

Chapter 7

Social Inclusion/Exclusion of Youth and Rhetorical and Symbolic Illusions of Social Change in Recent Spanish Education Policy



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In the last quarter of the twentieth century, Spanish education experienced a full historical cycle closely related to the profound political changes that the country underwent during that period. The social and economic structure of the Spanish society changed considerably during the years of Francoism, and as such the regime's social base was gradually narrowing during the 1960s and its last years (e.g. it was the significant case of the progressive disaffection of the great support received from the beginning from the Catholic Church). The 1970s witnessed the decline and definitive disappearance of the dictator in 1975, when a process of political transition began that was to a certain extent complete, but peaceful and based on agreement among the main political parties and social groups. It was generally regarded as a "success story" as well as a foundation of a country's re-emergence as a welcome, more effective player on the international scene. This was a so-called transition by transaction (*reforma pactada*) (Gillespie 2017) and was approached by the political elites, from both inside and outside the regime, with much improvisation and even expeditiously under pressure regarding the new arrangements. However, this "judicious pragmatism" (Tzortzis 2017) that was praised for so many years has now come to be perceived by many as one of the most relevant weaknesses of the whole process and a means of generating for the near future a sense of historical amnesia among citizens and in particular for the new generations.

The first fruit of this process was a new Constitution (approved by universal suffrage in 1978). This Constitution established a new political regime that is a parliamentary monarchy, similar to those of some other European countries. Accordingly, in 1986 Spain was admitted as a full member of the European Union. For the first time in the history of the country, an ambitious decentralization project was undertaken, resulting in the country's division into autonomous communities with a significant degree of self-governance (Judt 2006).

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We must add to these and other political changes a process of rapid and relatively successful modernization that had just begun in the late 1950s, after the most authoritarian years of the regime, when Spain began a new era with its “economic stabilization plan” of 1959 supervised by the World Bank, and during the 1960s through the so-called Economic and Social Development Plans (created following the French model of “indicative” economic planning of the post-war era, and technocratically accomplished by an elite of high-ranking civil servants linked to Opus Dei) (Balfour 2000). With the advent of democracy after General Franco’s death, modernization accelerated, after the so-called Social Pact of La Moncloa was signed by political parties, trade unions, and entrepreneurs, with significant consequences for all aspects of the social life of the country. During the 1990s, Spain succeeded in situating itself among the most developed countries of the world, experiencing excellent economic indicators and a transformation of social structures and lifestyles. In the field of education, a number of major reforms were promoted by a succession of governments of different ideological orientations, which, obviously, is similar in many ways to what occurred in other Western countries, with the difference of the historic *acceleration* of these processes in the case of Spain (McNair 1984; Boyd-Barrett and O’Malley 1995; Bonal 1998; Escolano 2002; Cuesta 2005; de Puelles 2016).

Our aim is to analyse the politics of education during this crucial period, but we will focus attention particularly on the last great reform of the twentieth century, carried out in 1990 by the Socialist party (PSOE) during its first period in government (1982–1996). The effects of this reform persist to this day, as the socialists were returned to power following the Madrid terrorist bombings in March 2004. In this sense, our “historical” remarks are really quite contemporary. Our intention is not so much to describe accomplished deeds, but to analyse the interpretations, images, and assessments that different social actors have applied to the consequences of this socialist reform.

Principally, we will analyse their discourse regarding the impact these changes in the governance of education have had on processes of social integration and exclusion, paying particular attention to the role played by young people in secondary education. It must be remembered that from the start this reform was grounded in a powerful social rhetoric dominated by such expressions as “equality,” “democracy,” “participation,” and “innovation.” For accomplishing this kind of analysis, and from the perspective of language as creator of representations of reality, we conceive “discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions” (Fairclough 2003: 124). Clarifying at this instance, it would be necessary to point out that in the production of discourses, in front of the logic of the argumentation of them, another logic can also be produced, the logic of the appearance in which the issues of conviction and persuasion play a significant role, with their ideological stance.

7.1 History and Politics in the Construction of Education Policy in Contemporary Spain

But let us briefly return to the beginning of this historical cycle, to the final phase of the regime of General Franco. From the 1960s, rejection of the dictatorship gradually grew as it came to be regarded as illegitimate and anachronistic in the contemporary European context. This attitude of rejection extended throughout the university and the labour communities, both of which were clearly conscious of the fact that Spaniards did not have access to the most elementary political rights. Spain, whose political and strategic geographical situation helped it receive foreign investment in both industry and tourism, enjoyed manifest economic development during those years; and it led to the transformation of a predominantly rural state into a modern industrialized one, whose standards of living approached those of most advanced European countries.

During the 1960s the annual economic growth and industrial output of Spain was one of the highest among all OECD countries being more than doubled since that time, also thanks to the very important amounts of cash remittances sent by the emigrants working mainly in European countries (Krasikov 1983: 5–6). On the other hand, in this final stage of the dictatorship, General Franco's own government was aware of the waning relevance of many institutions in the face of the changes being experienced by Spanish society. Among these were the educational institutions. As a result, the regime promoted a grand education reform in 1970 by means of a *General Law of Education* (Ley General de Educación), the greatest transformation imposed on the Spanish education system since the middle of the nineteenth century and opportunistically presented as the next step in the implementation of the above-mentioned Economic and Social Development Plans. Likewise, the new educational reform led by Opus Dei was actually a kind of promoter of an almost thaumaturgical modernization of Spain, seeking internally to find a better cover-up aimed with calculated ambivalence to link modernity with the seamless, reactionary, and Catholic anti-liberalist sources of the regime (we must not forget that it was part of a *fascistized regime*, which Francoism was *par excellence*, at that time desperately trying to survive). As such, Spain was presented to the nation's population and also internationally as a modern "Europeanized" nation with a certain orientation to Weberian ethics of success, provided by Opus Dei's strategic rhetoric and conscientiously arranged manoeuvres (Saz Campos 2004; for analysis of the role played by Opus Dei in Franco's regime, whose influence was felt from the outset, see Casanova 1982, 1983, Estruch 1995, and Camprubí 2014).

7.1.1 *In Search of Compensatory Legitimation of the Dictatorship*

Through a technocratic reform conceived under the premises of the human capital theory of the 1960s as promulgated by reports conducted by the UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank (according to which education began to be considered in Spain as investment and consumption), the Franco regime attempted to adopt a progressive rhetoric of social change in order to sustain and extend as much as possible its increasingly precarious national and international credibility, and its real deficit of political legitimacy at a time when it was seeking to be admitted to the European Common Market. In this sense, the reform enacted in the so-called Villar-Palasi Law, promoted by a pioneering program of mass media publicity, aptly characterized as a “political spectacle” (Edelman 1988), sought to promote a new language of social change by means of a mystified expression of social modernization (Ortega 1994). This process, characterized by the use of the effective authority-based tools of mutually supporting persuasion, incentives, and controls in the process of constructing an effective education policy requiring legitimation, can be understood as an example of the process that Hans Weiler (1983) called *compensatory legitimation* in his successful analyses of educational reforms as the Spanish one (Morgenstern de Finkel 1991, 1993). When this most important reform—actually not developed during Franco’s time but during the transition period to democracy by a national agreement among the different political parties—was quickly enacted in less than 2 years, the dictator was a very decrepit human being.

Ironically, this feature of the political strategy of the 1970 reform has not received adequate analytical attention in Spain. However, this reform ended up profoundly altering a traditionally elitist system, institutionalized a distinctive and effective comprehensive school system inspired by the Scandinavian model through the emerging processes of educational globalization undertaken by OECD and UNESCO recommendations, and brought about wide-ranging curricular reform.

