

# (Re)thinking gender identities in transnational contexts: 1.5 generation discourses about high-school influences

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, identities, due to their multidimensional and polisemic nature, have emerged as one of the main issues in transnational studies. And the concrete and systematic reflexions about gender identities have undoubtedly contributed to a greater understanding of complex social interrelations that arise from fuzzy ties between migrants and their countries of origin and settlement.

This paper explores the discourses of Brazil, Colombia and Morocco-born secondary school students in Galicia (Spain). The present proposal highlights the voices of a group of teenagers to examine their perception about the impact of education on their own processes of gendered identity construction. Besides, these narratives will be figured out at the same time as those from their parents.

## CONTEXTUALISATION

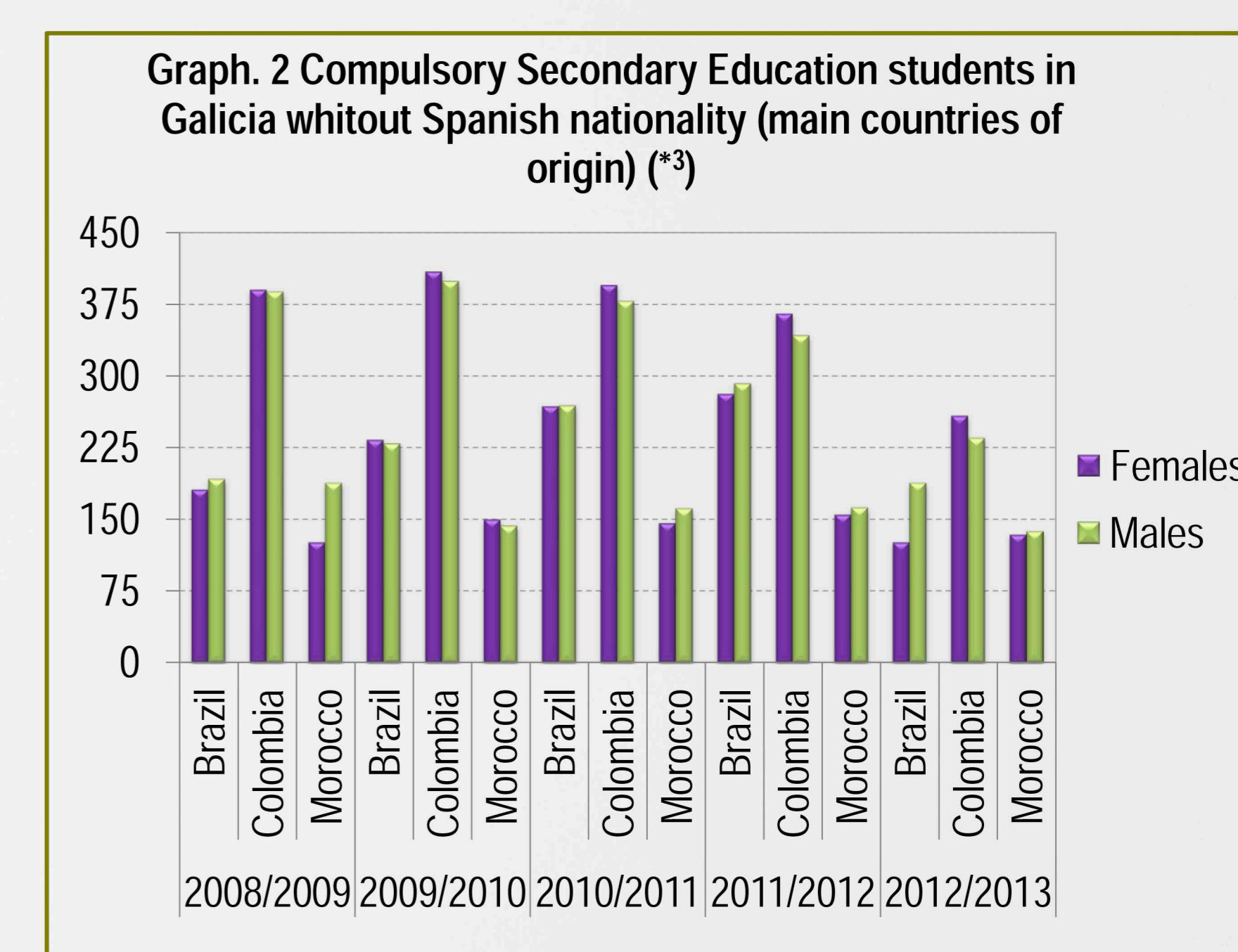
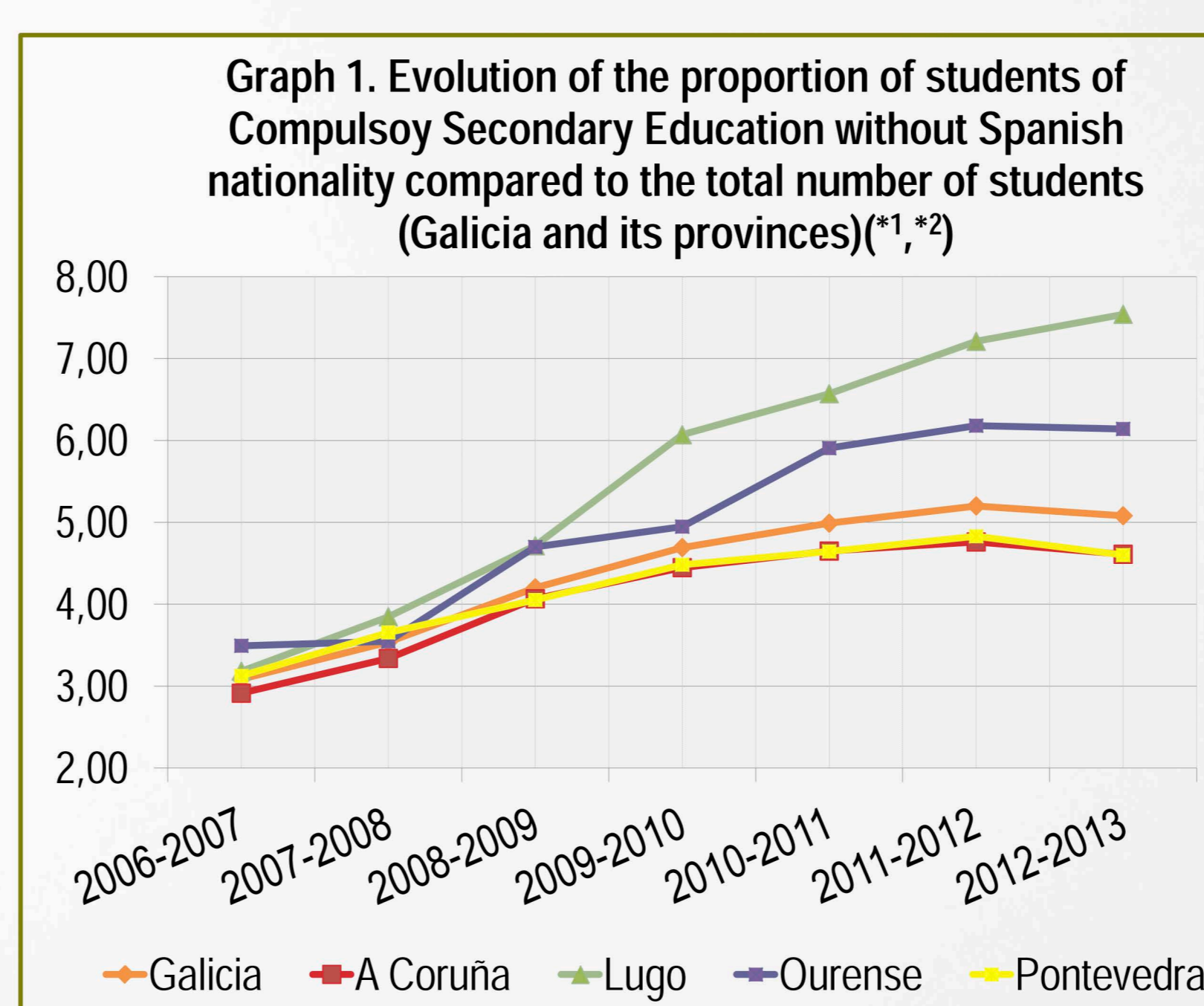
In the period 2003-2013 the number of the foreign-born people residing in Galicia increased by almost 160% (INE, different years). During the school year 2012-2013 the classrooms of the Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) in this region had more than twice the students without the Spanish nationality than ten years before. This group represents 5.09% of the total amount of students in this educational stage\*<sup>1</sup>.

