing demographic complexity of migrant populations, but also the ways that such populations interact with existing diverse populations. Societies are characterised by what he terms the 'diversification of diversity' and the multiplication and increasingly complex axes of identification and difference brought about by transnational migration (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025). The Canadian 2016 census, for example, indicates that over one-fifth (21.9%) of Canada's total population is foreign born, and in Toronto, Canada's largest City, 46% of the population was born overseas. In the UK, increasing numbers of cities (London, Leicester, Luton and Slough) are now minority majority cities where the white ethnic population is in the minority (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). Even Western cities and regions which do not experience such high levels of migration are, to varying degrees, likely to be the product of previous migrations and of existing cultural diversity; they will almost certainly be fragmented by class, ethnic, religious, gender and other differences. The construction, elevation and projection of an essentialised superior western culture is powerful, and reflects deeply engrained

colonial thinking of western nation states. Yet, it does not reflect the reality of modern global societies, and the existing structures and inequalities which newly arrived migrants map onto in unpredictable ways.

Korteweg (2017) argues that the focus on migrant integration serves to deflect attention from social, political and economic problems of the 'host' society. Migrants, she argues, become the '... subject of abjection onto whom generalised social problems are projected ... Yet, too often the problems of "immigrants" are the problems of society at large and affect those labelled as immigrants and non-immigrants alike' (2017 p. 5 and 2). Anthias (2014) has critiqued the integration trope where immigrants are expected to become integrated into a majority culture on grounds that it essentialises cultures and at the same time creates and reproduces 'the other'. She argues that migration can better be understood through an intersectional framing (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992). This optic recognises that differences and categories of inequality and discrimination interlock and overlap so that individuals (both migrants and non-migrants) can face multiple exclusions on a combination of grounds. Anthias suggests that

Such an approach is focused not on cultural difference but on inequalities and subordinations that are produced intersectionally; it therefore moves beyond culture and ethnicity, and considers material struggles over resources of different types (Anthias, 2014, p.32).

The challenge of binary categorizations and essentialised notions of cultures is also reflected in Said's call for the elimination of 'the Orient' and 'the Occident' and for the recognition of the multiple differences and ways differences crosscut (1978), and in Bhaba's notion of 'interstices' to capture the '... "in-between", or in excess of, the sum of the "parts" of difference' (1994, p.2). Coupled with the enormous diversity encapsulated in the term 'migrant', this more nuanced understanding starts to dissolve, or at least call into question, whether the categories of migrant/non migrant are the most analytically salient at all times and in all places. I suggest that a focus on the inequalities, needs and struggles of the metaphorical Global South might offer a more productive way forward and would extend the focus of education beyond its current, very limited remit.

### **The education-migration nexus**

*Education for migrants: civic education, control and counter-extremism*



In line with contemporary understandings and discourses of integration, lifelong education policy has focused on Western assumptions of the perceived needs of migrants and has become increasingly assimilationist in its approach; the role of the host society, its institutions and the educational needs of the longer term settled population are largely ignored. There is an assumed host society, existing on this side of the line that is a largely unchanging group sharing common understandings and values, unfractured by class, racial, ethnic, religious, gender or other lines of affiliation. The educational needs of the host society largely escape scrutiny or question in these discourses. Despite polls revealing that citizens across Europe and North America not only have vastly inflated perceptions of the scale of migration, but they are badly informed about the characteristics of migration (Ipsos-MORI, 2015), there appears to be little political will to change public awareness or to change dominant narratives. For example, the UK public think 24% of the population are immigrants, which is nearly twice the real figure of 13%; the US public think 30% are immigrants when it is actually 13%. There are also misperceptions about the composition of immigrants. For example, in the UK there is a tendency to greatly overestimate the number of asylum seekers and refugees, which are in fact the smallest category of immigrant type. The least mentioned group of immigrants are those who come to the UK for study, which is in fact the largest group of immigrants (Duffy and Frere-Smith, 2014). The overwhelming significance of migration in the contemporary world and the high levels of public concern point to the need for education to extend its gaze and to contribute to these debates. And yet, the role of education remains restrictive and firmly linked to ideological agendas of citizenship and control: control of borders and control of national identities, coupled with counter extremism measures.

