

The Controversy about Education for Citizenship: The Contested Limits of Tolerance in Spain

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Education is of crucial importance to ensure social cohesion and progress in a given society. Even if the content of citizenship education has been a matter of debate in several European countries, it has taken a singular development in Spain. The important controversy that has been triggered by its introduction in secondary school curriculum is a matter of interrogation: Why did Spain react differently than other European countries? The argument put forward in this article is that education for citizenship reveals the impossibility for Spain to provide a stabilised and consensual definition of national values and identity, precisely because the country is characterised by unresolved questions about its territorial and national diversity, and exemplifies multiple diversity challenges. After providing a European contextualisation of questions of religious and values teaching in Spain, we present a chronology of the controversy and then analyse the public debate in terms of limits to tolerance. We will show that the question of the shared public values highlighted by this conflict is still unsolved and remain non-consensual in the Spanish society.

Introduction

Education is of crucial importance to ensure social cohesion and progress in a given society. Many scholars have shown how the design of the educational system and the content of the curriculum are of a tremendous importance to build what Anderson called the «imagined communities» (Anderson 1991) and in the diffusion and maintenance of national identity. Since the nineties, the growing linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the Spanish society coming from a raise in foreign immigration rates is challenging the national education system.

Within this framework, Education for citizenship (EfC) has been subject of a growing attention from policy-makers and scholars in many European countries (United-Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Norway). Various reasons to explain this growing interest have been put forward. Scholars linked it to changing patterns of governance in the nation-States and to the globalization process (Keating *et al.* 2009). Others argue that the perception of a decline in

the adhesion of children to liberal-democratic values in the post-September 11th context, the increase in immigration rates and the growing cultural diversity of societies have contributed to bring this question on the political agenda (Naval *et al.* 2002). As in the majority of Western countries, citizenship education has been debated in Spain since the beginning of 2000s (Eurydice 2005). However the implementation of the subject sparked one of the most important controversies the country experienced in relation to education over the last ten years.

The creation in 2006 of a new subject named Education for citizenship and Human rights (*Educacion para la ciudadanía y los derechos humanos*) generated a social and political debate more than a debate about education and curriculum. Definitions of Spanish identity was particularly at stake, and the controversy functioned again as a 'mirror effect' regarding how the country conceives itself as a diverse society (Zapata-Barrero 2010). In this debate, the place of religion and more specifically the relation between the Catholic Church and the State was discussed but remained largely unsolved.

Even if the content of citizenship education has been a matter of debate in several European countries (Kaltsounis 1999, Davies *et al.* 2005, Doppen 2010, Niens and McIlrath 2010, Marshall 2011) and recalls debates in Australia (McIntyre and Simpson 2009) and about History in the United-States (Nash *et al.* 1997), it has taken a singular development in Spain. The huge controversy that has been triggered by its introduction in the curriculum is a matter of interrogation: Why did Spain react differently to the implementation of citizenship education driven by European institutions than other European countries? To which extent does that account for the impossibility for the country to debate questions of national identity and conditions its management of social and cultural diversity?

The argument put forward in this article is that education for citizenship reveals the impossibility for Spain to provide a stabilised and consensual definition of national values and identity, still unresolved questions in this country characterised by «multiple diversities» (Zapata-Barrero 2013). Two frameworks of diversity interact in Spain: an old framework arising from the democratic transition, in which religion and languages are the only categories of diversity, and a new one due to immigration. While education for citizenship had been created in view to acknowledge the new cultural diversity brought by immigrants in the country, it triggered debates about the tolerance of all kind of values and practices associated with socially, nationally and culturally diverse identities in the Spanish society. On a conceptual level, the controversy shows that values associated to liberal-democratic societies, such as tolerance, are a matter of competing boundary-drawing processes to define what can be accepted or not in the society. Social and cultural plural-

ism of European societies shows that supposedly consensual and universalistic moral values are in reality strategic stakes for competing ideas and interests in society.

