

Gypsy students¹ in Catalonia (Spain): compensation with improvable cultural recognition²

Studenti zingari in Catalogna (Spagna): compensazione con riconoscimento culturale migliorabile

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Abstract

The article starts from the premise that the school institution has generally failed to recognise cultural minorities and incorporate them into its everyday dynamic and curriculum. A greater incorporation of families and the recognition and incorporation of cultural diversity in schools are relevant points for favouring the processes of schooling. In this framework, the results of a survey of a sample of representatives from the management teams of primary schools (aged 6 to 12) in Catalonia (Spain) are presented. This focuses on the evolution of action to favour equal opportunities, identifying the extent to which cultural diversity is recognised in the documents in the schools and defining the actions in which this is taken into account. The results indicate that opportunities for Gitano pupils have worsened and that their presence in the schools does not mean greater recognition of their identity and culture but rather that there is a tendency to act in a compensatory way.

Keywords: gitano, school institution, compensatory, intercultural education, Catalonia (Spain).

Sommario

L'articolo parte dalla premessa che l'istituzione scolastica non ha generalmente riconosciuto le minoranze culturali e non le ha incorporate nella dinamica quotidiana e nel curriculum. Una maggiore incorporazione delle famiglie e il riconoscimento e l'incorporazione della diversità culturale nella scuola sono punti rilevanti per favorire i processi di scolarizzazione. In questo quadro, vengono presentati i risultati di un'indagine su un campione di rappresentanti dei gruppi di gestione delle scuole primarie (dai 6 ai 12 anni) in Catalogna (Spagna). Questa si concentra sull'evoluzione delle azioni a favore delle pari opportunità, identificando la misura in cui la diversità culturale è riconosciuta nei documenti delle scuole e definendo le azioni in cui questa viene presa in considerazione. I risultati indicano che le opportunità per gli alunni gitano sono peggiorate e che la loro presenza nelle scuole non significa un maggiore riconoscimento della loro identità e cultura, ma piuttosto che si tende ad agire in modo compensativo.

Parole chiave: gitano, istituzione scolastica, compensazione, educazione interculturale, Catalogna (Spagna).

Introduction

The presence and educational success in the school system has been, and still is, an important challenge for pupils as a whole and but particularly when we focus our attention on the young generations of Gitano people whether in Europe or Spain. From the analysis of policies carried out in the British and European contexts, for O'Hanton (2010), the problematics of the Gypsy/travellers are similar all over Europe: low enrolment and attendance, high rates of school dropout and low educational performance. In his opinion, the policies aimed at improving this situation are having poor and slow results. At the level of diagnosis, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) carried

out a broad-based study in eleven European Union countries with Roma and non-Roma population. This identified four main problems in educational questions: a low literacy rate, high levels of school dropout before finishing secondary education, a high risk of segregation in the school and low presence at the pre-school level. The comparative analysis shows a breach between the educational level of the Roma and non-Roma. Nevertheless, the educational level of the young Roma is higher than that of previous generations within their community (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2006; Rica, Gorjón, Miller and Úbeda, 2019).

On the other hand, numerous studies have focussed on how to improve the incorporation of Roma pupils into education systems, often starting from the underlying factors of low performance, absenteeism and school dropout, attitudes of no acceptance of the Roma families regarding schooling as it is defined, etc. Derrington & Kendal (2008) state that there has been a tendency, which they consider a risk, to give too much importance to cultural factors as a causal explanation for why Gypsy students do not have better academic results. In fact, the authors cited consider that emphasising this aspect contributes to the construction of a theory that there is a cultural pathology and so, other influential factors becoming invisible. Derrington and Kendal add that the institutional educational context also contributes to students feeling isolated, alienated and experiencing situations of racism (on anti-Gypsyism can be found: Piasere, 2012 and 2018). This means that it is difficult to develop the educational potential of these students without making changes in the educational institution and, as indicated by Szelei, Tinoca and Pinho (2019), if their voice is not heard so that these students and their culture are present. In fact, for Myers (2018), even when there are changes in the educational institution, these must be well evaluated since they are not always appropriate and may represent a new form of exclusion for Gypsy students since their difference is identified and classified by decision makers who are not Gypsy. On the other hand, Gobbo (2009) indicates that reticence and resistance among Roma students (specifically in Turin and Florence) to educational development cannot be explained solely through the cultural variable but must be contextualised in the wider field in which the attitudes and expectations of the *non Roma* (mainly teachers³, but also the rest of society) towards these have a significant weight. The author mentions that the Roma are not indifferent or resistant to education as such, but rather that their responses to institutional education vary in function of the educational proposal they are presented with and how they perceive the aims of said proposal.