The increasing emphasis on national identities and the efforts to support migrants to adopt particular cultural values and norms is witnessed in the significant increase in pre- and post- entry compulsory language and citizenship education across Europe and the higher standards of competence required to pass (Bijl and Verweij, 2012; Council of Europe, 2014). Increasing responsibility is placed on the migrant to demonstrate their adaptability, flexibility and ability to become willing subjects. Critiques of citizenship education have pointed to how it serves as a tool to control immigration and naturalisation (Etzioni, 2007; Joppke, 2007; Morrice, 2017a), and how it forms part of a political discourse, rather than an educational discourse (Martin, 2003). Such programmes have been argued to be a hindrance to becoming a full citizen and a barrier to integration (Bron, 2003); and to be part of an ideological project promoting a vision of liberal democracy which legitimises the material conditions learners are struggling to overcome (Mojab and Carpenter, 2011). Although presented as supporting integration the role of education is largely one of sifting and sorting migrants. Through the linking of learning to immigration and naturalisation

requirements, education is made complicit in the maintenance of abyssal lines: determining who can enter, and of those who gain entry who can claim the rights of citizenship. Global inequalities and colonial relations of domination become reproduced and cemented in the process.

The tightening of citizenship requirements also sends a message of exclusivity; it represents a narrowing of the aperture through which migrants must pass before they can fully belong to the nation state and be one of 'us'. The more vociferously the state claims and promotes its national imagery the less space is left for newcomers to challenge and assert their place in and contribution to society. The increasingly muscular projections of national identities and imagery in Western societies highlight postcolonial logics which elevate and fix a superior Western cultural identity. This construction depends on a polarising discourse in which migrants' culture and values are positioned as inferior, backwards and 'other', as somehow belonging to some long past stage of civilisation (Morrice, 2017b).

Education has not only become entangled with an increasingly assimilationist and civilising mission. Following the terrorist attacks in European countries over the past decade or so, educational institutions, along with other civil society organisations, have been enlisted by states to help prevent the radicalisation of young people. Schools, colleges and universities have become key sites of surveillance and intervention in anti-radicalisation work (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015; Novelli, 2017). The European Commission have stressed the need for greater investment in 'tackling radicalisation through education and youth action' (European Commission 2015). Throughout Europe countries have been developing anti-radicalisation programmes, training teachers and youth workers to spot the signs of radicalisation, and also fostering closer cooperation between security services and educational institutions (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015; Bigo et al., 2014).

The UK Government's 'Prevent' strategy targets extremism which is described as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values' (Home Office; 2015, p.2). The strategy requires teachers, lecturers and other staff in educational institutions to promote British values, and to identify and refer individuals considered to be at risk of radicalisation. Drawing on figures published in the British newspaper the Guardian in 2015, Novelli points out that of the 3,994 people referred under the Prevent strategy in 2015, 1,319 reports came from the education sector, i.e. approximately one third of all referrals (Novelli 2017, p.12). Novelli argues that the harnessing of education to security objectives in the UK is a form of 'internal colonialism' deployed to monitor and control marginalised populations. Sukareih and Tannock (2015) chart the rise of anti-radicalisation in education and make a compelling argument that the agenda not only harms Muslims and other ethnic minority citizens in Europe, but is also part of a broader attack on the radical, progressive and liberal traditions in

education, precisely at the time when it is needed most. They point to how the discourse of education and radicalisation as understood in the work of Paolo Freire, critical pedagogy and popular education, has been hijacked and replaced by the project of de-radicalisation. Citing Freire's understanding of radicalization as a 'process of liberation' with an explicit goal of transforming the world, they argue that current anti-radicalisation policy directly undermines this tradition in education in three ways: it serves to divert attention from analyses of structural causes of social problems, opposes the idea of social change as a fundamental goal of education and stigmatises transformational practice. Although ostensibly about the prevention of terror, Sukarieh and Tannock (2015) locate this movement in the neoliberalism which has swept through the education system narrowing the educational vision to short term measurable goals, market values and standardised test scores.