In order to understand and categorize the controversy that arose from the conception and implementation of Education for citizenship¹, we carried out an analysis of the public discourses which appeared in newspapers – 164 pieces of articles in 3 national centre-left and centre-right wing newspapers between 2004 and 2012 – as well as administrative and civic organisations materials and essays. In addition, we conducted seven semi structured interviews with prominent actors who intervened in the public debate during the first semester of 2011. This material allowed to reconstruct the dynamics of the contention on the one hand and, on the other, to analyse the discursive frames of the different parties.

We articulate our argument as follows: First, we provide a European contextualisation of questions of religious and values teaching in Spain, in order to enlighten the causes of such contention. Then, we present a chronology of the controversy, from its brewing to its last developments. This is followed by an analysis of the rationales in terms of tolerance, which have appeared. We show that most of the issues highlighted by this conflict, and especially questions of what is tolerable and what values should be taught to children at school, are still unsolved and remain non-consensual questions in the society. We thus conclude by highlighting the challenges that poses for Spain. It also invites to consider lines of tolerance and national identity as permanent source of negotiation and contention.

From a European recommendation to a Spanish social debate

The creation of the new subject has been decided after long years of debate about the necessity to introduce the teaching of civic and public values to children at school. However, decisive moves came from supranational organisations and in particular the Council of Europe. This institution has promoted Education for citizenship as a core element in the curriculum of European children. In 1997 the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Coun-

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cil of Europe issued a declaration calling on the inclusion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions. Between 2002 and 2005, various recommendations were issued by the Council of Europe all focusing on the implementation of citizenship education in the member States. The initiative of the Council of Europe to declare the year 2005 ‘European Year of Citizenship through Education’ has been an opportunity to organise many events and debates. It strengthened the collectives who had been advocating for the development of citizenship education. The Spanish Education Law prepared by the newly elected socialist government in 2004 represented a good opportunity to assume international recommendations in favour of education for democratic citizenship.

The influence of Europe has been decisive in the creation of Education for Citizenship. Yet, Spain had already experiences of moral values teaching. Several subjects were designed for such purpose over time. There are of course many differences between the place of moral and values at school during the Franco dictatorship and after the democratic transition but both parties referred largely to these previous experiences during the conflict about the creation of Education for citizenship.

During the Francoist era, moral education was one pillar of the curriculum at all stages of school (Dietz 2007). Ethics was delivered through compulsory catholic religion. Catholicism was not only one of the two pillars of the regime along with patriotism and national unity. It was also the cornerstone of the moral formation of children at school. Until 1970, another subject was entitled ‘Formation of the National Spirit’ (*Formación del Espíritu Nacional*) and aimed at delivering the doctrine of Franco’s national movement, especially Spanish nationalism, corporatism, deference to the regime and its leader. The 1970 law which reformed the education system suppressed this course. But it remains in the memory of large generations of people, especially those born before 1961.

During the democratic transition (1975-1982), a subject named ‘Living together in democracy’ (*Convivencia en democracia*) tried to oppose dictatorship’s moral education. It was integrated afterwards in History subject. In 1990, the LOGSE created the concept of ‘transversal subjects’ which were not taught during specific hours but had to be integrated in all other subjects and were considered as of crucial importance for the curriculum. Civic education and values such as gender equality, respect for diversity and multiculturalism were considered as transversal subjects (Gonzales-Lucini 1993). The 2002 LOCE took up the idea of transversal subjects and added a focus on the need to deliver the ‘culture of effort’ to students. The introduction of transversal values in the curriculum had already been advocated by some education organisations. As the president of the ‘Spanish league for education and popular culture’ (*Liga es-*

pañola de la educación y de la cultura popular or LEECP) recalls, this was considered as a first victory. Nevertheless, the mainstreaming of these core transversal subjects was merely perceivable and this policy was not considered a success. Faced with this situation, social organisations start promoting the creation of a full subject aiming at teaching citizenship and liberal democratic values.