On the institutional level, necessary improvements are indicated. These include participation and integration, the training of teachers (Messing, 2008; Szelei, Tinoca and Pinho, 2019) and the implementation of complementary (extra-scholar) actions of support for their schooling (Messing, 2008). It is also necessary to evaluate the culture and identity of the Gypsy/Travellers as a starting point for developing any policies or programmes as the schools that have better results are those that make efforts to integrate Gypsy/Traveller culture into their educational dynamics (for example, through materials that reflect historical and traditional elements), those that project higher expectations among the Gypsy/Traveller pupils and those that are able to make the curriculum more flexible (O'Hanton, 2010). While focussing on exploring the factors that influence the low performance and high absenteeism of Gypsy/Travellers pupils in primary and secondary education in Great Britain, Bhopal (2004) identified positive experiences that, as well as emphasising the necessity of greater involvement of the families in the logic of the education process, indicate that this encourages trust between families and professionals and allows the development of strategies for collaborative action to overcome the mentioned limitations of these students in the education system (European

Commission, 2019; Zachos and Panagiotidou, 2019). Bhopal & Myers (2009) also highlighted the need to improve the relation of the school with the Gypsy/Roma and Travellers community, open the schools to facilitate contact and communication between families and professionals and increase pupils' motivation. They also claim that the incorporation of Gypsy language, history and culture into the curriculum (inclusive) generates trust and motivation for learning. In the same line, Myers & Bhopal (2009) indicate that the cultural dimension is important and Matras, Howley and Jones (2020) that greater recognition of the Roma language is also important. The coordinated use of intra-scholar and extra-scholar actions to recognize the cultural dimension improves academic performance, reduces the drop-out rate, improves community relations and reduces interethnic conflicts in the school (Myers and Bhopal, 2009).

To sum up, what we have presented indicates that the greater involvement of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers in the school depends on themselves (cultural factors, attitudes, expectations, etc.) but also on the school as an institution that has generally not had to recognise cultural minorities and incorporate them into its everyday dynamic and curriculum. Greater involvement of (all) the families and the recognition and incorporation of cultural diversity in the school appear as relevant points for favouring the processes of schooling.

1. The Gitanos in the Spanish education system (and in Catalonia)

Since the 1970s, the educational activities aimed at the Gitanos carried out in compulsory education in Spain have oscillated between segregation and assimilation until recently, when the discourses and policies have tended towards inclusion (see Garrido and Torres, 1986; Fernández Enguita, 1996; Llevot and Garreta, 2013; Márquez & Padua, 2016; Parra, Álvarez and Gamella, 2017). The initial approach of the Gitanos to Spanish schools came from the insistence of the authorities on linking schooling to access to other public goods, services and compensatory transfers⁴ (Fernández Enguita, 1996, 2004). However, despite the growing presence of Gitanos in the ordinary classrooms over the years, mainly concentrated in some public schools, the levels of schooling, attendance, success with studies, literacy or number of students in middle and higher levels have yet to reach optimum levels (San Román, 1984, 1994; Muñoz Sedano, 1989; Álvarez, Parra and Gamella, 2018). The positive figures for enrolment in primary contrast with the high rates of de-schooling in secondary (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2006; López, 2011; Laparra, 2011; Damonti and Arza, 2014; European Roma and Travellers Forum, 2016; European Commission, 2019). Given all the above, academic failure and absenteeism are central themes for analysing the educational trajectories (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2013), although fortunately successful trajectories are also found and studied (see Abajo and Carrasco, 2004; Padilla, González and Soria, 2017). Brüggemann (2014) carried out a biographic analysis of Spanish Gitano students at university. In it, he indicates that among these students, academic progress and the acquisition of knowledge through the institutionalised educational system are not incompatible with their Gitano cultural origins, although this evidently generates pressure that both Gitanos and non-Gitanos must learn to negotiate. For Brüggemann, one should not conclude that academic success among young Gitanos brings with it a distancing from their culture but rather it is more a cultural redefinition.

Like the above-mentioned international studies, in the Spanish case, Flecha & Soler (2013) indicate that the participation of the families in the decision-making processes and their children's learning activities are significant factors that contribute to linking the Gitano students and their families to the school, as well as improving their educational

performance (specifically, they show how promoting interaction and dialogue in small groups promotes learning in general and among the cultural minorities in particular). Then Álvarez, Parra and Gamella (2018), focussing on school dropout of Gitano students in secondary education, indicate that institutional and structural factors influence this school dropout, as do other more micro factors like the role of the family and discriminatory and racist practices.