#### *Western-centric hegemonic concepts of learning*

The dichotomous and assimilationist approach is mirrored within educational institutions, in our approaches to understanding learning, and what it means to integrate cultural difference and diversity in educational environments. Western thinking assumes that the world is composed of interacting individuals and that we are all discrete entities with distinct boundaries. Jarvis (2013) points out that this is a philosophical interpretation of the world and not a scientific one, and yet such individualism has become deeply embedded in Western culture and has been foundational in our thinking about learning. These assumptions ignore other ways of seeing the world and ignore cultural differences in the way people learn.

... there are fundamentally different ways of looking at the world, and learning from it, which are, culturally-based rather than hard-wired into each human being. (2013, p.5).

Quoting Nisbett (2005), Jarvis suggests that human cognition is not everywhere the same, '... people use the cognitive tools that seem to make sense – given the sense that they make of the world' (Nisbett 2005 cited in Jarvis 2013, p.14). The difficulty here is that as Santos (2016a) points out, after five centuries of 'teaching' the world, the global North has lost the capacity to acknowledge and learn from these different experiences of the world '...colonialism has disabled the global North from learning in non-colonial terms, that is, in terms that allow for the existence of histories other than the "universal" history of the West' (2016a, p.19). We are limited by the hegemonic power of western understanding of the world and western concepts of learning that we cannot conceive of other modes of being, thinking, knowing or learning, as a consequence we struggle to manage the different ways of learning and different knowledges which transnational migration brings to our institutions.

The exclusionary monopoly operated by western conceptions of learning and what constitutes relevant or valid knowledge has the effect of negating the knowledges, experiences and practices of whatever does not fit within the dominant epistemological canon. The sociology of absences is the inquiry into how what is not recognised, and what does not exist 'is in fact actively produced as non-existent, that is, as a noncredible alternative to what exists.' (Santos 2016a, pp. 171-2). The significance of existing qualifications and competences and the difficulties migrants face in transferring these to either education or employment in the west has been the subject of a growing body of scholarship (e.g. Andersson and Guo, 2009; Guo & Shan, 2013; Ng & Shan, 2010; Sprung, 2013). There has also been recognition of the specific difficulties that refugees who arrive with situated knowledges and professional qualifications have in gaining recognition for their certification and skills in order to access education and to gain entry to the labour market (Andersson and Fejes, 2010; Morrice, 2011). Forms of knowledge, qualifications, experiences and ways of learning which cannot be accommodated are rendered incomprehensible and invisible by an abyssal way of Western thinking, what Santos refers to as 'epistemicide'.

In terms of diversity within educational systems probably one of the largest bodies of literature contrasts the learning styles of Chinese learners with Western conceptions and practices of learning. Wu (2015) provides an overview and critique of the literature pertaining to Chinese students, showing how they are not only often viewed as a homogeneous group and a problem in Western universities, but that much of the literature relies on distorted understandings and stereotypes such as lack of critical thinking, dependence on rote learning, reluctance to form an opinion, respect of teacher authority. Similar literature exists in relation to Indigenous students in Australian universities (e.g. Frawley et al. 2009) and in relation to the struggles and experiences of refugee students UK universities (e.g. Earnest, Joyce and de Mori, 2010; Morrice, 2013). Western-centric abyssal lines embedded in educational institutions, policies and practices exclude these and other populations from experiencing education as their own, from contributing their knowledge and ideas. Their diversity is not recognised as an asset and they are denied a role of active contributor and potential transformer. This denial of diversity of knowledge and practices is a constitutive and persistent feature of postcolonialism and positions certain learners as 'deficient' and 'inferior' (Abdi 2012; Santos, Nunes and Meneses 2007). Rather than automatic disqualification of whatever does not fit with the dominant epistemological canon, Santos argues for the acknowledgement of the principle of the incompleteness of all knowledges which allows for pragmatic discussion among alternatives and the criteria on which judgements and hierarchies are being established. It is only through deconstructing this hegemonic monoculture of knowledge and recognising that other knowledges have been delegitimised and rendered invisible that global cognitive justice, and consequently global

