NEW KNOWLEDGE about

Spain

This briefing note highlights NEW KNOWLEDGE about Spain.
We present here new knowledge and key messages for policy makers and civil society.

ACCOMMODATING ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SPAIN

Spain has been part of the so-called "new" countries of immigration in the years 2000s with the arrival of five million immigrants over a ten year period. In 2010, non-nationals accounted for 14% of the total population. The country is currently witnessing a new phase in relation to migration and diversity. The transition from reception policies to an emphasis on (long term) accommodation is taking place in an unfavourable context of severe economic crisis since 2008.

The term tolerance has been seldom used in the Spanish context with regards to immigration and cultural or religious diversity. When it is, it refers in general to "more than tolerance", i.e. respect and recognition for difference. Diversity policies have relied on a concept related in some ways to the one of tolerance, the concept of *convivencia* (living together). Through the promotion of *convivencia*, policies aim at developing a bidirectional integration process where citizens are recognized as equals. In Catalonia, it has also been associated with the creation of a common public culture.

Even if tolerance is traditionally associated with respect and recognition of the 'other' as equal, discussions on tolerance boundaries occasionally appear in the public debate. Human rights, democracy and liberal values are in general perceived as the limits of tolerance. However, over the last years, several issues have led to more focused discussions on the boundaries of tolerance. On the one hand, the boundaries of tolerance have been directly questioned by several public actors, in relation to Islam, immigration or gender/sexual orientation. On the other, non interference with public discourses or in the educational context has led to an increased tolerance towards intolerance of cultural difference.

In the ACCEPT PLURALISM project, we investigated how ethnic, religious and cultural diversity is accommodated in two very important areas: **education** and **political life**.

We examined in particular:
- **Debates about segregation dynamics of immigrant students in Spanish schools;**
- **The controversy about the creation and implementation of citizenship education in the curriculum;**
- **The increased tolerance for intolerant discourses about immigrants in Catalan politics.**

Evaluation of discourses and practices of tolerance in our case studies:

	Institutional and legal framework	Practical situation	Public discourses
School segregation of immigrant children	Formal equal opportunities between native and immigrant students but indirect mechanisms of exclusion	Individual and school strategies reinforce residential segregation's influence on schools composition.	The emphasis on individual choice and individual strategies over diversity and equality is an impediment to public action.
Citizenship education	Recognition through the law, recognition by the Supreme Court but still challenged.	Mandatory teaching of tolerance and acceptance of diversity (gender equality, cultural diversity and anti-racism...) opposed by social sectors that do not recognize those values. Flexible implementation by schools.	Deep cleavage between recognition and denial of recognition.
Discourses of intolerance in the political life (Catalonia)	Legal framework against hate speech and incitement to racist violence, Ambivalent decisions of Courts and institutional responses.	Increased tolerance for intolerant discourses. Local controversies about cultural diversity and immigration issues.	Opposed streams of discourses between acceptance and intolerance. Limits of intolerance unusually stretched in 2010-2011.

(IN)TOLERANCE IN SPANISH SCHOOLS: TOLERANCE TOWARDS THE SEGREGATION OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Although segregation is obviously illegal in Spain and equal opportunities is put forward as a core principle of the education system, research and statistics show that there are important mechanisms of segregation in the education system which affect primarily immigrant children in major cities.

The mapping of the discourses at stake has highlighted an intertwining of factors, whether institutional or resulting of micro decisions and school strategies, contributing to segregation dynamics. The complexity and multiplicity of factors have become an argument for public authorities for not acting with determination against segregation mechanisms. Our empirical findings thus suggest that:

- There is a gap between the principles that orient education policies, which aim at guaranteeing equal opportunities and the possibility for all parents to enrol their children in the school of their choice, and the reality of school composition. Empirical evidence suggests that, in major cities where there is a large offer of schools, even a balanced freedom of choice essentially leads to more segregation. Different composition effects of public and private schools, and even between public schools, reinforce residential segregation effects.
- A number of public discourses are placing the responsibility of concentration on immigrant families. They are deemed responsible for choosing schools with co-nationals or for not being as interested as natives in the project and identity of each school. Institutional causes, effects of asymmetrical information between natives and newcomers, different perceptions of the educational system and even inequality in twisting the rules of admission are insufficiently taken into account.

Working-class immigrants are primarily affected by the current rules of the educational system. The objective of guaranteeing equal opportunities to all students is a pillar of educational policies. Although notable improvements have been achieved, the system of enrolment and inequalities between schools lead to an indirect discrimination of immigrant students with fewer resources.