First of all, what has been done to incorporate Gitano pupils (and their relatives) into the Spanish education system? A first verification is that despite there being a general framework (see Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2012⁵), the Autonomous Communities (that have power over education) have developed their own discourses, policies and actions to incorporate cultural diversity into the school within the logic of inclusion in education. So, and given the difficulty of analysing 17 regions with a range of initiatives, we focus our research work on one of these: Catalonia. This Autonomous Community has been working for years with plans aimed at the Gitano people, with special relevance on education (see Garreta, 2003; Llevot and Bernad, 2019). Thus, for example the *Plan Integral del Pueblo Gitano (Integral Plan for the Gitano people)* (Departament de Benestar Social i Família, 2014; Departament de Treball, Afers Socials i Famílies, 2018) defines the specific policies in favour of the Gitano people in Catalonia and develops strategies to apply successful actions in the following fields: education, work, culture, justice, health, housing, the media, promotion of associationism and local administrations. Specifically regarding Gitano culture, the aim is to promote this as part of Catalan culture, disseminating its values and contribution to the culture of Catalonia. Regarding promotion of the schooling of the Gitano people in Catalonia⁶, the aim is to facilitate full schooling of Gitano students in the different stages of the education system in Catalonia. This has to be done through prevention, diagnosis, and preventative action against absenteeism, contributing to academic success and the social and occupational promotion of Gitano students and enhancing the visibility and values of Gitano culture within the curriculum and life of the school (see also: Macías-Aranda, Sordé-Martí, Amador-López and Aubert Simon, 2020).

This will be carried out within what has been called attention to diversity in education (Decree 150/2017. Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya, number 7477 of 19/10 2017) in the framework of an inclusive system to continue advancing in the training of committed citizens, critical and active in the fair and supportive development of society, which, according to this Decree, will only be possible with the presence, participation and progress of each and every person who forms part of this. Thus, the Generalitat de Catalunya⁷ contemplates attention to cultural diversity, intercultural education and equal opportunities among the actions to achieve an inclusive and equitable school and greater social cohesion.

2. Design and methodology

The study carried out aims to respond to two questions, both related with the two main lines of work regarding the Gitano population of Catalonia. The first centres on equality of opportunities, a question that, as we have indicated, is at the heart of social and education policies. In this case, we ask whether over the last ten years, of full economic crisis in Spain and Catalonia, the equality of opportunity for Gitano students has changed and in what sense. Moreover, we also wish to know how attention to cultural diversity (focussed on Gitano students) is being carried out, as well as if the intercultural discourse has been developed sufficiently in general and specifically regarding the Gitano ethnic minority.

Given these interests, it was decided to design and carry out a survey of representatives from school management teams. Beyond the methodological motives, this is also one of the few ways to gain knowledge of the situation of Gitano students given that there are no official statistics that take their profile into account, thus making it complicated to obtain a clear view of their situation in the education system.

Participants

The study's target population are the schools that teach pre-school (ages 3 to 6) and primary (6 to 12) education in Catalonia. As the aim was to obtain a snapshot of how the schools work, the decision was taken that the best profile of informants was people with good knowledge of this, in other words, members of the management teams and with years of experience in the same school.

The global sample for the research was calculated starting from data from the Generalitat de Catalunya about the number of schools, both public and private, in the 2013-2014 course. The level of confidence was 95.5%, in the most unfavourable case ($p = q = 50\%$), and a statistical error was $\pm 3.5\%$, the sample (n) covered 545 schools. This sample (n) was compiled proportionally according to the distribution of the population (N) from a table of random numbers—and thus, selected at random while controlling that it represented the total territorial distribution of schools. However, not all centres in Catalonia have Gitano students, so, for the purposes of this article, we selected those which do. Given the impossibility of obtaining a census of the presence of these students, we opted to find out the percentage of students with this profile through the interviewee. This enabled us to detect 160 schools (29.35% of the global sample obtained) where Gitano students studied.

Instrument

The instrument used to compile the information, the questionnaire, was designed by the project research team from a prior theoretical-empirical phase. From the theoretical point of view, beyond going in depth into the results of research carried out on the subjects on the international and Spanish levels, the discourses and policies were analysed on the basis of the documentation from the educational administration. This, plus a phase of documentary interviews (a total of six) with representatives of the educational administration, enabled the design of an instrument made up of various types of question: open, closed, single or multiple responses. Before applying this instrument, it was validated by three experts in educational psychology and sociology. It was also tested to verify for a correct understanding, structure and the order of the questions.