After the death of Franco and in the context of the so-called Transition to Democracy (*Transición a la Democracia*), numerous educational reforms took place that exposed the fundamental disagreements underlying the diverse political, social, and professional constituencies affected. The parliamentary debates concerning the new Constitution were particularly acrimonious when addressing educational issues. Generally speaking, the political right supported the position of the Catholic Church, which had traditionally exercised an extraordinary influence on public instruction in Spain and still controlled a great part of private education. Leftists sought to increase the control of the state over schools. They also favoured encouraging the participation of parents in the governance of educational institutions, and they sought to enhance the equality of the system through programmes of social integration. For the left it was essential that political democracy translates into educational democracy. As had already occurred in the nineteenth century and during the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936), people began to speak of a “school war.” This tense educational climate persisted throughout the following political stage and, in reality, continues to this very day.

7.1.2 *Political Democracy vs. Educational Democracy*

In 1982 the Socialist party overwhelmingly won the general elections. It was a historical milestone given that this party, which had such a decisive role during the Second Republic in the 1930s, re-emerged in the 1970s after a long period of clandestine activity during the Franco regime. A new generation of young socialists, headed by Felipe González, was to maintain control over the Spanish government until 1996. Soon after assuming power, they established the *Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación*, or the Organic Law of the Right to Education (LODE 1985), that developed some essential points of the Constitution of 1978. This extraordinarily polemical law explicitly consecrated “the principle of participation of the members of the educational community” as a key factor of educational policy and the State established controls to prevent discriminatory practices that even applied to private schools. As could be expected, the new regulation of educational institutions was harshly criticized by the proprietors of schools and by some parents’ associations in the private sector. Protests were frequently held in the streets and in the media, and parliamentary procedures for the approval of the law were slow and tortuous. The defenders of private education, among them the Catholic Church, argued that this law represented an unacceptable interference of the State in the rights of families and the liberty of instruction that were also recognized in the new Constitution.

In 1990 the Socialist Party (after having produced some critical social movements against the government’s economic policies—e.g. the introduction of new more flexible contracts for unexperienced youngsters—which ended with a successful general strike in the whole country) undertook a new modernization of the Spanish education system. It was in fact the first since the reform of 1970, and it would put an even greater emphasis on the comprehensive nature of the school by avoiding defined tracking policies (Bonal 1998; Fernández-Mellizo, 2003; Fernández-Mellizo and Martínez-García 2017). This new reform was formalized as the *Law of General Planning of the Education System* (LOGSE 1990). Obligatory schooling was extended to the age of 16 years, and wide-ranging changes in the curriculum were undertaken. Among the most important of these changes were the introduction of the so-called cross-curriculum areas of study and new fields of social learning concerning gender, multiculturalism, and the environment (Boyd-Barrett and O’Malley 1995).

The curriculum designed by the Socialist reform was theoretically based on cognitive constructivism and defended the creation of a new type of school culture and a new educational community through the development of appropriate moral values and attitudes (in fact the reform was designed by leading professors of educational psychology—and not pedagogy as is frequently thought—at the level of a *total psychologization* where language was consciously saturated “with constructivism, aptitude, psychological diversification... but not social classes, racism, cultural bias, school failure...”: see Torres 2007: 121; and Varela 1991, for a provocative understanding of this reform as one designed for the middle classes). With the

increase in conflict in schools, “living together” gradually became a priority focus of interest, as would also occur with “multiculturalism” attendant with the growing influx of immigrants, mainly from Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. In these circumstances, “educating for values” and “intercultural education” came to be well-known and frequent discourse subjects in a curricular context that the Socialist reform attempted to “flexibilize”.

Nevertheless, after an initial phase of intense pushing for reform during the 1980s, when the rhetoric of the old ideological traditions of the left predominated, the Socialist party gradually lost enthusiasm for some of the reforms initially championed. Pragmatically, the governing socialists began to take into account that the emphasis they had placed, for example, on social participation was much closer to the utopian ideas of the 1970s than to the responsible realism that, they thought, ought to characterize the action of a governing political party. These types of arguments were deployed at times to justify what came to be regarded as a necessary pragmatism, and some socialist leaders came to reconsider some of their earlier proposed reforms. For the most severe but sound critics, this kind of shift represented a surrender of principles in the face of the neoliberal currents that were beginning to inundate the educational arena or “market” in the rest of the world (see Rozada 2002 for the case of the Spanish education reforms introduced by the last of Socialist Felipe González’s Ministers of Education).

7.2 New Political Changes, New Educational Changes Ending in a Great Recession

In 1996, after their victory in the general elections, the conservative Popular Party formed a new government that immediately began to redirect the main aims of the Socialist education policy (a national evaluation of the education system was conducted for the first time in history; see García Garrido et al. 1998). After obtaining another majority in the 2000 elections, the Popular Party pushed through Parliament the Law of Educational Quality (*Ley de Calidad de la Educación, LOCE* 2002), which openly questioned the overall foundations of the previous reform, introducing some substantial changes in the obligatory period of education that have for the most part not been implemented (Rambla 2006).¹ In an atmosphere in which the predominant impression was one of chaos in the classroom, with insistent calls for recovery of lost authority and order, some measures began to be taken to improve the situation.

¹In March 2004, the Socialist Party returned to power. One of the priorities of its program was to halt the application of the Law of Quality (LOCE) and reform it along the basic premises of the LOGSE. In April 2006, the Spanish Parliament approved the new Organic Law of Education (*Ley Orgánica de la Educación* 2006). The Popular Party voted against the new reform. One of the few important innovations introduced by the new law referred to the development of free schooling for children from 3 to 6 years old.

As noted above, the analysis follows centres exclusively on the application and development of the socialist reform under the various governments (1982–1996), although the LOGSE also remained legally in force under the first government of the conservative Popular Party (1996–2000). During the Felipe González era, the Socialist Party attempted to build a comprehensive, integrating system to tackle the social inequalities in Spain at that time. In these circumstances, the development of a comprehensive school was seriously hampered, as shown by many diverse studies that focused on the lasting consequences of the rhetorical images, questions, or slogans such as the issue of “social redemption” that accompanied the Socialist reform of the 1990s (Peruga and Torres 1997; San Segundo 1998; Carabaña 1999; Echevarría 1999; Rambla and Bonal 2000; Bolívar and Rodríguez-Diéguez 2002; Sevilla 2003).

When the Socialists returned to power in 2004, a new cycle of reforms began (then already including an ideological “hybridation” with the assumption of beliefs coming from neoliberalism) (García Yanes 2017: 221–222); and again after 2012 when the conservatives returned to government, introducing in 2013 a more controversial and conservative “organic law” of education for the compulsory education system and post-compulsory secondary education (the so-called LOMCE or Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality, which replaced the Socialist LOE or Organic Law of Education of 2006). At present, with a new Socialist government since May 2018, supported by nationalists and left-wing parties, the LOMCE will probably soon be amended although it does seem that the new government is just going to derogate some conservative reformist initiatives and replace for others, as to provide a stronger role to the public schooling and less to the private-subsidized one.

Some recent general analyses in English of the different main educational reforms, as elaborated in the four “organic laws” (compulsory in the entire State), stated since the institutionalization of democracy in Spain, try to introduce some theoretical understanding although somewhat disappointingly (Jover et al. 2017). However, an achieved and well-defined ideological analysis of these main laws, thought from a multidisciplinary approach, has also recently appeared. It is focused on the relationships of causation and intentionality present in the cognitive linguistic models (necessary for its construction as links between society and discourse and as they are transmitted by their texts) and also using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (García Yanes 2017: 221–222).

