

## Where Are Venezuelan Children's Knowledges in Educational Research in Brazil?

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An unprecedented number of Venezuelans have left behind the economic and social crisis at home to look for better prospects in Brazil. The country currently hosts around 261,000 Venezuelan migrants, among whom are asylum seekers and refugees. They represent the largest share of Brazil's 1.3 million migrant population, constituting eighteen percent of the group (Shamsuddin et al. 2020). In Brazil, just 37,700 (or forty-five percent) of Venezuelan children were enrolled in school (UNHCR 2021). Brazilian Constitution and law ensure them the basic right to public education, forbidding discrimination on the basis of nationality or migration status (Krawczun et al. 2020). Reinforcing this right, in November 2020, the Ministry of Education enacted Resolution number 1, highlighting that all migrant children can enroll in public schools and that the enrollment can be made regardless of status and documentation proving previous schooling. This is only the beginning, however. Numerous critical factors still hinder Venezuelan im/migrant children and youth's access to formal education.

First, a despite formal guarantee of access, concrete barriers in the form of documentation requirements (such as identification cards and school transcripts) remain (Alvim 2018; Custódio and Cabral 2021; Tonetto and Gomes 2021). Many children lack the necessary documents to register properly within the school systems as they are not available or not accepted by Brazilian public schools. Additionally, children have also faced discrimination from school administrators, community members, peers, and other parents in the process of enrolling in Brazilian schools (Melchior and Lacerda 2021). These stem from not being recognized as equally capable, resulting in xenophobia and racism (Assumpção and Aguiar 2019), and oftentimes have been cast as the "foreign other" (Vasconcelos 2018).

Lastly, but importantly, Venezuelan children have been susceptible to child labor, forcing them to forego school enrollment (Custódio and Cabral 2021). Warao indigenous children and families from the Delta Amaruco region in Venezuela are particularly vulnerable, experiencing poverty and resorting to beggary in Brazil. Several Warao children lack access to basic food items and suffer from malnutrition (Pauli and Almeida 2019). An additional barrier to school enrollment for this population is present since Warao indigenous children may also experience in their new schools what Pauli and Almeida (2019) called "duplo distanciamento cultural" or double cultural distancing (129). This compounded discrimination against their Venezuelan and indigenous cultural practices, heritage, and identities impacts families' trust to enroll children in Brazilian schools. Thus, schools' perceptions of indigenous immigrant children can constitute yet another obstacle to their inclusion in the Brazilian educational system.

The rights of refugee Venezuelan children are invisible, and their knowledges are not only unrecognized but also absent from research and practice in anthropological educational research. Understanding the hardships that these migrant children face to gain access to education is only an initial step. Krawczun and colleagues (2020) highlight that the rights conferred through the law to refugees and immigrants do not always translate into educational and pedagogical praxis in school settings centered on values such as equality, dialogue, and solidarity.

Thus, we ask: *where are Venezuelan children's knowledges in anthropological research in education in Brazil?* Anthropological educational research has produced a powerful body of work that discusses issues of inequality, belonging (Abu El-Haj 2015), articulations of self (Gallo and Link 2016), and civic participation (Bellino 2017). Our call is for research that centers the experiences of children inside classrooms and schools. Both Venezuelan and Brazilian children are learning alongside one another. In a country where the rise of xenophobia and hostility toward immigrants has been increasing (IACR 2021), the voices and experiences of children in schools and classrooms contribute to a nuanced understanding of the immigrant experience in Brazil.

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