Empirical procedure

The empirical work was done through telephone surveys (from the 9th of January to the 15th of September 2017) given that this reduced costs considerably and that the population was easy to reach and obtain responses from as there are lists of schools in the educational administration. More specifically, the profile of the interviewees was as follows: 69.2% were head teachers, 25.7% were heads of studies, 5.1% had other responsibilities in the team.

After the empirical telephone work was done, all those responses that had not previously been classified were codified and tabulated. The statistical analysis with the

Star de Pulse Train programme was then carried out and uni- and bi-variable analyses and tests of statistical significance (Test T of proportions to 95%) were applied to this.

3. Equality of opportunities and intercultural education in Catalonia

The presentation of the results obtained was done after a more in-depth presentation of the profile of the sample differentiated between three themes: equality of opportunities, attention to cultural diversity and intercultural education – in line with the above-mentioned Decree 150/2017.

Gitano students in schools in Catalonia: specification of the sample

A first approach to the subject allows us to specify the sample we work with. The fact that there are no official data (due to the personal data protection laws, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* 298 of the 14th of December; Departament de Treball, Afers Socials i Famílies, 2018) about the distribution of Gitano students in the Catalan (and Spanish) education system, contributes to defining this presence and the profile of the schools where we find these students. As we have indicated, this information was provided voluntarily by the interviewees and always, as with all the information obtained, guaranteeing anonymity and ethical treatment and handling of the results.

In detail, these students make up an average of 8.72% of the total⁸. However, their presence in schools varies. So, in 68.1% of schools the percentage of Gitano students is 5% or less, 13.8% have between 6% and 10%, 9.4% from 11% to 20% and 8.8% have more than 20% of Gitano students.

This image must be complemented with where they are enrolled. The existence of a double educational network in Catalonia differentiated by the ownership of the school (private and public) makes it relevant to indicate where these children are schooled. The data show (like other studies: Síndic de Greuges, 2016 and 2016a) that 89.4% of Gitano children are enrolled in publicly owned schools, while 10.6% of them are in private centres. Moreover, the latter have lower levels (the average percentage of Gitano students in publicly-owned schools is 9.54, while it is 1.88 in the private ones).

It was also intended to go in greater depth into the profile of the families. Again, given the impossibility of doing this any other way, it was decided to ask the interviewees about the socioeconomic and cultural profile of the families in the school. Although it is true that this was an approximation, the knowledge the interviewees have about the schools and the families allows us to consider this information very reliable. Gitano students are enrolled in schools where the socioeconomic and cultural profile of the families is medium or low (Tab. 1). In fact, a relation is observed between the presence of Gitano students/families and the socioeconomic and cultural level of the families. As shown below, both levels fall in proportion to the increase in the presence of this type of student and their families in the schools. This is related to the neighbourhoods where these families reside (as shown by Laparra, 2011, Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2018: despite the improvements that are observed, they are defined as impoverished with lower cultural levels) and the way the pupils are distributed among the schools, generally by the criterion of place of residence (see: Síndic de Greuges, 2016).

Table 1. Socioeconomic and cultural profile of the families in the school.

	Total	Up to 5% of Gitano students	From 6% to 20% of Gitano students	Over 20% of Gitano students
<i>Average socioeconomic level of the families in the school</i>				
High	4.41	4.81	4.57	0.50
Medium	42.97	49.46	33.31	15.92
Low	52.62	45.73	62.11	83.58
<i>Average cultural level of the families in the school</i>				
High	5.39	6.14	4.86	0.09
Medium	44.30	50.07	34.91	20.64
Low	50.32	43.79	60.23	79.27

Source: project *Diversidad cultural e igualdad de oportunidades en la escuela*; Recercaixa2015.

Gitano students and equal opportunities

One of the first results of the survey shows that the interviewees have the perception that inequality among students has grown over the last ten years (from 2007, when the economic crisis in Spain began, until 2017). Of those surveyed in the Recercaixa study, 29.4% responded that it was growing «a lot» and 45.6% «quite a lot», while 16.9% responded «a little» and 5% «not at all» (3.1% did not answer this question). More specifically, the profile of the students who they considered that «their opportunities in the education system have decreased» were the children from families in risk of social exclusion (51.9%)⁹, children of Gitano families (15.6%), students with special educational needs (11.3%) and the children of foreign families (3.8%), among other lesser responses.