Through the reconstruction of the situation models induced by each of the texts analysed, in the case of the two laws approved by the Popular Party—especially accentuated in the case of the latter, the LOMCE of 2013—it can be observed that they appear saturated with conceptualizations of conceiving the individual as a social actor, but this is defined exclusively by the function that he/she fulfils within the educational system (63.5% of the references to the individual in the case of conservative laws versus 32.9% of the socialist laws). The Popular Party, when it comes to referring to the person who is the subject of the education system’s action, tends to conceptualize it exclusively based on the role he/she plays towards school

performance, regardless of the rest of his/her personal characteristics and dimensions (García Yanes 2017: 94–96).²

In this entire context, the result was not so much a weakening and development in Spain of a dual education system, but, indeed, its reinforcement, thus adding another indisputable source of social exclusion to factors such as race, gender, or social marginalization. We are, of course, referring to the progressive devaluation of the public network of schools in favour of the private sector. In 2015, according to Eurostat, 68% of all students enrolled in Spain go to a public centre (European average 81%), while 60% of primary and secondary students attend grant-maintained private schools, many of which depend on the Catholic Church and its religious orders. In general, public schools are becoming the schools of the least socially and economically privileged children, while the middle classes monopolize grant-maintained schools. This parallel system, traditional in Spanish education (a general historical account in Boyd 1997), is being reproduced in the public system itself, as a possibly spurious consequence of the principle of autonomy. Particularly in urban areas, the public education network is gradually breaking up in a manner that reflects the geographical location of the centre, the pupils' social origins and the duration of the school day. There are clearly marginal public schools used only by families living in the vicinity. On the other hand, there are prestigious public schools in extraordinary demand by both teachers and families, even though they may live some distance away. In practice, the two represent utterly different institutional strands. In general terms, the immigrant population living in suburban or poor areas makes use of the lower quality centres, thus adding to their already complex problems (Fundación Encuentro 1998). This on-going process in the Spanish education system is one of the major sources of social exclusion (McAll 1995).

Taking into account the ever-increasing complexity of these processes (see a more detailed but synthetic description in Pereyra et al. 2009), we can say that social exclusion is the result of the interactions among different classes of social actors, rather than an end-state or condition attributable to a particular population or group. In this sense, social exclusion can be understood in an increasingly diverse manner, as a processual, accumulative, multidimensional social reality operating in different

²LOMCE exploits, as a reform argument, the social and economic consequences that would have for the individual (the “social exclusion”) as for the country (“deterioration of the competitiveness”) of not carrying it out the educational reform that recommends. But this law (and also the previous LOCE) excludes from their inventory ideal quality attributes of people such as identity or personality. Unlike what happens in general to the socialist laws, they mainly attribute to the individual a more instrumental character, with the goal of creating individual value and the need for diversification, individual sophistication and greater “employability” (expecting to achieve the goal of developing the ability to compete successfully in the field of the international market and to face the challenges that arise in the future, through the achievement of “new patterns of behavior that place education in the center of our society and economy”) (García Yanes 2017: 108, 146, and 173). In addition, we observe that in the LOMCE disappears the interest shown by the previous socialist LOCE for the issue of immigration. With this kind of argument, the LOMCE ends up promoting the conservative ideology as regards the hierarchical conception of society, which is characteristic of conservative ideology where inequality and hierarchy of society are accepted as natural.

social spheres, most particularly in education (Littlewood and Herkommer 1999; Moreno 2000; Goguel d'Allondans 2003). In this text, we analyse the presence of this and other key concepts in the discourse of various educational actors regarding the construction of the Spanish school of today—how they imagine it and its problems—taking the reforms mentioned above as our point of reference.³

7.3 Young Spaniards' Social Awareness of Education

The Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion (EGSIE) project carried out a survey among young students on questions concerning the importance given to education, valuation of work, choice of post-compulsory studies, and young people's own view of their future social integration or exclusion. EGSIE, over the years, is one of the very first exponents in educational research of the launching of two contemporary concepts of the greatest significance such as the relationship of *educational governance* and *social inclusion/exclusion* in policy, from the foundation of which the “policy research becomes bound to the policy makers definition of research main issues, [avoiding to take] the categories and problems definitions derived from governmental policies with the problems of research without any serious intellectual scrutiny”. This pioneering introduction in the field of educational policy research takes place on the basis of theoretical orientations that initially did not converge with the foundations that will consolidate from the beginning of the twenty-first century. It was due to the fact that the theoretical leaders who led the EGSIE project derived the conceptualization of the own concept of governance of contemporary educational systems, and its direct application to the case of the mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion of youth, of social theory then still called postmodern with the Foucauldian new thinking as a distinctive orientation (Popkewitz and Lindblad 2000: 6).

³To this end, we used 788 young people's replies to questionnaires based on the theoretical categories of the *Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe (EGSIE)* project. EGSIE was an international project of comparative research carried out between 1998 and 2002 as a TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) project of the XII Directorate General Research of the European Commission within the Fourth Framework Programme of the European Commission. The surveys were mainly carried out in the regions of Andalusia and the Canary Islands, which may be characterized by their peripheral geographical location within the European Union and by their modest economic development by Spanish standards. See: Lindblad and Popkewitz 1999, 2000, 2001; Lindblad et al. 1999. The Spanish version of the final report of the Spanish case appears in Luengo (2005, Chap 7).

The official publication *European Research on Youth Supporting Young People to Participate Fully in Society* published by the European Commission included several references to the EGSIE project as well as other youth-related projects funded from the fourth to the seventh research framework programmes of the European Union from 1996 to 2013 (http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/policy-review-youth_en.pdf).

The EGSIE project was one of the three TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) projects of the 4th Framework Program that investigated the issue of exclusion and social integration of European youth in the context of the governance of education systems. The concept of social exclusion, when approached within the project, had recently been introduced as a concept within the social sciences as drawn from French Republican thought where social exclusion refers to rupture of the social bond or solidarity.

The others projects were the important YUSEDER project (Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion, ended in 2000), focused on the investigation of the concept of social exclusion in the context of unemployment of vulnerable groups of young unemployed people in six Northern and Southern European countries, with diverse historical and social understandings of being socially excluded or marginalized, and the ENTRANCE project (Enterprise and its transfer to combat social exclusion, also ended in 2002), in which university partners of Hungary, Spain, Israel, and England, under the leadership of the Centre for Education and Industry at Warwick University and its director Prue Huddleston concluded that entrepreneurial education for young people would help them confront that risk since it has a significant impact on the affective domain of the youngsters as regards motivation, self-confidence, and locus of control). The YUSEDER project was headed by Thomas Kieselbach, director of the Institute for Psychology of Work, Unemployment, and Health (IPG) at the University of Bremen in Germany, and published an important book—EGSIE and ENTRANCE did not ultimately produce a book on their project—containing the findings of the contributors, who were work psychologists, sociologists, and social workers (Kieselbach 2000).

Although the YUSEDER project made a very elaborate approach to the concept of social exclusion, we think that the EGSIE project was more sophisticated in addressing the conceptualization of this new concept of social exclusion of young people in school (compared and internally related to inclusion since this must be conceived as a two-sided process). In addition, unlike the other two projects, it included a pioneering treatment of governance in the context of educational institutions, which is not mentioned in the important volume cited above. In fact, the governance concept was officially used with some precision in main European Commission's reports in 2001; the title of the important final draft of 2000 of the European Commission on *management methods* (nurtured heavily by the New Public Management, increasingly integrated into the mainstream of policy-making methodology) was still called *Reforming the Commission*, but when released the White Paper in 2001, they decided to change the previous title to *Governance in the European Union* (Tarschys 2010: 37).

The 6th Framework Program (2002–2006), which additionally focused on citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society, contained moderate research on the question of governance in the field of education. The education-related

projects in the 7th Framework Program did not consider exclusion in school either, but the focus was on social exclusion in the CSEYHP projects (Combating Social Exclusion among Young Homeless Populations, 2008–2011) and YOUNEX (Youth, Unemployment and Exclusion in Europe, 2008–2011).

7.3.1 Study Topics, Young People's Characteristics, and Family Backgrounds

The survey, carried out in the year 2000, formed the third phase of the project, with the participation of four EU countries (Finland, Sweden, Portugal, and Spain) and one non-EU country (Australia), as part of a comparative study (*Youth Survey*, coordinated by Risto Rinne from the University of Turku, Finland) (Rinne et al. 2003).⁴ The Spanish sample consisted of 788 pupils in the third and fourth year of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) in the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia (458 pupils) and the Canary Islands (330 pupils). Some of the participants were registered in two measures of attention to diversity known as Social Guarantee Programmes and Curricular Diversification Programmes, as defined by the 1990 Law of Education (LOGSE). In all the participating countries, the sample used was of pupils reaching the end of compulsory education, with a total of 3008 cases.