This of course also concerns working-class native students, but the situation is exacerbated for immigrant students as they are also affected by other types of discrimination and intolerant behaviours. Even if the concept of intolerance is seldom used in public debates, intolerance drives most practises. Our empirical research in the context of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project on segregation in the field of education highlighted a combination of three dynamics leading to exclusion: inter-individual intolerance (i.e. "native flight"), structural and systemic factors of indirect discrimination (i.e. territorial segregation, free choice), and policy-makers' "tolerance for intolerance".

(IN)TOLERANCE IN SPANISH SCHOOLS: RELUCTANCE TOWARDS CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

In 2006, after a consultative process, the government decided to create a new mandatory course on 'Education for citizenship and human rights' which was to be included in primary and secondary education. This initiative was taken following several recommendations by the Council of Europe and European institutions. It triggered an important conflict between supporters of citizenship education and opponents who perceived it as an imposition of the State over families and Catholic beliefs. Opponents to this course objected to the introduction in the curriculum of an approach in terms of gender equality and diversity (transformations of the family, reproductive health, and so on) and the positive recognition of cultural diversity.

Empirical research has acknowledged the deep cleavage existing in Spanish society around the recognition of these values. Conservative streams, especially catholic organizations, opposed their own set of beliefs to the ones promoted by the State. They argued that schools should not teach values that are contrary to the beliefs of parents. The supporters of citizenship education stressed on the contrary the necessity to provide all children with universally recognized values such as human rights and democratic values in order to contribute towards a more cohesive and tolerant society.

The definition of collective identities, especially of national identity, is in debate in Spain since the beginning of the democratic period in the late 1970s. The diversity of identifications, on a territorial and national basis, is a cornerstone of Spanish democracy. Nevertheless, controversies such as the one on citizenship education reveal a lack of consensus on common public values. The resistance from influential sectors of society (and especially dominant institutions like the Catholic Church) make it difficult to reach the public recognition of diversity in cultural and social practices.

(IN)TOLERANCE IN SPANISH POLITICS: INCREASED TOLERANCE TOWARDS INTOLERANT DISCOURSES

Spain is one of the countries in Europe which has not witnessed a rise of far-right political parties. No far-right representative sits in national or regional parliaments. Only a few local councillors represent parties with this ideology. This is noticeable in a country that has been struck by a deep economic and social crisis since 2008. Unemployment rates have increased dramatically (from 8.3% in 2007 to 27.1% in 2013) and affect primarily immigrants. Nevertheless, public discourses in Spain still express fairly tolerant views on immigrant

integration.

However, shifts in the political discourses have been noticed in Catalonia, especially on the occasion of a series of electoral campaigns (local, regional and national) in 2010-2011. Immigration has been put at the centre of the electoral agenda by several mainstream parties representatives. In addition, local elections have confirmed the breakthrough of a young anti-immigrant party, the Platform for Catalonia, which managed to multiply by four its local councillors in relation with 2007. The party also gained ground in metropolitan cities while it was essentially implanted in rural areas before 2011.

In the ACCEPT PLURALISM project, we studied these transformations through the public discussions of the boundaries of tolerance on the occasion of three local controversies about the regulation of cultural and religious diversity. Discourses in favour of an increased intolerance rely on different framings :
- A framing in terms of security enforcement: immigration and cultural difference are perceived as a source of delinquency, incivility and generally harmful attitudes;
- A framing in terms of welfare protection/chauvinism: immigrants are perceived as (unfair) competitors with natives over access to social welfare benefits and employment;
- A framing in terms of identity preservation: immigration and cultural difference are perceived as a threat for the majority culture.

These traditional repertoires are also influenced by the Catalan context. In particular, the stress on (in)civility is deeply rooted in the political culture of Catalonia and its understanding of immigrant integration through a common civic culture. In addition, discourses – including the far-right discourse - do not generally rely on (Spanish or Catalan) nationalism. Liberal values or local identity act as a proxy for nationalism.

Interestingly, anti-immigrant discourse has moved to the mainstream despite the absence of a powerful far-right. This led us to explore the relation between the redefinition of intolerance boundaries and party dynamics. On the one hand, party dynamics such as inter-party competition, electioneering and intra-party competition have given opportunities to traditional right-wing representatives and candidates to voice anti-immigrant stances. On the other, trivialisation and denial of racism among Catalan politicians and autonomy within the party have created a laissez-faire attitude shared by centre-left and traditional centre-right wing parties. This explains how, despite a public commitment against the expression of cultural prejudices and anti-immigrant public discourses, political parties' discourses have progressively pushed back the limits of intolerance in Catalan politics.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The studies conducted for ACCEPT PLURALISM have been carried out in a context of deep transformation of migration dynamics on the one hand and of the Spanish economic and social situation on the other. They have captured structural dynamics that affect the tolerance/acceptance of diversity in the country as well as short-term dynamics.