Over this same period of time, according to 72.5%, of the interviewees, the financial resources dedicated by the educational administration to equaling the opportunities of the above-mentioned students with greater needs have decreased. For 18.1%, these resources have remained the same and they have improved for 6.9% (2.5% did not respond to the question). At the same time, their impression of the human resources available has followed the same dynamic. For 71.9% of the respondents, these have worsened, 18.1% state that they are the same and only 8.1% say that the situation has improved.

The above shows us an education system which, more than seeing opportunities increasing, has seen inequality growing and a reduction in the resources destined to correct this. More specifically, the policies implemented in Catalonia to equal opportunities in school for Gitano students have not evolved optimally either. In the views of our interviewees, these opportunities are valued as «excellent» by 5%, «good» by 41.3%, «bad» by 26.9% and «very bad» by 2.5% (Tab. 2). Translating these answers into values between 4 and 1 (with 4 being equivalent to «excellent» and 1 to «very bad»), we find that the average would be between «bad» and «good», that is, in a neutral point (Tab. 2). This average enables us to observe that these policies are valued more positively in schools with less than 5% of Gitano students in comparison with the rest where this positive perception falls (Tab. 2). In other words, the greater the presence of Gitano

students in the school, the more negatively the policies implemented to give equal educational opportunities to the Gitano students are valued.

Table 2. Evaluation of the policies implemented in Catalonia to equal the educational opportunities (in the school) of Gitano students.

	Total	Less than 5% of Gitano students	From 6% to 20% of Gitano students	Over 20% of Gitano students
Excellent	5.0	6.4	2.7	-
Good	41.3	45.0	32.4	35.7
Bad	26.9	24.8	32.4	28.6
Very bad	2.5	0.9	5.4	7.1
Don't know/no answer	24.4	22.9	27.0	28.6
Average	2.64	2.74	2.44	2.40
Typical deviation	0.66	0.62	0.70	0.66

Source: project *Diversidad cultural e igualdad de oportunidades en la escuela*; Recercaixa2015.

This is the framework where the main actions carried out with the aim of equalling opportunities among the students take place. In fact, a general question was asked about the action done in this sense. The main actions mentioned were: individualised attention (41.3%), giving grants and financial assistance (39.4%), making curricular changes (33.1%) and coordination between professionals within and external to the school (21.9%, generally social workers), among other responses that are presented in the following table. On differentiated by a greater or lesser presence of Gitano students in the school, we observe an interesting question. With a greater presence, the measures of financial help and coordination with external professionals (social workers, social educators, etc.) increase, while less mention is made of individualised attention or methodological and curricular changes. The difference is statistically significant (see Tab. 3) between the segment with over 20% of Gitano students where this type of curricular action and attention to the students is considerably reduced, and those that act to alleviate the family financial situation and coordinate with external professionals also increase significantly. This indicates that in practice in the schools, the actions are aimed more at socioeconomic aspects (in a compensatory line) than at educational aspects (more in the intercultural line). This can also be observed in two of the lesser responses also increased with the percentage of Gitano students in the school. These were combatting absenteeism and working with the surroundings (existing public services, associations, entities, etc., near the school with the aim of building a support network for educational community¹⁰).

Table 3. Main actions for equaling opportunities.

	Total	Up to 5% of Gitano students	From 6 to 20% of Gitano students	Over 20% of Gitano students
Grants and financial help	39.4	34.9	43.2	64.3
Facilitate payments for the families	5.6	3.7	8.1	14.3
Individualised attention	41.3	40.4	48.6	28.6
Methodological and curricular changes	33.1	30.3	45.9	21.4
Coordination with outside professionals	21.9	18.3	21.6	50.0
Redistribution of the staff	8.1	9.2	5.4	7.1
Working with the environment	7.5	5.5	8.1	21.4
Activities to involve the families	7.5	6.4	8.1	14.3
Information for families	5.0	4.6	5.4	7.1
Combating absenteeism	3.1	0.9	5.4	14.3
Other answers	3.8	4.6	2.7	-
They do nothing specific	7.5	9.2	5.4	-
Don't know/No answer	0.6	-	2.7	-

Source: project *Diversidad cultural e igualdad de oportunidades en la escuela*; Recercaixa2015.

Attention to cultural diversity and intercultural education

As indicated above, recognition of cultural diversity has increased in the education system in Catalonia, both at the level of discourse and, we hope, in practice. So, the survey asked about this at three levels: in the documentation of the education centre, the general actions regarding cultural diversity and intercultural coexistence in the school and, more specifically, the degree of incorporation of intercultural education, the culture and *Caló* language¹¹ in the school curriculum.