The young people surveyed live in a traditional nuclear family model, where a majority of parents have only primary education, and a minority have higher education or university degrees. In the main, male parents have university degrees, and there is a correlation in the family structure showing that the higher the educational level of the father, the higher that of the mother. In this family model, the male parents are in paid employment, whereas 55.3% of the female parents are housewives. However, there are also working mothers, who are basically those with higher educational level. The parents are employed in white-collar professions, the services sector and craftsmanship, and in skilled and unskilled manual labour (blue-collar).

In the comparative study, the traditional family model was found in Portugal and Sweden, whereas in Finland and Australia, the young people lived under other family compositions. Regarding educational level, the data indicate that in Portugal the parents had only basic primary education, whereas university studies were found in Finland and, especially, in Sweden. The figure of the housewife was not a visible

⁴By age, the Spanish study included young people from 14 to 19 years of age, the majority of which were in the 14–16 years age range, although 19% of those over 16 were still in the compulsory education stage. By sex, 54.3% were girls and 45.7% boys. The survey was carried out at 15 educational centres, 11 public centres (4 in Andalusia and 7 in the Canary Islands), and 4 private state-subsidised centres (2 in Andalusia and 2 in the Canary Islands), with a sample taken followed a quota system of pupils from different geographic and educational contexts (the urban or rural nature and considering also the socio-economic and cultural status of their pupils).

option, unlike the case of Spain. The percentages of family unemployment were higher in the countries from southern Europe than in those from the north.

The parents tend to work mainly in white-collar profession in the Nordic countries, unlike the southern countries. Access to education, the family structure, and differentiated distribution of roles in the productive and/or reproductive spheres can be explained by the role played by the State, family, and market in the different models of welfare states defined by Esping-Andersen (1996, 1999) and, in particular, by the role played by the Catholic Church in the familialism or the family-centred welfare states, such as Spain.

The ESO is a crucial stage in school life and the biographical trajectory of young people. It covers 100% of the population as access has been democratized, but not without some problems due to the difficulty in compulsorily keeping pupils in the classroom. ESO is also important inasmuch as the school certificate obtained on completion is the first certificate awarded by the Spanish education system and is necessary to continue post-compulsory studies or to join the labour market. Lack of this certificate places pupils in a situation of academic failure and/or school dropout, with the accompanying risks of educational and social exclusion (Jiménez 2015).

The aim of the survey was to discover and describe the discourse about the narratives, sagas, and myths young people have about the relation between forms of governance in education and how it affects processes of social integration and exclusion in education and at work. Specifically, we were interested to know young people's perception of the changes taking place in the education system, whether there was a relation between their social, educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds and their success or failure at school, their future possibilities of integration or exclusion in the job market, as well as their perception as fully fledged members of a multinational environment (EU), which could, *a priori*, offer better training and work options.

7.3.2 Meritocracy as Motto: Faith in the School as a Means to Achieve Equality

The young people, the main actors in the education system, were aware of the changes taking place in education and society, as well as the not always positive consequences of education and their access to the job market. However, in their discourse, they retained some myths about equality in the education system and the need to cater for a diversity of pupils with different school trajectories, in order to guarantee them the right to education.

Analysis of the survey found that education is highly valued by the young people, as they expressed a strong belief in it as a medium that can bring social equality. They thought that it was worthwhile to study to be successful in life (90.8%), that education is a public good (87%), and also, although to a lesser extent, that it is a solution to the problem of youth unemployment, which agrees with the fact that a

low level of education is an obstacle to finding work. A majority—more girls than boys—also favoured the view that school has an equalling capacity and that individual and personal characteristics (effort and persistence) are key aspects to be successful in school if one works hard.

These comments show that young Spaniards have a meritocratic ideal in their popular consciousness, according to which education has the capacity to smooth out inequalities (Jiménez et al. 2003). This idea is also based on the fact that they believe education should be more supportive of pupils with difficulties. Among young Europeans, young Spaniards stand out by their solid belief in meritocracy and egalitarianism, despite the fact that Spain is not a country where the development of the democratic principles of the welfare state has reached the same level as the Nordic countries, for example. This faith in education is shared by the young people in the other countries analysed (Rinne et al. 2001).

The young people also consider the myth of equality when they almost unanimously state their preference for a system that offers more opportunities and support for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with special educational needs. This expression of solidarity may be the result of having been accustomed to the continuous policy introduced by the LOGSE (1990) of the integration of pupils with special needs into schools. From a comparative viewpoint, equality is also significantly valued by young Portuguese and Swedish pupils, although Finnish youth was less convinced of possible social equality, as were the Australians. Girls have a strong belief in equality, whereas boys are more reticent. There are differences in the manner of understanding the support for pupils with special educational needs: the Swedes and Portuguese favour a solidary educational system that gives more support to pupils with difficulties. However, the young Australians and Finns had less of a tendency towards solidarity with pupils in difficulty, and, particularly, the young Australians valued very strongly that support should be given to highly gifted pupils.

The pupils surveyed also thought that teaching staff tend to favour and pay more attention to more studious pupils and those who show better academic progress (72.3%). However, they do not agree so clearly with the idea that teachers are more favourable towards girls, and even fewer think that teachers treat pupils differently according to their social and family origins. They also interpret that inequality is more a question of individual effort and not sex or family origin, on which they disagree with their European and Australian counterparts, who do think that the family has a decisive influence on success at school and their own future. Nonetheless, despite valuing meritocracy, they also identify with the idea that individual competence should be key in school culture.

The myths of meritocracy and equality contrast with the important research by Martín Criado (1998; 172–173), whose study shows that, despite the devaluation of school certificates, “young people continue to have confidence in school capital as a means of social promotion, (...) they share a project of social promotion based on their confidence and on the returns from investment in school capital. With a meritocratic conception of society, there would be no insurmountable barriers, all could be overcome thanks to individual will and effort”.

7.3.3 *Internationalization of Spain: Scepticism on the Advantages of the European Union*

Spain's entry into the European Union substantially altered social, economic, political, and educational relations between countries and their citizens. Young people also have their opinions about the expectations and demands associated with joining the EU, and what opportunities or limitations might affect them regarding their future as citizens, students, and workers in a common market.

The study on this question carried out by Prats et al. (2001) concluded that "the majority of young people have a very imprecise and distant view of what the European Union is; a vision which, moreover, does not concern them despite the importance that the decisions taken there will have on their lives" (p. 148). The young people interviewed for the EGSIE replied with scepticism about their attitude to the EU because, despite the legitimacy of the institution according to young people in another study (Elzo et al. 1999), a considerable number choose the "Don't know" option. In any case, they think that the EU promotes peace in Europe and increases equality among citizens because it creates conditions in which the individual has more opportunities. However, they do not consider unanimously that such opportunities are related to the creation of more possibilities for work, and they are notably reticent about other European citizens coming to Spain to work. This same opinion was expressed forcefully by all the other young Europeans and Australians interviewed, who did not accept foreign workers coming to their countries.

The indecisiveness and lack of awareness of the young Spaniards may be due to a lack of information on the EU provided by the education system and the internationalization of Spain, as it can be seen they are unaware of both the advantages and disadvantages of European integration. Opportunities for student and worker mobility have different values for these young people. The girls were especially favourable (58.7%) to encouragement to study in other countries and were agreeable to the idea of foreign students coming to study in Spain (58.2%), which is already taking place under the Erasmus Programme.

However, the results show a different story regarding the question of work. The idea of working abroad is not well received, with 50.4% not being agreeable to encouragement to work in another country, as against 30.3% that would be ready to look for job opportunities in Europe. The older young people did not agree (53.5%) that EU workers should come to Spain, although there is disparity because almost 25% were not against this and the remainder had no set opinion. The girls were most in agreement with foreign workers coming to Spain.

In consequence, the young Spaniards interpret the process of European integration with scepticism, with the "Don't know" option ranging from 30 to 60% in their replies. Prats et al. (2001) stated that "teenagers are in favour of the process with the European Union, but a large percentage of them –around four out of ten– look on it with indifference and disinterest. They are not opposed to it, but neither do they express decided support" (p. 157).