social justice, can be achieved. This does not entail accepting relativism, but rather allowing for pragmatic consideration of different epistemologies and recognising alternative ends and ‘another possible world’ (Santos 2016, p.190). This process through which different knowledges and perspectives come into dialogue is called, ‘translation’, and it is this process of translation which can lead to new forms of emancipatory knowledge (Santos, Nunes and Meneses 2007).

### **Cartographies of exclusion**

Over the past twenty years we have seen greater regulatory complexity in immigration policies and a proliferation of immigration pathways. In the category of economic migration there has been a trend towards a more differentiated approach based on selected characteristics, such as skill level, with low skilled migrants facing increasingly stringent immigration measures (Beine, Boucher, Burgoon, et al. 2016). The language and labelling used in humanitarian discourses has similarly proliferated and become increasingly fragmented as refugees have started arriving in increasing numbers in the global north (Zetter, 2007). Zetter points to how the label ‘refugee’ has been transformed from the interpretation of the Geneva Convention (an individual fleeing persecution), and given rise to new and often pejorative labels and sub-labels, including ‘asylum seeker’, ‘bogus refugee’, and a range of labels indicating temporary refugee status (e.g. Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary leave to Remain). These bureaucratic labels serve as ‘warehouses’ to contain certain categories of migrants and to restrict access and entitlements (Zetter, 2007). However, despite attempts to channel migrants into different bureaucratic pipelines there is a fluidity between different categories of migrants, and statuses are subject to change, for example economic migrants who overstay their work visas are transformed from regular (‘legal’) migrants to irregular (‘illegal’). Previously useful and productive members of society become an unwelcome commodity which has to be removed. With no innate or intrinsic change to the people themselves having taken place, previously tolerable people become intolerable.

The proliferation of ever more nuanced distinctions between different categories of migrant can be seen as part of the ‘elaborate cartographic work’ (Santos 2016, p.121) which enables new forms of colonial ordering; it permeates civil society institutions, and gives non-state actors control over the well-being of vast sections of the population. Santos refers to this form of power as ‘new indirect rule’, after the European, particularly British, colonial policy which enlisted traditional local power structures to support the colonial administration (2016, p. 128). Bordering systems whereby ordinary citizens are made responsible for checking entitlements, controlling access and monitoring others, have quietly slipped into public institutions such as education, health, employment and housing. In education, we have seen this in the entanglement of education with security agendas

described above. A further example is provided by the responsibility of UK colleges to check that students have refugee status and are not asylum seekers, before they can access any tertiary education, including English language classes. Universities similarly have to check that applicants are entitled to access higher education and that they meet residency requirements, we also see it in the monitoring of attendance of students in Higher Education. In the UK the 2016 *Immigration Act* (Home Office, 2016) introduced legislation to prevent anyone who cannot prove their legal status from accessing housing, employment, and prevents them from opening a bank account and obtaining a driving license. In each case it is everyday citizens who are made responsible for determining entitlement and whether a person is deserving or not. This hostile environment and social relations based on suspicion and judgement have seeped into the public psyche largely unchallenged and unnoticed.