The context of Spain at the beginning of 2000s give strength to those who advocate for the democratic and human rights values teaching at school. The rooting of democracy, the desire to further the democratic culture of children, globalisation and, above all, the desire to take into account transformations of the Spanish society since the 1990s, especially the new diversity introduced by foreign immigration, create the conditions for the development of citizenship and human rights education. In 2004, the newly elected government led by Zapatero decides to include a subject of 'Education for Citizenship and Human Rights' (*Educación para la Ciudadanía y los Derechos Humanos*) in secondary school curriculum, as part of an education law presented by the Minister of Education San Segundo. But this creation unleashed an important controversy on education, common identity and values.

Aspects of the debates referred directly to educational matters, such as the respective roles that school, State and the families must have in regards to the education of children and especially the transmission of ethics and human rights values. Nevertheless, the controversy raises mainly political and ideological issues for society as a whole, about collective identifications and territorial, social, cultural, sexual, religious and ethnic multiple diversities in the country².

The dynamics of the controversy about Education for Citizenship (2004-2013)

The creation of EfC, the 'Education for Citizenship and Human Rights', has confronted two clear sides. On the one hand, people who put forward values of public ethics and secularism and defended that there are minimal constitutional values that have to be taught to children, as tolerance to diversity and to sexual, religious or cultural differences, democratic values and human rights. Among them are the instigators of the Law, who belonged mainly to the socialist party (PSOE) circles and to organizations of the civil society in favour of secularism. On the other hand, entities have rejected the new

² There were other matters of confrontation between the Church and the State at the same period on questions relative to gender and homosexuality. Zapatero's first government (2004-2008) legalised the same-sex marriage and raised the condemnation of anti-homosexual speech.

subject arguing that it goes beyond the duty of the State to teach values to children, which can be contrary to the personal beliefs of their families. The most actives were members of the Catholic Church hierarchy and Catholic organisations, which could rely on the support of an important part of the conservative People's Party (PP) representatives. A retrospective review on years of public debate since 2004 reveals the complexity of this matter, as for the variety of players involved as for the twists and turns at different stages of the confrontation.

This section presents the controversy about Education for citizenship, from the conception of the law to its suppression. We divide the controversy into three stages: the stage of discussion and design (2004-2006), the implementation during which the protest takes place in Autonomous Communities and Courts (2006-2009), and the definitive abandon of the subject by the newly elected government of the People's Party (2011-2013).

The stage of discussion and design: Cleavages-building process about the creation of Education for Citizenship (2004-2006)

The creation of a subject of Citizenship education was part of the platform of the newly elected government in March 2004. Civic organisations and in particular the secular movement close to the PSOE have advocated for such creation for years.

During the process of elaboration of the future Organic Law on Education (LOE) in 2004, the Ministry of Education invited determined sectors of the civil society dedicated to education issues to take part to an *ad hoc* group for discussing and designing the new subject. Both parties participate to these meetings. On the one hand, we find the future promoters of EfC, such as the CIVES Foundation, sister organization of the *Liga española por la educación*, professors of Carlos III University in Madrid, the trade union UGT and its sister organization the Foundation Lorenzo Luzuriaga. On the other hand, representatives of organisations which will be leading the protests against EfC, such as members of Catholic Schools organisation (*Escuelas católicas-FERE-CECA*) or the Catholic parents' organisation (CONCAPA) also participate to the commission. This ad-hoc group designed roughly what will be the future subject and also served to strengthen the networks of the advocates for EfC.

At the end of 2004, the Ministry of Education published a document named 'A quality education for all' (*Una educación de calidad para todos*) in which it outlined, among other measures, the key features of a new subject named 'Education for citizenship' (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia 2004). The document was addressed to all educational organisations and underlined the

importance of teaching values and citizenship at school. It argued that immigration has been positive in many matters but that «it has introduced in the distinct social institutions and at school a range of very diverse beliefs, customs and practices of socialization, sometimes contradictory and not only occasionally opposed to widely accepted democratic principles of our society». It stated that values education implemented as a transversal subject at school resulted insufficient and proposed to create a dedicated area.