Within this context, the following recent evolution in the case of the European image and the idea of integration in Europe among Spanish youth has some relevance as confronted with the case of other European nations as shown by the Centre for Sociological Research (Spanish acronym CIS), which has for many years been the most important Spanish institution to undertake periodic surveys of the Spanish population on a wide variety of questions, using privileged samples that are significant in the number of participants and the sophistication of research techniques and whose results enjoy full public access. As such, several years ago, in 2009, the CIS carried out an initial inquiry into pro-European feelings in Spain. The survey of 3,459 persons found that Spanish citizens give great importance to belonging to the European Union, with a significant 17.5% of young people from 18 to 34 years who felt purely European, with less allegiance to their country of origin. However, this percentage rose to 65.1% when they were asked about feeling European and Spanish, as against 13.4% of young people, who did not identify particularly with either Spain or Europe. Following this line of research and shifting the question of Europe to only the young Spanish population, in 2014 the INJUVE (National Institute of Spanish Youth) analysed young people's interest in the European Union. The results found that Spanish youth was divided between 51.5% who showed interest in questions relating to the European Union and 48.4% who did not.⁵

But with the economic crisis that began in 2008, and the introduction of neoliberal packages of structural adjustments that became harsher after 2013 with the return of the Popular Party and its policies of flexibility in the labour market, youth unemployment has been creating "new views" among Spanish youth about what had been said before. Unemployment has gradually increased to alarming levels (with higher unemployment rates and more temporary and part-time employment than before the recession or the global financial crisis).⁶ This is why we can state

⁵The INJUVE study concluded that young Spaniards with apparently less strong pro-European feelings have a lower level of education, whereas those with further and university studies tend to be more concerned and better informed about events in Europe. Similar considerations were found in young people who classed themselves as "left-wing", who had stronger pro-European feelings than young right-wingers, although both also considered themselves Spanish nationals. We can therefore conclude that young Spaniards, still suffering serious difficulties in the labour market, view Europe as a way out of these difficulties. The European Union is seen by 34.7% as a means of collaboration and aid among countries, and 13.9% emphasize the importance of travelling and studying in a European country. In short, the conception and attitude of young Spaniards towards the European Union are positive, with as high as 86.6% giving considerable importance to the EU.

⁶The last youth unemployment rate reported in Spain is 37% of youth (the second highest in EU-28 after Greece). According to Eurostat data, for the EU as a whole, the percentage of long-term unemployed young people between 15 and 29 fell from 6% at the beginning of the 2000s to 3% in 2008, and since then has gradually increased until reaching a maximum of 7% in 2013 (Echave and Echave 2017). In the case of Spain, the percentage of young people affected by long-term unemployment (12 months or more) went from 15% in 2007 to 50% in 2015. There are hardly any gender differences in the incidence of this social phenomenon among Spanish youth (Montero González 2017). Unfortunately, this is in fact one of the features of the Southern European model (understood as historical and comparative political economy) whose socio-demographic model is characterized by a lengthening of young people's residential, work, and family dependency, in a context characterized by weak family policies (Domínguez-Mujica and Pérez García 2017: 18).

that higher vulnerability in unemployment, worse working conditions, and more precariousness among the young is something structural in the Spanish job market and something that the crisis has merely made worse.

Consultation of both European and Spanish sources corroborates not only the disadvantaged position of young people (aged 16–29 years) compared to the population as a whole but also the existence of profound inequalities among youth before and during the crisis, where the youngest and women are most precarious and vulnerable because of their differential work characteristics.⁷ In this context, youth emigration has increased in recent years, with the United Kingdom, Germany, and France being the three main countries to which these young people move in search of work (Caro et al. 2018).

7.3.4 Self-Confidence for School Success and Obtaining Education Credentials

Young Spaniards think of themselves as motivated students, who work hard and strive to achieve credentials as a means to open up both educational opportunities, such as post-compulsory studies, and job opportunities, as they state that obtaining an academic certificate gives them better chances of integration in the job market. In general, the young people consider that education is the panacea for all social evils and, of course, for not being unemployed. This discourse found in the social consciousness of youth was common in the 1970s and consistent with the expansion of compulsory education in the developed countries. Now, towards the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, we might ask if the extension of compulsory schooling, the massification of access to post-compulsory training, the increased obsession with accumulating certificates and the excess of university training (and, by contrast, the lack of numbers choosing VET, although it has become a more popular option for post-compulsory secondary education and higher education (Homs 2009) are elements that contribute to improve equality and are an incentive ensuring the promotion and social rise of young people, or, on the contrary, this situation causes over-qualification.

⁷Spain has been plagued by high youth unemployment for the last several years (in 1999 the rate reached 25%, falling slowly over the following years until the great recession started in 2008, when it rose gradually to near 48% in 2015 on average for the whole country) (OECD 2018). This dramatic phenomenon of great social concern is also connected to the brain drain, since many Spanish professionals cannot find employment opportunities at home (Aguilar-Palacio et al. 2015; Nelson 2015). Furthermore, between 2007 and 2013 there was an increase of 18.5% in young people between 15 and 24 years who neither studied nor worked (NEET: see <https://data.oecd.org/youthinac/youth-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet.htm>), where important increases in countries such as Greece, Ireland, or Spain (over 50%) contrast with decreasing trends (only occurring in Luxembourg, Malta, and Germany). The most noticeable cases are Italy (22.2%), Bulgaria (21.6%), Greece (20.4%), Cyprus (18.7%), and Spain (18.6%), as against the lower percentages of Luxembourg (5%), Holland (5.1%), Denmark (6%), and Germany (6.3%) (Ramos et al. 2015).

These young people, perceived as meritocratic, think that certain distinctive qualities are needed for academic success. Specifically, and according to this meritocratic perception, they value highly individual personal qualities to be successful in school, over and above the positive valuation of other family aspects that could have an effect on school performance. Being diligent or constant in study (97.6%), a positive attitude at school (94.4%), talent and personal abilities (80.3%), and even a capacity for rapid adaptation are the most important characteristics for success at school, all more intensely valued by the girls. Other aspects, such as behaving as the teaching staff wants, ambition and the will to compete with others, well-educated parents, being popular among peers or having rich parents (8.6%) are less highly valued, although the boys believe they are more important. These results coincide with the valuation of education by young Swedes, Finns, and Portuguese. They too are meritocratic and value personal qualities and determination in school work over family influence. The boys have a higher belief in competition and being popular among their peers than the girls. The young Australians also think it is important to work hard and have personal skills, although, in comparison with the young Europeans, they give greater importance to being competitive and ambitious. This question is affected by the educational level of the parents, i.e., young people whose parents only have elementary education or VET considered competition and ambition to be much less important.

It is clear that to think one way does not imply behaving that same way, and, as in other questions, the contradiction between discourse and practice can be seen in the young Spaniards, but not so much among the Europeans and Australians, where there is a higher correlation between what they think and what they do. Almost all the Spaniards state that success at school depends on hard work, but only two thirds of those claims to put this into practice in their daily school lives. This proportion is much higher for the girls, who also obtain the best results and have a more positive attitude to work. Apart from personal merit, the academic results seem to bear some relation to cultural and educational aspects of the family. Specifically, the educational levels of the father and mother, as well as their job status, have a positive influence on school success, although we must not discount the fact that the data suggest that students whose parents are employed achieve the lowest percentage of poor or unsatisfactory results. In contrast to what the students suggest (that educational differences depend on personal merit), these data rather seem to indicate that social origin affects the level of school success and also the processes of socio-educational integration and exclusion, which coincides with research by Calero (2006) and Tarabini and Curran (2015).