A first level of analysis of the responses the schools give to cultural diversity (in general) is the degree to which the school documents confirm that it is necessary to take this into consideration. Specifically, it was asked to what criteria about how to work on cultural diversity have been explicitly defined in the school's educational project (PEC)¹² and whether cultural diversity has been taken into consideration in the school management project (PDC), the school's norms of organisation and working (NOFC), and in the general programming of the course. The table 4 shows the answers given for each of the documents, and it can be deduced that it is generally common to take cultural diversity into account «quite a lot» or «a lot». Looking at the average¹³, this would be between the two mentioned responses, although closer to the former.

In greater detail, when we differentiate according to a greater or lesser presence of Gitano students in a school, it is observed that when this is less than 5%, the degree of concretion or consideration of cultural diversity in the documents is lower than when this percentage is exceeded. In other words, the higher the presence, the more recognition we can observe, this being very close (although not equal to, but without statistically

significant differences) to the scores awarded when we differentiate between those with between 6% and 20% and those with over 20%. Moreover, it must be noted that the response is similar for the different documents, which indicates that when the school considers that cultural diversity has to be taken into consideration, this features in all the documentation and that this varies with the greater or lesser presence of Gitano students in the school. In fact, this coincides with the guidelines from the educational administration of the Generalitat de Catalunya that indicate that, whether or not they have cultural diversity in the classroom, all schools must take into account that the general aim must be to prepare students to live in a culturally diverse society (for further information, see Direcció General d'Atenció a la Família i Comunitat Educativa, 2018, 2018a).

Table 4. Degree to which the school documentation...

Degree to which it ...	TOTAL	Gitano students		
		Less than 5 %	From 6 to 20 %	Over 20 %
.... has established criteria for working on cultural diversity in the PEC.				
A lot	31.9	25.7	45.9	42.9
Quite a lot	53.8	58.7	40.5	50.0
Little	11.9	13.8	8.1	7.1
None	0.6	-	2.7	-
Don't know/No answer	1.9	1.8	2.7	-
Average	3.19	3.12	3.33	3.36
Typical deviation	0.66	0.63	0.76	0.61
.... taken cultural diversity into account in the school management project (PDC).				
A lot	37.5	30.3	54.1	50.0
Quite a lot	48.1	56.0	32.4	28.6
Little	12.5	13.8	8.1	14.3
None	0.6	-	2.7	-
Don't know/No answer	1.3	-	2.7	7.1
Average	3.24	3.17	3.42	3.38
Typical deviation	0.69	0.65	0.77	0.74
.. taken cultural diversity into account in the norms for the organisation and working of the school (NOFC).				
A lot	31.9	25.7	48.6	35.7
Quite a lot	48.8	56.0	27.0	50.0
Little	15.6	16.5	13.5	14.3
None	1.3	0.9	2.7	-
Don't know/No answer	2.5	0.9	8.1	-
Average	3.14	3.07	3.32	3.21
Typical deviation	0.72	0.68	0.84	0.67
... taken cultural diversity into account in the general programming of the course (2016-17).				
A lot	31.9	23.9	51.4	42.9
Quite a lot	45.6	49.5	37.8	35.7
Little	13.1	17.4	2.7	7.1
None	1.3	0.9	2.7	-
Don't know/No answer	8.1	8.3	5.4	14.3
Average	3.18	3.05	3.46	3.42
Typical deviation	0.72	0.70	0.70	0.64

Source: project *Diversidad cultural e igualdad de oportunidades en la escuela*; Recercaixa2015.

More specifically, when asked whether they work on cultural diversity in the curriculum, the responses indicate that a large proportion of schools do so (93.2%). However, on differentiating these according to the presence of Gitano students, again this was not seen to be an important variable. In fact, in the schools with over 20% Gitano pupils, this response fell to 85.7%, while among those with 6% to 20%, it was 97.3% and those that have 5% or less, it was 93.1%.

