Abstract

Education, migration, inequality and integration in Europe

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Questions relating to the education and integration of migrant children concern both new arrivals and second or third generation children. As far as equal opportunity is concerned, this concerns access to employment and training for newly-arrived immigrants, whatever their age, as well as school results and, more generally, access to knowledge.

In all countries of the European Union, this is an institutional concern which follows a number of analyses relating to pupil performance, and the socio-economic or socio-cultural context. Observations relating to learning difficulties and early guidance, which reinforces latent discrimination, are added on top of negative attitudes and representations, both from migrant pupils and teachers or supervisory staff, and these sometimes cancel out the effectiveness of the measures set up.

Why do certain children or grandchildren of migrants fail to succeed at school? What is the scale of this “educational failure”? Does it share the same bases as that of children from underprivileged backgrounds? And if not, why not? Is this situation the same in all countries of the European Union? How do these same countries tackle the education and socialization of the children of migrants? Why do we focus on the problems of second-generation children? Until when is a child a child of an immigrant? Isn’t this a feeling which disturbs the conscience of families, pupils, teachers and society as a whole?

These are all questions that this issue examines in the light of recent contributions from French and international research.