7.3.5 Myths about the Ideal Job in Time of Uncertainty: Job Stability and Remuneration

Young people in Spain are leaving home at an increasingly late age (Benedicto 2017) because of the difficulty in finding a job, given that youth unemployment is one of the most flagrant social problems (Moreno Mínguez 2012). The young people

surveyed also gave very high importance to everyone's duty to earn their living through work (93.3%), even though the job might not mean that a person felt fulfilled by it. However, they prefer a boring, monotonous job to being unemployed. The girls valued more intensely the ideal of feeling fulfilled by their work, and the boys gave more value to personal enrichment without much effort. These are basically the same attitudes for the young European and Australian participants.

In order to gain access to the job market and be successful in it, the young people considered that certain characteristics were basic, all valued in importance at over 75%: to work a lot, to have a good education, to present suitable habits and attitudes, communicative capacity, flexibility, abilities, and talent, and, to a lesser extent, to have vocational training in a specific field, and the ambition and capacity to compete with others. These aspects once again confirm the meritocratic tendency already evidenced in the educational identity, although the girls valued more intensely effort and appropriate personal aptitudes, and the boys leaned towards ambition and competition in the workplace, which also correlated with those having the best marks on their academic record. Perhaps with the idea of entering the job market, VET was the preference of the older boys still in compulsory education and with lower than average educational performance, who came from families where the parents had elementary education and worked in blue-collar jobs. In the comparative analysis, there were no differences in the perceptions of the young people, except for the importance of competitiveness for the young Australians (Aro et al. 2010) and the fact that the young Portuguese showed a preference for VET.

However, the most important characteristics for choosing future employment do not agree with what the young people would actually wish or choose. Although they consider personal individual characteristics to be very important, in practice the highest value awarded to choice of job is related to the extrinsic benefits, i.e., having a stable job (96.2%) and good remuneration (95.1%), which are conditions found generally throughout the young Europeans and Australians surveyed. Consequently, the myth of a stable job for life, which allows you to have a professional career with good financial rewards, prevails over the possibility of learning and developing, and interacting with other people. Nonetheless, we must question whether these characteristics of an ideal job continue to be real (particularly if we take into account that the high rate of youth unemployment, job flexibility, precarious job contracts, and baseline earnings, among other factors, have reshaped this myth of the steady job and a good salary). Although many young people mention this myth, much more importance is given by the boys to having a significant remuneration for their work, while the girls value being able to develop personally and professionally.

7.3.6 Exclusion and Integration: The Result of Personal Acts by the Individual, Not Family or Social Influence

We were also interested to know the young people's awareness of the factors that could lead them to social exclusion or integration in their future lives. They identified the qualities for success in life as being hard-working or diligent in the workplace, the capacity to mix with other people, and studying as much as possible, with a majority of the girls identifying with these qualities. However, with the exception of the young Australians, little importance was given to being able to compete with others, having well-educated parents, and, with an even lower valuation, having rich parents. Once again, we find personal ability considered as a fundamental value, together with the importance of meritocracy and a low valuation of the cultural, economic, and educational capital of the family. We also find a certain predisposition towards language learning and an interest in new technology.

Unlike other political, teaching, and social actors, the young people surveyed considered the causes of social exclusion to be having poor quality education, not wanting to take risks in life, a person's passivity, not having the will to compete with others, or being unemployed, this last being considered very important by the young Europeans and Australians. However, they did not think that a family with few resources could influence them as a determining factor in their situation of social exclusion or integration, an idea on which they do not differ from other young people. This view confirms the young Spaniards' discourse of strong confidence placed on education and the little influence of family background to be successful in life and not be excluded in society. Moreover, this interpretation has little or nothing to do with the explanation given by other educational actors that family and social background are mainly responsible for exclusion.

For the young Spaniards, unemployment is not considered decisive for social exclusion, despite the fact that they considered having a stable job as the most important thing for their future. As Martín Criado (1998) pointed out, the different agents and groups involved in the job market give different symbolic views and strategies when valuating different situations, such as unemployment. According to the students, coming from a "family with few resources" is an even less decisive factor for causing exclusion. In their view, school is a valuable means of social promotion.

With an egalitarian, solidary discourse taken straight from reforming rhetoric, the Spanish students display, first, a meritocratic and even pragmatic attitude, based on the most individualistic credentialism. They even go so far as to deconstruct these beliefs into the immense possibilities of personal effort, giving numerous examples proving the reproductive capacity of the school system and, therefore, of the determinations of social origin.

7.3.7 *Post-compulsory Studies: Differentiated Educational Expectations for Access to University or VET*

In the process of building young people's identities, it is important to know how they project their image of the future regarding the continuation of post-compulsory studies. Over half the young people surveyed chose *Bachillerato*, traditionally followed by university studies, before specializing professionally in a field of work. In fact, only 14% chose professional training for their future. This view clashes somewhat with the pragmatism the young people show in other ways and falls into line with the Spanish educational tradition, in which VET has never had much social prestige and has always been "the poor relative of the system" (Lorente García 2012)⁸.

Another variable conditioning the choice of future studies is the estimation of the pupils' academic performance. Only 18% of students confessing to below average marks chose *Bachillerato*, 49.1% chose VET, and only 11% chose university studies. Despite the fact that successive educational reforms have tried to improve the value and image of VET, it continues to have very little demand from students with high academic qualifications (only 9.5%). This symmetry is disturbing, as it shows that school drop-out and the risk of social exclusion are a plausible pairing. It is well known that this type of relations has been the focus of scientific attention for many years. According to the classic analyses of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bernstein (1988), among others, there are two mechanisms to explain these processes of social reproduction. First, school has a marked cultural bias expressed in an "elaborated code" that privileges certain types of contents more typical of the middle and upper classes. Cultural competence therefore acts as a value that shapes and determines success at school. Second, social difference is associated with the position of each social class—the expectation of achieving a certain type of diploma is closely linked to social class by way of *habitus*.

The social awareness of the young Finns, Swedes, Portuguese, and Australians on continuing post-compulsory studies shows that they all chose post-compulsory training. In Finland and Sweden, almost none of the young people marked the option of not continuing their studies. Access to the university is one way for the young Finns, Swedes, Spaniards, and Portuguese, with no differences by sex. Although the Australian students also opted for university studies, they showed a

⁸ However, we did find significant differences between girls and boys, the former being more apt to consider *Bachillerato* and university, whereas the latter opted more for VET. The students choosing VET were children of blue-collar working parents with basic education. On the contrary, the children of secondary or higher education and white-collar workers basically preferred university. We must also mention that choice of further study according to the employment and education of mothers shows that a great number of students whose mothers are housewives and/or have only primary education have serious doubts about the course of study they want to follow, and many of them choose VET over university courses. Equally, most students whose mothers have secondary studies generally opt for university study, while less choose VET. It therefore seems that the choice between one and other types of further education differs according to the occupational category and education of the fathers and mothers, as has been pointed out in other research on young Spaniards (Fernández de Castro 1990; Martín Criado 1998; Carabaña 1999; Calero 2006).

stronger tendency towards the VET option. The branches of knowledge chosen would lead them in future to hold jobs classified as white-collar.

7.4 Discussion: A Story of Light and Shade on Politics, Policy, and Educational Reforms for Young People in Spain

Spain is now a country that has arisen from a long period of fascist dictatorship, which systematically manoeuvred using rhetorical and symbolic illusions of social change without introducing and implementing deep political and socio-economical transformations. In this context, analysis of the discourse of the actors in the Socialist reform of the 1990s shows it to be an indistinct, ambivalent narration arising out of the gap between a few illuminating intellectual discoveries and darker practical implications. The optimism they express about the social changes occurring during this decade turns to scepticism regarding the changes experienced by the school, which they understand to be not exclusively due to the educational reforms.

These contrasts can probably best be seen among the teaching staff. In-service teacher training, for example, has improved substantially. However, the social prestige of teaching has declined, the practice of the profession has deteriorated (excessive workloads, hard to accept social expectations, etc.), and relations with the political administration have become increasingly strained. Democratization, autonomy, and bureaucratization have become typical factors in the imagery and narratives of school actors. Despite the fact that the educational reform should have meant greater democratization and autonomy of management, the teachers continuously complain of bureaucratization and the deficient administrative organization of education.