Among the 300 contributions the Ministry received between October 2004 and March 2005, a report contributed decisively to design the content of Education for citizenship. It was written by CIVES in collaboration with the chair on 'Secularism and Public liberties' (*Laicidad y Libertades Públicas*) Fernando de los Ríos of the University Carlos III in Madrid, created in 2004 and chaired by the Professor Dionisio Llamazares. The report was made public and both institutions acquired a great role in shaping the reform. The document proposed a full course of Education for citizenship, taught at every grade and delivering a general knowledge on public institutions, values and knowledge based on the Human Rights and liberal democratic values. Referring to Habermas' concept, the document stated that the course had to deliver and develop the 'constitutional patriotism' of the young and a 'common heritage of values' based on the liberal-democratic State (Comunidad Escolar 2005).

While this proposal is welcomed positively by the Ministry, it also raised many oppositions. At this stage, even leftist and radical left organisations criticised the initiative. First, this project was criticized for burying the 'transversal subject' strategy. Organisations of the Left and especially education unions such as the main education federation of the *Comisiones Obreras* (FE-CCOO), criticized that the creation of EfC was in fact a way to abandon the transmission of values in other parts of the curriculum. In reason of this opposition, the Education council of the State, the major consultative body on Education, rejected the project of EfC in February 2005. In April though, the majority of the Council changed and backed this time the creation of EfC as a new dedicated area. Other leftist organisations rejected EfC for presenting liberal-democracy as the most desirable form of government or for spreading human rights principles at the same time it supports capitalism, individualism and market economy (*El otro País*, July 2007).

But the major resistances come from the catholic organisations who interpret this initiative as an attempt from the secular movement to control the content of the values taught to students at school. The catholic organisations also complained about the closure of the debate despite an apparent deliberative process. The opposition thus concentrated on religious matters. First, the project planned to make religion optional and non evaluable, and, second, EfC was said to be a way to depreciate religion and to deliver to children

secular ideology and values contrary to Catholicism. In February 2005, the Catholic confederation of parents (CONCAPA) decided to leave the *ad hoc* meetings and the confederation of private-schools CECE refuses to take part to it. However, the sector of catholic organisations is divided and the major organisation of catholic private-schools (*Federación Española de Religiosos de Enseñanza* or FERE-CECA) keep participating to all negotiations.

Despite this opposition and despite the attempts of the Ministry of Education to negotiate the Law with these opponents, the process of elaboration of the LOE follows and leads to its adoption in December 2005 with the creation of the subject Education for Citizenship but without the support of the main parliamentary opposition, the People's Party, which had rallied the arguments developed by the Catholic hierarchy.

The stage of implementation: Escalation of the conflict at the level of territorial administrations and in Courts (2006-2009)

Autonomous communities are in charge of an important part of the educational policies in Spain. They thus have had a leading role in the controversy. When, at the end of 2006, complementary texts fix the hours and school-grades to which the subject will be imparted, Autonomous Communities are given a large autonomy to decide on the content and organization of the subject. In September 2007, only half of the Autonomous Communities – Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Cantabria, Catalonia, Extremadura and Navarre – decide to implement EfC while the other half postponed it with various reasons.

Autonomous Communities which implemented the subject, ruled in majority by left-wing governments, were faced by a new social protest. Catholic organisations and the Church launched a movement of 'conscientious objection' asking to the families to manifest their opposition to EfC and withdraw their children from school. The sector of the society against the new subject was large: the initial petition launched by CONCAPA received more than 3 million signatures. Parents and family organisations and the 'Association of professionals of Ethics'³ organized in a very active platform disseminating initiatives of 'conscientious objection' and compile thousands of demands made by the families to the Autonomous Communities. Along with these or-

³ This last one was certainly the most active in providing legal tools to the families: manuals, support to formal accusations to the Autonomous Communities and in front of the European court of fundamental rights (see in particular: Profesionales por la Ética, 2006).

ganisations, prominent bishops appealed to disobey the law. The archbishop of Granada, Javier Martínez, appealed to ‘conscientious objection’ and ‘civil disobedience’ to EfC in November 2006. He denounced the ‘real invasion of the fundamental right of parents’ and the ‘terrible threat’ to the freedom to education (*El Mundo*, 18 November, 2006). This first statement from a high representative of the catholic hierarchy made a commotion at political and social levels.