In greater detail, where is cultural diversity taken into account and worked on¹⁴? Among those who do so, remember that while 93.2% say they do this, a high percentage do not know or do not answer this question (20.1%) which indicates that not so many consider and work on it. However, despite this, we believe that is what it is like. Among the rest, 38.6% work on it transversally. In other words, it affects different subjects, activities, etc., done in the school. Other answers indicate that they do so in such subjects as social environment (24.8%), tutorials with the pupils (18.9%), culture and values (19.1%), religion (5.9%) and projects (4.3%), and other less frequent responses, such as artistic education (1%), music (0.6%) and physical education (0.4%). Going deeper into the data, while the schools with a greater proportion of Gitano children were those that worked least on cultural diversity in the curriculum, they were also the ones that put «no answer» when they claim to have done so (33.3% answered «don't know/no answer»). The range of answers they gave was also very limited with a clear dominance of those who claim to do it transversally (41.7%). This leads us to believe that, as we have defended, it is not a priority for these schools to work on this theme from a cultural, linguistic or identity point of view. Instead of this, they prioritise the socioeconomic aspect or do so another way, as we shall see, by incorporating more than the rest, the class of Gitano culture, although this continues to be a very minority option. In other words, if they include it, they do so specifically as an extra-scholar activity in the school while it is still little or not at all present in the school curriculum.

And to what extent is the *Caló* language and Gitano culture incorporated in schools in Catalonia? The answer is that both are not very present. Only 0.6% (in other words, a single school) offer *Caló* language classes and 3.1% give classes of Gitano culture (a total of 5 schools), but always as an extra-scholar activity in the school. In this case, we observe that the school that gives *Caló* language classes has a low presence of Gitano students (it is among those with 5% or less). Regarding culture, as the presence rises, we also observe an increase in classes of Gitano culture (this being 0.6% in schools with up to 5%, 2.7% in those from 6% to 20% and 14.3% in schools with a presence of Gitano students greater than 20%).

Lastly, they were asked to what «degree the school worked on intercultural education to favour future social cohesion» in line with the political discourse of the educational administration. This question had a closed response scale with 36.9% answering that «a lot» of work was done in this direction and 53.1% «quite a lot». 7.5% answered «little» and 1.3% «none» (the average, following the criteria cited above, is 3.27, in other words, greater than the «quite a lot» response). However, this was found more in the schools with a higher presence of Gitano students (an average of 3.23 in schools with up to 5% of Gitano students, 3.32 in those with between 6% and 20% and 3.43 in those with over 20%). This indicates that the idea still persists that it is for social cohesion important to work on intercultural education for social cohesion in the schools. This is in line with the results obtained when asking our interviewees about the documentation of the school.

Discussion and conclusions

As we have presented, a greater involvement of the Gypsy/Roma and Travellers in the school depends on themselves (cultural factors, attitudes, expectations...) but also on the school institution that has generally not had to recognise cultural minorities and incorporate them into its everyday dynamic and the curriculum. The schooling of generations has been conditioned by the little recognition and presence of their culture and identity in the school. This failure to incorporate this by the institutional educational context contributes to students feeling isolated and alienated (Derrington and Kendal, 2008; Szelei, Tinoca and Pinho, 2019). Valuing their culture and identity (O'Hanton, 2010), flexibilising the curriculum (O'Hanton, 2010), incorporating their language, history and culture (Bhopal and Myers, 2009) and involving and generating links of trust with the families (Bhopal, 2004; Flecha and Soler, 2013; Álvarez, Parra and Gamella, 2018) and the community (Bhopal and Myers, 2009; Matras, Howley and Jones, 2020) are essential to developing any policy or programme for the inclusion of the Gitano students in the schools. In fact, the cultural dimension is important, and the coordinated use of intra-scholar and extra-scholar actions improves the educational opportunities of the Gypsies, enhances community relations and reduces interethnic conflicts in the school (Myers and Bhopal, 2009).

In the case of Catalonia, the education authorities aim to promote the Gitano culture as part of Catalan culture, raising awareness of its values and its contribution to the culture of Catalonia in the belief that it is necessary to make the culture of the Gitanos in general, and its values in particular, more visible within the curriculum and life of the school. This will have a positive impact on improving the educational success and social and occupational promotion of the young generations of Gitanos (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014; Departament de Treball, Afers Socials i Famílies, 2018).

Regarding recognising and valuing cultural diversity, the results of our survey show a situation that can also be improved and that is, in part, still contradictory. On one hand, the discourse (that it is necessary to consider cultural diversity, bear in mind cultural minorities, incorporate intercultural education) seems to have taken root in primary schools (ages from 6 to 12). The documents that define the line of work, running, organisation, general programming, etc., generally incorporate the necessity (and obligation) to keep in mind and work on the fact that society is culturally diverse and that students must prepare for this. The interviewees also consider that working on is of importance for future social cohesion.