On the other hand, the one essential change in the structure of the system brought about by the LOGSE was the extending of obligatory education to the age of 16 years, with the subsequent creation of a new stage of secondary education, i.e., a strong drive towards a comprehensive school. However, this decision has led to numerous problems—shown explicitly during the brief period of economic expansion occurring with the conservative governments after 1995, and even when the Socialists returned after 2004 and until 2008 when the larger crisis became notorious—related to the desire of some pupils to leave the system before that age. Early school-leavers or even school objectors wanted to work in the booming real estate business—a phenomenon also found in the educational discourses of the EU and there was to the excessive diversification of pupils caused by different programs of integration or compensation.⁹ Many school actors believe that this increase in the

⁹We need to bear in mind that the Spanish contemporary growth model has been based on sectors offering little added value (tourism and construction with low technological development). The real estate business generated a certain economic recovery after 1995 with the conservative Popular Party in power, although it really masked the continuity of economic crisis when the real estate bubble burst, when the Socialists were again in power (Buendia and Molero-Simarro 2018).

comprehensive period of instruction is only of benefit to, and actually was invented for, the most disadvantaged pupils, with no regard for those who are characterized as “above average.” These discourses make very clear the tension between comprehensiveness—the typical option of education policies in the welfare state—and efficiency, the preferential aim of neoliberal policies that have been very active in recent years (Simola et al. 2002).

The same constants apply to the relationship between the family and its relation with the school. The family naturally continues to be considered key as a socializing agent and, therefore, essential for the development of the new educational system. Yet its participation in school life—highly valued by the reform—has fallen short of expectations. If the family does not participate, the system begins to break down—this is one of the most repeated conclusions in the interviews analysed, especially when the object of consideration is inclusion and exclusion. For many, the cause of exclusion resides not in the school but in the family, in society, and in the very individuals who suffer it. As registered in our “cognitive unconscious” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999), school, by itself, rarely excludes, although, as a matter of fact, in Spain the family is a key institution for young people, actually the most highly valued. However, as a counterpart, young people think that the family does not influence their exclusion/inclusion processes because they are young meritocrats, and everything depends on their effort and their involvement in school.

This rhetorical exoneration of the school is predictably present in narratives, thought of as symbolism or social imaginaries (that is to say, the subject and society are constituted and instituted imaginatively and as such their meanings are perceived and imagined) (Castoriadis 1997). All this gives this institution called school a sort of “magic aura” inscribed in a “story of salvation” to which all individuals are summoned regardless of their origin or condition and where they are involved in local decision-making that brings government policies closer to the individual (Lindblad and Popkewitz 2004: 84). Although let us first admit that the effect of including the excluded is not necessarily inclusion. As Goodwin (1996) suggested, the frontiers or limits of marginalization are mobile and constantly shifting.

What really happens, then, is that what is in fact a socio-political problem is denaturalized and turned into an individual question of moral or ethical conscience. The narrative effect of this transformation is a host of weak, diffuse images (a “humanitarian soup” as the Spanish leading sociologist Manuel Castells would say) that do not reward reflection or lead to the invention of new creative formulae of governance that could be useful in overcoming the spaces of classification and normalization so firmly embedded in the school system. In fact, these images work as part of a *normalizing of ideology* through precisely “the production of images of human beings that unjustly serve to keep people in their place” (Beach 2017: 199).

In a more general view, we could say that social inclusion-exclusion in the educational sphere causes the emergence of different, socially distorted school cultures. The prevailing models (discourses and imaginary) are those that opt for a school based on success and results, where there are no insurmountable barriers for individual effort and perseverance in study, as against the other models and traditions that put emphasis on social and economic factors (Silver 1994). The question of

equity is translated into a system of reason that labels, differentiates, and divides the subjectivity of educational actors and agents according to certain normalization procedures.

School educates, i.e., it qualifies and capacitates students, but at the same time it normalizes them depending on their comprehension of and proximity to this new and all embracing, but likewise contradictory, legitimacy. This “new legitimacy” has been queried in various ways by educational actors, whose image of the school is distinct from that optimistically presented by the Socialist reform of the 1990s. Many of them felt tired and disappointed upon seeing how, behind all the modernizing rhetoric of efficiency and quality, there remains an insufficiently creative school guided by traditionalist models and values. The future is uncertain. Freedom and autonomy are a mirage, and the level of student achievement continues to drop alarmingly (in particular in secondary education). Teachers are trapped by the demands of the educational authorities, the families, and society, but above all they feel they are undervalued and alone in the face of a task that is beyond them. The “ideal” student imagined and desired by the educational reform, society, and teachers bears little resemblance to the “real” unmotivated and even aggressive student who is actually present in the classroom (González Faraco 2003). School has changed, but its future is the murkiest image of all.

Such scepticism and uncertainty contrast with the extraordinary confidence shared by the vast majority of the educational community in the egalitarian condition of today’s school. The same is not true when deciding on the reasons for failure and exclusion. For the students, it is a fundamentally personal process, whereas for the other educational actors, its origin is essentially social. The latter admit self-exclusion but consider that exclusion is a socially produced artefact (Jamrozik and Nocella 1998) and that only society is capable of setting it right, so that the initial confidence in the school’s integrating capacity now becomes doubtful. However, no one doubts that public and private schools (a decisive duality in the Spanish educational system) differ in their perception of social inclusion and exclusion and other closely linked concepts such as “equal opportunity”, “attention to diversity”, and “school autonomy”.

Taking these differences into account, the most widespread impression is still that the school cannot solve problems that society has not been able to solve heretofore, that it is not ready to accept all sorts of pupils and that it has little to offer pupils with difficulties, who end up excluding themselves. Therefore, it merely confirms the marginalization of those that society has already marginalized. Consequently, for many educational actors, progress towards cultural plurality, which should not be a plurality of cultures but a plurality of culturally defined communities (Bauman 2000: 86), is no more than a beautiful dream.

This confused panorama presents many interrogatives, but there is one above all, directly related to education and its relations with social inclusion and exclusion, that we find especially worrying: what is to become of the school system and those involved in it if it is not openly recognized that its capacity for exclusion, differentiation, and segregation remains intact, even though it is masked and hidden beneath flowery rhetoric?

7.5 The Relevance of Educational Research in the Forming of a European Union Policy: By Way of Conclusion

One of the main contributions of the EGSIE project studied in this chapter consisted of describing the social imaginary of young students on concluding their compulsory education from a comparative viewpoint. As actors in the education system, the students were not examined in depth from the viewpoint of the new practices of governance, despite their being one of the main actors. The conclusion of compulsory education represents a key moment to begin the processes of juvenile transition, which are determined by the construction of discursive imaginaries on the importance of education and training, work, and the qualities required to be successful in life. These aspects give meaning to the configuration of de-standardized transitions that do not follow a classic linear trajectory and cannot be understood unless they are interpreted in a changing socio-structural context, in which belonging to the European Union appears as a possible horizon for the development of expectations of transition for young people. This was found particularly in the case of Spain, in comparison to the other countries analysed. Even today, one might say that the social imaginary of Spaniards in general regarding Europe and Europeans continues to be attractive, more so than for the rest of EU nations together.

The description of the young people's social imaginary was carried out following three analytical categories used in the theoretical framework of the research and which we believe give theoretical consistency to the analysis. Just before the new century began, the category of "narratives, sagas and myths" described how young people constructed and idealized the changes they wished to achieve for their project of school life, taking into account that those changes were contextualized by official discourse that visibilized and continues to visibilize the school as a space offering better social opportunities. This belief that young people have in the education system is legitimized by a discourse in which equality and trust in the school conform a myth of their social imaginary.

The "subject construction" category laid the basis for the identification of the images, perceptions, and qualities that the young people have or idealize for their transition processes to imply success at school and in work. In this case, they showed a meritocratic conception for the achievement of success, both in the school and at work. After a long crisis from which Spain has not fully emerged, these images have been considerably eroded and devalued. It is not for nothing that one of the choices young Spaniards have been taking in recent years has been to leave Spain in search of work. This general emigration towards Europe is not the same as that undertaken by their grandparents or parents, many of whom were born abroad, because many of the young now emigrate after concluding their university studies.