But Western societies 'both require and refute migration' (Hall 2017: 1562). The sustained demand for labour from elsewhere is a feature of most, if not all developed economies. Migrants accounted for approximately 50% of the increase in the workforce in the United States and 70% in Europe over the last decade (OECD, 2017). Migration is seen as having a key role in filling the shortfall in the EU working population caused by demographic changes and an ageing population (EC, 2011). This evokes a utilitarian view of migrants as human capital, fulfilling the needs of Western capitalism by 'fixing' gaps in the workforce. One of the key features of contemporary borders in this respect is their 'selective and variable permeability', classifying and sorting migrants on grounds of nationality, status, skills and so on (Szmagalska-Follis, 2011). Elitist policy debates make distinctions between migrants with skills, and those who are unskilled, or at least do not have the skills being sought. This latter group are referred to as being beyond the Marxist 'class-which-has-only-its-chains-to-lose' category as these people are not considered sufficiently useful to 'have chains' in the first place (Santos, 2016, p.135). In the current 'refugee crisis' in Europe, they are the people who have failed to secure refugee status and are framed as unwanted economic migrants who have chosen to seek an easier or a better life in Europe. Constructed as agentic and with options and choices they are deceitfully attempting to enter Europe. And yet, in an alternative framing these people are the epitome of the perfect neo-liberal subject – highly resilient, flexible, willing to leave family and community and to walk across continents in search of work.

The sociology of absences and the logics of appropriation and violence produce those who cannot be placed in an acceptable or desirable social category as dangerous colonial savages, as such they can be removed from civilised society and deprived of any positive human qualities; identities and their humanity are produced as non-existent by this colonial ordering. The working of abyssal lines and negation of whatever exists on the 'other side', divides the human from the subhuman and ensures

that such practices do not compromise human principles. Modelled in the colonies, radical negation of the other side of the line:

... result in a radical absence, the absence of humanity, modern subhumanity. The exclusion is thus both radical and non-existent, as subhumans are not conceivable candidates for social inclusion.' It is enabled because it happens on the other side of the abyssal line and can be created 'as a nonarea [sic] in legal and political terms, an unthinkable ground for the rule of law, human rights and democracy. (Santos 2016a, pp.123 -124).

As a consequence, social policies and public discourse pertaining to those who are positioned on the wrong side of the socially constructed binary are unfettered by ethical and judicial principles and norms of western democracies. An illustration of such 'non areas' are the increasing numbers of forced removals and growth of detention centres across Western states. Probably the most internationally renowned are the Australian-run off-shore detention centres on Manus Islands in which for over four years asylum seekers have been deprived of basic human rights and '... confined in cruel and degrading conditions' (Amnesty International 2018: 5).

### **Conclusion: re-imagining the intersection of education and migration**

The issue of framing is fundamental to understanding migrant integration, and consequently to the intersection of migration and education. I have argued that the dominant western-centric framing is deeply problematic reflecting engrained colonial logics and privilege. Applying a postcolonial analysis the paper has sought to expose and unpack some of the simplistic binary understandings upon which current policy and practice hinge, in particular dichotomous understandings of integration and crude distinctions between migrant and non-migrant. Within this framing the role of education is inevitably both limited and limiting. Education, educational institutions and the staff working in them have become increasingly embroiled in highly ideological agendas which reflect the broader political concerns around migration and integration circulating in society. The intersection of migration and education has been narrowly defined in terms of what nation states deem necessary to secure their borders, shore up their sense of national identities and enable migrants to successfully integrate. The homogenised figure of the migrant has become fastened to a range of social problems, many of which cross-cut with other sub-populations, and yet the a priori naturalizing category of migrant as the most salient criterion of difference prevails. Non-migrants are rarely, if ever, included in this restrictive framing of education. In conclusion, I wish to draw on the analysis provided to pose some questions and to suggest what a new and more expansive agenda for studies on migration and education might look like in policy and practice.