Concerning the field of education, our empirical research suggests that there is a strong need to pay attention to the indirect or direct exclusionary mechanisms that derive from the preservation of traditional principles, values and norms. In particular, the preservation of freedom in the choice of schools has to be compensated by a strong political commitment for equal opportunities and diversity.

Recent developments concerning the teaching of citizenship education reinforce our conclusions on the difficulties to agree on common (and basic) values in Spain. Despite the Supreme Court ruling in favour of citizenship education and despite its implementation without major conflict since 2009, the current Minister of Education has planned to suppress the

subject from the curriculum. "Controversial issues" such as homosexual families, the gender approach and anti-racism have already been erased in 2012. The proposal for a new education law that would replace citizenship education establishes instead a course on "ethical values", mandatory only for students who do not attend confessional religion courses.

In the field of education, Spain has developed solid policies aiming at promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue. Autonomous communities as well as schools have pursued multiple experimentations in the field of intercultural education. Spain has been one of the countries in Europe that has offered a wide choice in terms of religious education. Against this background, the suppression of citizenship education and the creation of a mandatory alternative to religious education would constitute a regression on the path to recognition of diversity at school.

In the political field, the multiple electoral periods that Spain underwent in the period 2010-2012 offered the opportunity for political and social tolerance toward immigrants and cultural diversity to be challenged. Even if there has not been much change in the policies since the economic crisis, the *cordon sanitaire* against racist political discourses has been weakened in Catalonia. Although such discourses are far for being dominant, the lack of reaction against explicit anti-immigrant discourses should be a preoccupation for the political system. However, migration issues are not presently at the centre of the public debate, even though the lack of resources is affecting integration policies. Nevertheless, evidence points to a stratification of intolerance. Discourses of intolerance have spread more easily at the local level, especially in more deprived areas. This micro-level policy-making should be the focus of social, diversity and intercultural policies.

Our research suggests that a pragmatic – or practical – approach to diversity that was pursued in Spain allowed for policies and attitudes to not be constrained by historical traditions in terms of diversity management. This may explain – in addition to the relative novelty of immigration – that the backlash against multiculturalism that other European countries have experienced has not had the same force in the Spanish context. Empirical evidence from the studies conducted for ACCEPT PLURALISM show that in several cases, however, tolerance or even a formal admission as equals is not enough to achieve equality of conditions between minorities and the majority. This situation raises interrogations on the capacity of organised immigrants, or cultural and religious minorities, to voice specific claims. Lack of recognition, indirect institutional discrimination and the safeguarding of the in-group dominant position may represent new challenges in the future. But the early development of intercultural and inclusive policies is a solid basis to face these challenges.

FURTHER READINGS

To read more on the research findings presented here, see:

Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Concepts and Practices in Spain
By Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Flora Burchianti and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas (GRITIM–Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Download your copy from:
http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/24378

Other relevant publications include:

2012/02.2. Handbook on Tolerance and Diversity in Europe
Anna Triandafyllidou (EUI)

Download your copy from:
http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/Handbook.aspx

PROJECT IDENTITY

Acronym	**ACCEPT PLURALISM**
Title	**Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe**
Short Description	ACCEPT PLURALISM questions how much cultural diversity can be accommodated within liberal and secular democracies in Europe. The notions of tolerance, acceptance, respect and recognition are central to the project. ACCEPT PLURALISM looks at both native and immigrant minority groups.
	Through comparative, theoretical and empirical analysis the project studies individuals, groups or practices for whom tolerance is sought but which we should not tolerate; of which we disapprove but which should be tolerated; and for which we ask to go beyond toleration and achieve respect and recognition.
	In particular, we investigate when, what and who is being not tolerated / tolerated / respected in 15 European countries; why this is happening in each case; the reasons that different social actors put forward for not tolerating / tolerating / respecting specific minority groups/individuals and specific practices.
	The project analyses practices, policies and institutions, and produces key messages for policy makers with a view to making European societies more respectful towards diversity.
Authors	Ricard ZAPATA-BARRERO and Flora BURCHIANTI
Web site	**www.accept-pluralism.eu**
Duration	March 2010-May 2013 (39 months)
Funding scheme	Small and medium-scale collaborative project
EU contribution	2,600,230 Euro
Consortium	17 partners (15 countries)
Coordinator	European University Institute (Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies),
Scientific Coordinator	Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou
EC officer	Ms. Louisa Anastopoulou, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, European Commission