However, when we focus on practices in the schools, we can conclude that although action is taken,¹⁵ it is done not so much in line with greater recognition by the institution of the Gitano culture and identity (individualised attention, methodological changes in the curriculum, incorporation of *Caló* or aspects of Gitano culture) but more in the compensatory line (grants and help, coordination with outside professionals and the surroundings). The intercultural paradigm has penetrated at the discursive level although in practice, the compensatory paradigm still has a very relevant weight (see also Bereményi, 2011).

As mentioned, the school should make changes to recognise the Gitanos and reduce their alienation (Derrington and Kendal, 2008), which would involve a dialogue with the Roma community (Salgado-Orellana, Berrocal and Sánchez-Nuñez, 2019; Fernández Enguita, 2004) and listening to the voice of Gitano students (Szelei, Tinoca and Pinto, 2019) and their families. However, despite the dominant discourses of inclusion and interculturality and the existence of a plan for the Gitano population that gives great relevance to education (although this plan has yet to be updated given that it expired in

2020; see: Departament de Treball, Afers Socials i Famílies, 2018) the presence of the Gitano culture in the Catalan education system is still minimal. Whether this is due to resistance from the schools (that include it in the documents but do not develop it fully) or the educational administrations who do not pressure the schools to take it further, in Catalonia (a society that has been characterised by its recognition of cultural diversity (Direcció General d'Atenció a la Família i Comunitat Educativa, 2018, 2018a) coherent with the demands for recognition of its own within Spain) has yet to overcome the dominant link between the presence of Gitano students/families in the school and the necessity for compensation. The challenge, as in other contexts, is to maximise full inclusion. Together with the measures necessary to equalise opportunities, the knowledge, visibility and appreciation of minority cultures in the centre has to be enhanced if the aim is for the minorities to perceive the school as theirs.

Notes

¹ Following Parra, Álvarez & Gamella (2017) among others, we use the term *Gitano* as this is what is commonly used by the members of this minority in Spain to refer to themselves both in public and private. Of course, when we refer to other authors and their work, we maintain the terminology they use.

² The project has been financed through the Recercaixa programme (specifically the project *Diversidad cultural e igualdad de oportunidades en la escuela*; call Recercaixa2015) and State Programme for R+D+i Oriented to the Challenges of Society (Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, resolution CSO2017-84872-R).

³ For more details about the attitudes of teachers towards Gitano pupils, see: Bhopal (2011); Bereményi (2011); Makarova, Gilde and Birman (2019); Matras, Howley and Jones (2020).

⁴ A presentation of compensation in education in Spain can be found at: Garreta (2003a; 2006); Rambla and Bonal (2007); Tarabini (2015); Rujas (2020).

⁵ This document presents the Spanish strategy regarding the Gitano population from 2012 to 2020 and in the specific case of education, it presents the following general targets: increase the number of Gitano pupils in pre-school education, universalise schooling and increase the academic success of Gitanos in primary education, raise the number completing compulsory secondary education and the rate of academic success of Gitano students in this stage, and increase the educational level of the adult Gitano population.

⁶ More information in: <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/arees-actuacio/centres-serveis-educatius/projectes-educatius/comunitat-educativa-entorn/promocio-escolar/> (consulted on the 15/04/21).

⁷ Catalan autonomous administration with power over education.

⁸ Remember that the analysis focusses on the schools that have this kind of students (n = 160), as that over all the schools where the survey was carried out (n = 545), the average percentage of Gitano students was 2.56%.

⁹ This answer rose in parallel with the number of Gitano children in the interviewees' schools. It was 48.6% when this presence was 5% or less, 54.1% when it was between 6% and 20% rising to 71.4% when the number was above 20%. Remember that they tend to be enrolled in schools with lower socioeconomic levels.

¹⁰ For more details, consult: http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/comunitat/entorn_pee/ (consulted on the 15/04/21).

¹¹ Name given to the language of the Gitanos in Spain. For more details, see Gamella, Fernández and Adiego (2015).

¹² The document that defines how the school works: the guidelines that differentiate it from other centres, actions for adaptation to the surroundings, lines of attention to diversity, the medium-term targets, and breakdown of the main lines of organisation that are detailed in the curricular project, etc.

¹³ Compiled by attributing a value of 4 to the response «a lot» with, 3 to «quite a lot», «little» with 2 and «none» for 1.

¹⁴ It should be recalled that the Catalan education administration aims to enhance the visibility of Gitano culture and values in the school curriculum and in the daily life of the school.

¹⁵ However, if we look back and reread texts from the end of the 1990s or the early 2000s, the evolution can be seen as positive although improvable and slow (see, Palaudàrias, 1998; Garreta, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2014).

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