Adopting Santos' metaphor of the global South shifts the focus away from the migrant population as the inevitable unit of analysis for education policy towards disadvantaged and marginalised populations more broadly. This reframing sees poverty as at the root of much exclusion and segregation, rather than migration and the cultural differences which might accompany it; the social and political challenges of integration become challenges of addressing poverty and material inequality. It is a policy approach which recognises that there will be members of the host community who are currently struggling to become fully integrated into the economic, political and civil fabric of society, and who would benefit from education. A more expansive approach to considering education and migration would include migrant and non-migrant alike in attempts to produce more integrated societies. For example, the need for education policies which support people into work and to enable them to develop the skills and knowledge required to compete in the global economy, cuts across different populations.

We have also seen that there are high levels of public misunderstanding and misconceptions about migration among the host population, and education clearly has a significant role to play here. Contemporary transnational realities means that all of us, whether or not we cross national borders ourselves, are affected by transnational migration (Morrice 2017c). Policies which support all community members to 'learn to live positively with cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity' (European Commission 2000: p.5), have been largely neglected and yet have a significant role to play in supporting integration.

Alongside a focus on exclusionary processes that intersect the binary of migrant/non-migrant, an expanded concept of migrant education would address issues raised in existing scholarship round the specific barriers to integration facing migrants in a more nuanced and tailored manner. From those who have no print literacy and may struggle in formal language classes to those with high level competencies who require support to transfer them to a new context. The latter would include addressing the epistemicide in which non-Western forms of knowledge, experience and qualifications are rendered invisible. Policy and practice would involve support for the recognition of qualifications from overseas and provision of requalifying programmes for the migrants who arrive with higher level and professional qualifications. It would also provide mentoring programmes to support migrants develop and translate their existing skills and competences to new and unfamiliar workplaces. For refugee youth and adults who have missed out on education in the past, bridging programmes including academic content, language and other skills would support access to tertiary or higher education and enable them to reach their full potential.



Santos' central assertion is that there can be no global social justice without global cognitive justice. The pursuit of social justice requires the critical interrogation of Western knowledge and epistemologies, and the need to make visible and knowable, through a sociology of absences, localised, indigenous and other non-Western forms of knowing. This calls for a more dynamic understanding of education which is open and flexible, and prepared to enter into dialogue between different knowledges and practices, rather than seeking only to assimilate and construct learners according to some pre-determined image. For this to occur a decoupling from models of deficiency and deficit and instead a policy approach grounded in ideologies of human potential and social justice. Such critical and transformative pedagogies find expression in the work of Freire (1996); Giroux (2011), hooks (1994), Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) amongst others.

At the heart of critical education theories are the goals of empowerment, social change, exposing the connections between knowledge and power, the development of human potential and self-reflexive citizens. Educators have a critical role in staging a different kind of encounter, one that does not reproduce colonial relations and privilege. This includes exposing the historical processes and colonial relations that made and continue to make possible our contemporary existence. Educationally it also means '... a curriculum that interrupts our satisfaction with our modern ontological securities and that dislodges the arrogance of any search and struggle for privileged epistemic space.' (Stein and Andreotti 2017, p. 144)

It calls for educational spaces both formal and informal, which recognise the particularity of subjectivities and struggles of migrants, and others in the global South, and relates them to broader frameworks of oppression. Such pedagogical practices support the validation of diverse histories and experiences; and through the process of translation can lead to new ways of being and new forms of emancipatory knowledge. For civic education programmes such negotiations can lead to new understandings of national identities and alternative objectives which are perhaps more in tune with transnational realities and better able to imagine citizenship which extends beyond national borders. Finally, education and migration studies urgently needs a reinvigoration of anti-racist education policy, practice and research based on the intersection of race, gender, faith, class and other differences, of which migration might be one.

These pointers and ideas do not attempt to be exclusive or exhaustive, but rather to open debate into what a more expansive conceptualisation of education and migration might look like, and what a draft agenda could include. Education has the potential to play a critical role in the context of transnational migration and in bringing about a more globally social just world, but only if it can

liberate itself from postcolonial imperatives and framings. The reframing suggested here is a tentative step in that direction.

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