The civil society took the lead in the protests against the Education for Citizenship. Yet Autonomous Communities ruled by the People’s Party also obstructed the implementation by different means. They stated to delay the application of the new subject to the year 2008-2009. It was meant to wait for after the general elections of March 2008, counting on a victory of the PP who promised to suppress EfC in case of victory. The re-election of a socialist government ran counter these expectations however and weakened the possibility to politicize the issue for the People’s party afterwards.

Despite that, the Autonomous Communities of Madrid, Castile-Leon, La Rioja, Murcia and Valence tried to place a hindrance to the normal implementation of the law. They modified the content of the subject in order to erase the ‘controversial’ aspects on gender equality and different models of families. Madrid’s government showed its support to the ‘objectors’ and announced in 2008 that the Autonomous Communities would organise alternative courses for the students who object EfC. It did not reply to the warnings of the Ministry of Education until the Supreme Court of the State declared illegal the movement of conscientious objection. The government of Murcia equally accepted objections and stated that the objectors wouldn’t have to attend courses of EfC. As for the government of the Valencian Community, it adopted the same position admitting conscientious objection, and also decided that EfC would be delivered in English.

Faced with the denial of Autonomous Communities to accept conscientious objections, the oponents to Education for Citizenship change their strategies and present complaints to the Autonomic Courts of Justice and to the ECHR. They alleged that EfC was violating their fundamental rights and «freedom of ideology, religion and denomination» (Spanish Constitution, Art.16.1). At first, the sentences pronounced by the Autonomous Courts added more confusion to the debate. On the one side, the Superior Court of Justice of Asturias stated that EfC was perfectly constitutional and did not hurt the rights of parents and children while the Superior Court of Justice of Catalonia simply stated that there was no such thing as the right to conscientious objection. Conversely, the Superior Courts of Justice of Andalusia and Rioja recognized the right to object EfC if parents felt that it was contrary to their beliefs. This led finally to the appeal to the Supreme Court to decide on the consti-

tutionality of Education for Citizenship and of the objection. The resolution of the Supreme Court illegalized the movement of conscientious objection in 2009 and weakened definitely the movement. But the Supreme Court also underlined that the content of classes could not damage the personal beliefs of parents which satisfied also the opponents.

Despite the protests, the reelection of a socialist majority during the 2008 general elections and the sentence of the Supreme Court illegalizing the objection to EfC deeply weakened the political opposition. Nevertheless, the leader of PP stated in March 2011 that his party would suppress the course in case of victory at the general elections in November 2011.

The stage of abandon: The case of Education for Citizenship re-opened (2011-2013)

While the controversy on EfC seemed to be settled by the legal decision and disappeared from the public debate, the success of the People's party at November 2011 elections changed the situation once again. Even if the suppression of EfC was part of the People's party's platform, it did not seem that the new government was willing to really suppress citizenship education. But during summer 2012, the Minister of Education passed a royal decree changing the content of the subject, suppressing in particular the content on sexuality, new types of families, and on fighting racist, xenophobic and sexual prejudices. He announced that civic education would be maintained during two years in secondary schools under the name of 'Civic and constitutional education'. The 5 December 2012, a draft of the Education law in project suppressed outright Citizenship education. In addition, it created a compulsory subject alternative to Religion, satisfying a long-standing claim of the Catholic Church. There is a consensus in considering that the law was a token to the Catholic Church and catholic social sectors. Some Autonomous Communities such as Andalusia announced that they would use their right to fix 35% of the content of a subject to reintroduce the 'controversial' topics on sexuality and families, gender roles and equality or anti-racism. In addition, fifty organizations including parents' organization, Amnesty International or Oxfam wrote a public manifesto to defend EfC in January 2013, addressed to the Council of Europe. However, the suppression of the subject in the new Law did not reopen a conflict. The suppression being part of a wider legal change including the status of religion and the teaching in national language, EfC was pushed into the background of the contention of the new policy.