The three non-European Union nationalities that are the most present in Galicia in the ESO are Brazilian, Moroccan and Colombian.

\*1 Source: own production based on *Datos e cifras do ensino non universitario (Data and figures of the non-University Education)* (Xunta de Galicia, different years).

\*2 Source: unpublished processing of data provided by the *Axencia de Modernización Tecnolóxica de Galicia (AMTEGA)* (Agency for the Technological Modernization of Galicia).

\*3 Main non-European Union countries.



## METHODOLOGY

### DESIGN

- Qualitative proposal: an ongoing multiple cases study
- Emergent and flexible approach: a design that progresses at the same time as the development of the research.

### SAMPLE

- Strategic selection of cases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) linked to intergenerational and gender perspective: the 1.5 generation (teenagers aged between 14 and 16 years born in Brazil, Colombia and Morocco); students in state schools and state-subsidised private schools and their mother/ father.

|         | Brazil |      | Colombia |      | Morocco |      |
|---------|--------|------|----------|------|---------|------|
|         | Female | Male | Female   | Male | Female  | Male |
| Student | 1      | 1    | 1        | 1    | 1       | 1    |
| Parent  | -      | 1    | 1        | -    | 1       | -    |

### PROCEDURE

- Two phases of interviews: 1. open; 2. semi-structured
- Qualitative data analysis
- ✓ Coding in three phases:

open

axial

selective

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

1. The gender and age of the interviewed people have an exiguous relationship in the perception of the impact of education on the construction of gender identities; the public or private ownership of the school stands out as the most influential element in the discursive framework.
  - The students and families of state schools consider schooling a key process in the identity development.
  - Those of state-subsidised private schools value the family environment as the ideal context to generate identity narratives.
2. Different elements in the educational practice are identified as a basis over which gender identities are reproduced / transformed:
  - Classroom tasks
  - Curricular material
  - Unusual complementary activities
3. Two orientations are perceived in the perception on the educative impact:
  - Negative influence: educational discourses and practices that reinforce gender roles, attitudes and stereotypes, promoting an essentialisation of what's feminine and what's masculine.
  - Positive influence: coeducational discourses and practices that contribute to recognising and identifying patriarchal values and orient to questioning them.
4. The teenagers state living as a difficult experience the connection between self-representation and hetero-designation.
5. The students and the families agree in the perception of differentiated transmission of gender cultures (rules, values, beliefs, and expectations) by means of formal education in their places of origin and in Galicia. These differences generate collisions and discrepancies in the public and private environments, and are specially patent in the Moroccan case.
6. The interviewed families consider increasingly important the Compulsory Secondary Education in the construction of gender identities. They deem the schools are mediators that play a key role in the acquisition of the gender capital, which would allow to modify masculine and feminine normativities.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Identities are idealized constructions that are constantly changing; they are not final states, but processes (Restrepo, 2007); therefore they are open to redefinitions.
- Facing constructions of hegemonic masculinities and subordinate feminities, it is unavoidable to generate discourses and practices that build critical and emancipating gender identities (Arnot, 2002). In this process, the secondary education is a space of undeniable value. And the mainstreaming of gender perspective in education is a transforming curricular strategy.
- The exploratory character of the present study invites to a further necessary in-depth analysis that combines the analysed narratives of the migrant students and their families, and the focus on the scholar *everyday life* (Maffesoli, 2008) practices. Only thus can we obtain a more accurate image of the intersections between the country of origin and that of residence in the configuration of identities of transnational subjects.

## REFERENCES

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