In any case we have to point out that the "governance, social inclusion and exclusion" category of the EGSIE project referred to forms of governance found in the schooling and education received by these young people, which build and give identities for action and participation and, naturally, influence the processes of social inclusion and exclusion of these same young people. Far from having been sufficiently researched in Spain, it remains of interest to know and understand the

perceptions of young people today concerning the qualities necessary for success in juvenile transitions, the influence of individual, family, and social factors, and their expectations for the future.

As part of an important publication on education policy, this chapter represents a singular case of scientific literature that is not really well known in the European context and is intellectually removed in various ways from well-known policy analysis studies, traditionally in debt to conventional North American approaches in several aspects. As we have already said, the EGSIE project formed part of the European Union's Framework Programmes for Research (FPR) that was set up in 1984. Over the last 30 years, these programmes have led to the development and identification of specific goals and priorities for a European research policy. At first heavily influenced by the North American policy of research and innovation (R+I), these programmes began to encourage the competitiveness of European industry and technology and have extended their priorities to include questions belonging to the social sciences that were not considered priority until the approval of FPR4 in 1994 under the denomination *Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme*, including the EGSIE project. This FPR has been considered one of the most far-reaching (Finnegan 2015), because it introduced the need to analyse the economic and social effects of the technological changes taking place, including the consequences for the labour market and unemployment.

In the following FPR, the areas of influence continued to consider the need to support policy-oriented research that affected the achievement of solutions to such problems, as well as further, emerging ones. By means of these FPR, the European Commission has acted as a policy entrepreneur ("that is its skills to keep long-term pan-European goals, at the same time as using the situation as a 'window of opportunity' to expand the scope of its political arena/competences" (Kaiser and Prange-Gstöhl 2012: 60). Furthermore, with the launching in 2000 of the so-called Lisbon Strategy Agenda, the EU set the goal of creating a knowledge-based society and becoming the most competitive and dynamic economy using the three instruments of knowledge, education, and research and innovation. The creation of the European Research Area (ERA), the improvement in standards of education and training, with emphasis on mobility, and the development of programmes promoting Lifelong Learning, in the context of a cohesion policy focused on reducing economic inequality by boosting growth, have been encouraging the use of structural funds in the area of research and innovation (Milio 2012).

The present programme called Horizon 2020 (2014–2020) has involved the greatest financial contribution of the European Union to research. The final budget is 80 million euros for R+D over 7 years. On average, about 9% of the EU budget has gone to research and innovation over the past decade. Recently, the EU has required most of its member states to invest much more in domestic R+I systems, even under its budgetary policies of austerity.¹⁰

¹⁰Unlike the FPR focused on technological research, in search of an innovative discursive framework, Horizon 2020 shows how the scientific policy of the EU is seeking a new semantics prioritizing innovation, economic growth, and policy improvement. In fact, this programme has three main

Last year, 3 years altered the setting up of Horizon 2020, the European Parliament approved the Resolution of 13 June 2017 on the evaluation of the execution of Horizon 2020, as well as the recommendations for the upcoming FPR9, Horizon Europe. Some of the transversal questions pointed out are the need to promote the importance of collaboration in research in universities, research centres, industries, and other actors, i.e., the triple helix model and the achievement of “excellence”¹¹ as an essential evaluation criterion for the three pillars of the programme.

In this context, the place of the social sciences, education sciences, and humanities has been under-represented in the different framework programmes, as recognized by the EU itself. However, for them to be considered, they must be integrated into the designs of interdisciplinary research, not just as an afterthought to technological projects, in a conception of science not merely part of or related to the traditional academic disciplines, but “explored in the area of interdisciplinary engagement and [rather with the plea] for a significant broadening of research approaches, albeit one in which interactional research would feature prominently. This represents an investment in our future because if we can understand better how interdisciplinary research gets done, we can find ways of doing it better, and in doing it better we can enhance its contribution to the world in which we live” (Seongsook and Richards 2017: 267).

Recently, Zapp et al. (2018) analysed European education research and pointed out that political interests have profoundly transformed the goals and type of research that should be promoted. On the one hand, government intervention is legitimized in planning and programming educational research, and, on the other, it is shown that the EU and international organization are influencing the formulation of national policies.¹² In this way, the FPR represents the most important motor for

areas of research known as “pillars”. The first of these is “Excellent Science”, aimed at encouraging basic research, the second is “Industrial Leadership”, aimed at encouraging strategies of industrial innovation, and the third, “Societal Challenges” with 39% of the budget, aimed to develop policies to improve social and economic problems. Within this new discursive framework, basic research has been redefined as “frontier research” and has been institutionalized by the creation of the European Research Council. On the other hand, applied research is linked to the rhetoric of “great challenges” (Kaldewey 2013).

Nonetheless, one of the weak points of the whole policy of the FPR is its lack of evaluation as policy. It is only in the last few years that solid research has begun to be published on it, generally of an independent nature. Recently, the European Commission has been receiving calls to “to provide a broader definition of ‘impact’, considering both economic and social effects, by stressing that the assessment of the impact of fundamental research projects should remain flexible and... maintain the balance between bottom-up and top-down calls and to analyze which evaluation procedure... is more useful to avoid oversubscription and to conduct quality research” (see the assessment of Horizon 2020 implementation in view of its interim evaluation and the Framework Programme 9 proposal, and point 16 on Evaluation states at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2017-0209+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>).

¹¹Flink and Peter (2018) have recently analyzed how the concepts of “excellence” and “frontier research” have structured the political agenda, financing and evaluation of European research.

¹²More specifically, Kaldewey (2013) similarly suggested that the list of problems presented by the German Ministry of Education coincided with that of the European Commission and becoming central themes for European scientific policy. Symptomatically, themes such as poverty, education or unemployment figured in second place.

the Europeanization of research policy by way of their influence on the determination of research agendas and the creation of conditions to establish academic networks producing European educational research. In short, the move is towards increasing isomorphism in the types and formats of research produced.

The EGSIE project is one of the only cases of specifically educational research financed by the European Commission, i.e., one proposed by scholars and academic communities of educationalists which, in the framework of expanding points of view and flexibility that the latest FPR projects approved have not fully enjoyed, attempted to clarify and provide complex but valid answers to peremptory problems of a period of change. The search is of sound inquiry to identify the multiple mechanisms pushing exclusion, and lack of integration of youth in the context of ever more complex societies. Being or not inherently of rhetorical nature, these mechanisms have been leading in effect to an increase in economic inequality and its transmission into educational inequality—which is also political—and both are mutually reinforcing.

When the EGSIE Project was thought, the governance of educational systems on the stage in which it is currently producing internationally was only in its early present stages. In fact, this project was finished and sent to Brussels just at the beginning of the year in which the first PISA test results were going to be internationally launching after being applied to 265,000 thousands of young school boys and girls of 24 OECD countries plus 4 additional partners in 2000. Ten years later, “data production and management” have become central to the new governance until transforming today into a real “network governance”, which combines vertical, vertebrate, bureaucratic approaches with horizontal, cellular, and media networks across sectors and in the context of globalization across scales and spaces (Ozga 2012; Ball and Junemann 2012). In conclusion, the introduction of new regulating technologies and fields of governance in education, presented in models for governance by numbers and results dealing with large-scale assessments of international study shown through list ranking (this is not only for the case PISA, which is now diversified in different formats) (Pereyra et al. 2011; Lindblad et al. 2018a) has given birth to an “era of transnational governance”.

As a priority intellectual enterprise, an urgent implication of all this for us “is the demand for critical analysis of the premises for educational knowledge and strategies for educational change ... [in order] is to capture the interaction between different actors with their interests and the politics of knowledge in transnational and national governance and policymaking” (Lindblad et al. 2018a: 18). In this sense, we believe that the EGSIE project in which we were involved proudly was an accurate work of scholarship, but also an experience of intellectual global.

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