The debate about EfC has confronted mainly two coalitions: people advocating for a new ethical education of children in matters of citizenship,

human rights and respect to diversity, and people who saw the principle and the content of the subject as an intolerable invasion of families' – and private – prerogatives on education. This opposition overlaps the traditional right-wing / left-wing cleavage in Spain even if part of right-wing representatives and of the Church did not actively oppose EfC⁴. We will see that if the debate did not focus directly on the tolerance to diversity, both dimensions are indeed inter-related.

Teaching tolerance or teaching ideology? What Education for citizenship's debates reveal for the Spanish society

The main cleavages between the supporters and the opponents of EfC put into question issues of tolerance, acceptance and in general the shared core values of the Spanish society. The debates about the creation of EfC generally revolve around a series of issues. Some of them relate to education, such as: Is the creation of such a course necessary? Is it better teaching values as a transversal subject or as a specific subject? Is it the role of the school to teach values to children – and to dedicate a full subject to it – or should it be the responsibility of parents? Said differently, is the transmission of values a public or a private matter? These questions address mainly the principle of Citizenship education at school. Yet, another series of questions address primarily the content of the subject and content the values and liberal-democratic principles that are taught to the children. It refers particularly to the recognition of the multiple diversity of the Spanish society, such as multiculturalism, gender and sexual diversities and new models of families. We will analyse both lines of argument, on the principle and on the content, although they are generally associated in the claims and rationales about EfC.

Debates about the principle of creation of EfC are much more open than the other. It means that even strong supporters of EfC may express a preference for another type of subject or for another way to teach tolerance and respect to diversity. The majority of our interlocutors, in favour of against the introduction of the new subject, underlined that they were in favour of a transversal subject, which would be introduced in all classes and in the school project. As regards to the curriculum, others underline the need to provide a non-confessionnal religion subject that would be mandatory for all students. It

⁴ There has been also a 'left-wing' discourse against EfC, which libertarians and other revolutionary organizations saw also as a way for the state to indoctrinate children in favour of the liberal-democratic system.

is perceived as part of the goal pursued by Education for Citizenship. As one of the interviewees points out,

you cannot teach children to be good citizens or to understand tolerance [...] if you don't explain that the Muslim at your side is a perfectly normal person. The only thing is that he believes in other things (interview 3).

The main opposition in this respect, resides in the perception of the respective roles of the school and the families. For the opponents to EfC, teaching public values at school is perceived as a totalitarian enterprise guided by the State. As the president of CONCAPA underlines, EfC is seen as a clear intrusion into families' prerogatives on their children's education. He explains that the opponents to EfC:

want humans to be free, independent, educated in the most important subjects as morality and ethics by the families, and that schools be an auxiliary, which helps to the formation. As a consequence [...] we want to task the teachers with educating our children in what we cannot do ourselves [...] I do not educate my child for the State; I educate my child to be a good person [...] [Conscientious objection's purpose] was not to attend these classes because the content was contrary to the principles of the families (interview 2).

On the contrary, those who supported the reform criticizes this rationale and position of the Catholic organisations:

Firstly, they can't deny the legitimacy of the decision taken by the Parliament, even if it goes against their beliefs. Because, secondly, the only moral which is worth taking into account in that matter is the public moral [...] They live within a democratic system, which has its own rules (interview 3).

The idea that private ethics is superior to public ethics, and that school must not educate the children in values, is seen as a legal fault and an anti-democratic statement by the supporters of the law. This highlights how the discursive opposition between the families and the State, when it comes to education, is structuring the debate. These debates brought to light important cleavages in the Spanish society about the respective places of the State, the Church and the families when it comes to determine the values generally accepted, and when it comes to determine which statements and practices can be tolerated or not.

The debate about the content of the course was much more heated, as several points have been subject to criticism. This concerns the definition of the

shared values of the Spanish society (liberal-democratic values, human rights or constitutional values) and above all the inclusion or not of non-consensual matters such as gender theory, models of families or sexuality. The content referring to multiculturalism and religious diversity as such is not the major matter of controversy for the opponents. But the way to connect tolerance and immigration is questioned. Firstly, they underline that tolerance to diversity is just a false argument to create EfC. Plus, they feel that tolerance should be limited and that the State, and especially the socialist government, has been too lax in this sense. As the president of CONCAPA insisted:

In this respect, we should not mistake tolerance with a cession of rights. I think that one side of the debate is whether tolerance has to admit all the cultural, religious – and other – diversity brought by immigrants [...] We cannot be fighting to obtain women's liberation and allow women to wear burqa. This is not tolerance, this is a cession of rights we have fought during generations to obtain [...] This is mistaking weakness for tolerance (interview 2).

This highlights the connexion between the debates on the content of EfC and tolerance boundaries drawing activities. School appears to be a sensitive institution that reflects and amplifies social and political cleavages. Sources of cultural and social diversity in the society are deemed challenging values and representations presented as intrinsically Spanish or consensual among the in-group. But precisely, the controversy shows that the definition of what characterises the in-group culture and values is a question in debate. One main rhetorical rationale is then setting a classical opposition between the in-group and the out-group cultures. It presents the latter as an aggression that would lead to the elimination of the former if tolerated, as exemplified by the following quote:

I think that here, in every houses, yours or mine, we have invited hosts and these hosts have to respect minimal norms of positive coexistence. I understand that there is this very manichean discourse about plurality, about tolerance, and we have to be careful because it can be confusing. The thing is to which extent we want [...] we will abandon our very cultural essence, for which we have fought during centuries, in exchange for a tolerance which brings nothing to the humanity (interview 2).

In that sense, diversity is presented as something impossible to achieve and is not considered as a positive feature of a society. Cultural unity remains the way to live together in society. On the contrary, for the promoters of EfC, diversity and social pluralism are given a positive content that has to be en-

couraged. For them, different cultures are not competing with each others. It is possible for them to coexist and, in addition, the coexistence of cultures is an added value for any society. In that sense, citizenship education is not only perceived as a positive acknowledgement of the social and cultural diversity in society. It is also precisely as a way to pursue the integration of minorities in the society by acknowledging their practices and values and, finally, by teaching these practices and values to all students. This position is in line with the original motivations presiding to the implementation of citizenship education in the United-States and Europe (Banks 1990 and 2008, Crick 1999).

In the end, teaching tolerance of diversity in values and practices is, for its supporters, a way to form active citizens in liberal-democracies. Liberal-democracy is precisely conceived as the political system that seeks a peaceful compromise between values, ideas and interests in a diverse society. For supporters of EfC, the opposition of the Catholic Church and catholic organisations is a manifestation of its rejection of liberal-democratic rules and Human Rights values:

When EfC is proposed by the most progressive sectors of the society, the intention is not to invade anybody's moral education but to educate in democratic values to strengthen the democracy. I dare anybody's from the Church or from others sectors, as the conservative sector for example, to say which values of EfC go against human rights, may they just show me one example! (interview 1)

Few people or organisations questioned the need to reinforce the transmission of values to children, for two main reasons: the growing individualism in the society either due to the logics of the free-market economy or to the spreading of a 'moral relativism' as a trend of thought (put forward by the Catholics) on the one hand, and the growing cultural and religious diversity due to the immigration flows Spain was receiving at this period, on the other hand.

However, in link with issues of tolerance and acceptance, what the debate around EfC is highlighting is the persisting co-existence in the Spanish society of two different institutions, the liberal-democratic state and the Catholic Church, based on two different reference frameworks to define a 'regime of truth' and associated values for the society. Even if the liberal-democratic State and the constitution are defining the core values of the Spanish society, the values and organisation of the Church continue to be the main reference for sectors of the civil society and some families, especially when it comes to education. To which extend the State is able to define and teach common and public values is thus an important question at stake here.

The dividing line between two ethical systems (the ethics of the State and the ethics of the Church) is clearly apparent in the texts of the Conference of Spanish Bishops, which lets the parents determine which kind of moral education they are willing for their children: «The State cannot force legitimately a determined formation of the moral conscience of students apart from the right to choose of parents. When these choose freely religion and the catholic ethics, the State must recognize that the necessary moral formation of students is assured by those who have the duty and the right to deliver it» (Comisión permanente de la Conferencia Episcopal Española 2007).

Thus, the examples of an effective opposition between the values contained in EfC and those of Catholicism are not always put forward and, when they are, they refer to one point in particular, what the Conference of bishops calls the 'gender ideology'. EfC includes indeed among the values to teach, gender equality, autonomy in the sexuality and the rejection of homophobia. To the catholic organisations and hierarchy opposed to EfC these subjects should be out of the limits of what can be taught to children as they hurt the values and beliefs of some families and especially the ones who choose to educate their children in line with the catholic ethics.

For EfC advocates, it is precisely needed that schools deliver to all the students common public values, precisely because all the moral education must not lie on parental education and because the State has to «educate in self-defence, to avoid becoming a hotbed for opposed intransigences and for uncommunicative ghettos of tribal dogmas» (Savater 2006). The arguments of the promoters of the law is therefore that not only it exists such thing as a public ethics and public values, based on the constitution and on international treaties on Human Rights signed by Spain, but this public ethics has to be taught to children to maintain social cohesion and the possibility to live together. Plus, they put forward that the public ethic, whose respect is guaranteed by Law is superior to private ethics when values are in conflicts. That is to say that even if the State tolerates private ethics based on values differing from the public ethics, the respect of private values cannot be an argument to oppose public ethics (Llamazares 2009).

Concluding remarks: How to define limits to tolerance when common values are contested?

The creation and implementation of a course aiming at fostering the tolerance or student toward cultural, religious, sexual diversity and at reinforcing the democratic culture of children has failed in Spain. The Spanish debate around EfC has been one of the most heated in Europe, specially thorough

the years 2004-2008. We have seen how the protest occupied the social, political and judicial fields, until the Supreme Court, the daily practices and – finally – its abandon, eased the confrontation.

In the diversity and tolerance debate in Europe, the Spanish case study is relevant as it touches upon issues such as the secularisation of the State. The debate around EfC confronted two irreconcilable positions about the respective roles of the State and the families to educate children with their own provision in values. This public deliberation around the limits of the public and the private spheres is relevant to an analysis of the delimitation of what has to be tolerated and accepted in the European societies (Triandafyllidou and Zapata-Barrero 2012). Opponents to the subject ‘Education for Citizenship’ have argued that ethics and morality are not a matter of the State whereas its supporters and instigators argued that it is desirable to define common values that are or should be shared by all, independently of their culture, ideology or religion. Interestingly, as we have shown, these values have not been contested by cultural minorities but by the Church and related groups, which are part of the cultural majority.

The intensity of the debate cannot be explained only by a strong politicization and rivalry between the conservative opposition and the socialist-led government. The cleavage is deeper and put into question the different resources of the Spanish society for reaching cohesion. The debate over the national identity has always been perceived as a Pandora box in the political arena. Since Franco’s dictatorship, all attempts to define national identity have failed, and come generally from the most conservative sectors of the political spectrum. What gets to define the best the Spanish national identity is the acknowledgement of its territorial and national diversity. Before centrifugal forces of minority-nations’ claims and the centripetal force of State nationalism and political conservatism, governments have in general been reluctant to raise public debates involving a definition or a re-definition of Spanish national values.

The debate on citizenship education has been a new illustration of the persistence of the «invertibrate Spain», as depicted at the beginning of the 20th century by the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset (2005 [1922]). However, this does not mean that different conceptions and interests are not effectively competing over the definition of common values and identity. The difficulties to implement citizenship education in Spain highlight that tolerance boundaries as well as membership boundaries in society are never stabilised results of public actions and discourses. For social scientists, tolerance should therefore not be only considered as an essential moral value of liberal-democracies. It appears to be above all an ideologically loaded and challenged issue that diversification and cultural pluralism contribute to render salient.

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