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The limits of compensatory education in Spain: A comparative analysis of some autonomous governments[1]

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ABSTRACT.- The paper analyses educational systems, policies and inequalities in Spain. The main focus is a comparative analysis of compensatory education programmes implemented by autonomous governments (*Comunitats Autònomes*). Seven autonomous governments have been in charge of education since the 1980s and the other ten have received this resposibility in the late 1990s. A general description draws attention to the fact that long-term paths have shaped the regional map for several generations. Not only non-graduation rates keep high at secondary education but are also closely correlated with regional average educational levels. In our view, although systematic evaluations are not available, compensatory education programmes experience strong structural limitations. Finally, a theoretical reflection tries to make sense of this situation drawing on the capabilities approach.

It would be very confusing to speak literally of 'urban education' to a Spanish audience. Certainly, part of the problem would simply be the meaning of the adjective, since its geographical sense is so self-evident in our languages that it is difficult to figure out what it has been for Deweyan educators in Anglo-Saxon countries. However, the concept would also be difficult to translate because the intellectual and political tradition that identifies educational reform with the foundations of democracy and progressive change has been quite different and dramatically weaker during the twentieth century. So, an account of the related issues in the country must eventually focus on the institutionalisation of 'compensatory education' after the dictatorship and mention the few and new proposals that aim to work beyond the scope of this strategy.

About twenty years ago the Compensation Royal Decree (1174/1983, April 27th) used this term in order to define the function of specialised teachers and schools who had to "aid the zones or demographic groups that need preferential educational attention due to their particular characteristics". Then a small scholarship scheme for low-income students was also implemented. Later on, academic disadvantage due to cultural or social reasons became another kind of special education need when the Organic Act on the General Framework of the Educational System (1/1990, October 3st) defined special pedagogic strategies as "treatment of diversity".

The Conservative governments that were in office between 1996 and 2004 reacted against the child- centred philosophy that had inspired the1990 Education Reform Act, and finally in 2002 passed the Organic Act on Educational Quality (10/2002, December 23rd), which aimed to instil the "culture of endeavour" into students. However, the Socialist party won the 2004 election and is preparing a new reform that will modify these tenets.

Since the early 1980s seven autonomous governments or 'autonomies' (*Comunitats Autònomes*) have been in charge of their regional education system, and the other ten have received this responsibility in the late 1990s. So far some of them have complemented the initial and general

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scheme for 'compensation' with other strategies. Immigrant reception programmes, learning communities, priority schools and areas, e-learning initiatives and local educational participatory plans are all included in this set of experiences that provide the examples of 'urban education'. For instance, the Basque country, Aragon and Catalonia have deployed immigrant reception programmes and have implemented the first experiments of learning communities. These latter educational strategies aim to trigger participatory planning and assessment of academic and social objectives in disadvantaged schools (Comunidades de Aprendizaje, 2005; DE/DGA, 2000, 2004; DP/GC, 2001; DE/ GC, 2004). Aragon has also carried out an ambitious e-learning programme in order to promote distance education among its large rural areas (DE/DGA, 2005). Some public schools are the object of priority attention in Catalonia (DE/GC, 1996), where many municipalities have also implemented participatory planning of after-school activities (Jaumandreu and Badosa, 2002). On its own, the Solidarity Plan has enlarged reception programmes in Andalusia, which even foresee the explicit participation of immigrants, and has created priority areas in some localities (CE/JA, 1998, 1999, 2001a,b).

In our article we aim to find out if these interventions are powerful enough to meet their official end, that is, overcoming educational problems and disadvantages. Our argument relies on two previous generalisations that have established the framework for further discussion. On the one hand, some recent contributions continue the long intellectual tradition that looks for actual opportunities whereby schools can tackle inequalities and their correlative educational disadvantages. Thus, several authors have highlighted the importance of explicit objectives (Derouet, 1992), minority- friendly curricula (Connell, 1997), democratic participation (Apple & Beane, 1995), flat and polyvalent organisation (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996), supplementary education (Gordon & Bridglall, 2002), public- political spaces (Griffiths, 2003) or school-community collaboration (Warren, 2005) for educational justice or social inclusion. Certainly, in Spain autonomous governments and other social agents have drawn on these ideas for the design of the initiatives we have just mentioned. On the other hand, other reports and authors have recently highlighted that societal features influence educational disadvantage more than the concrete programmes and strategies deployed by schools (UNESCO-OECD/UIS, 2003). An exhaustive recent international comparison identifies two axes of these societal effects, namely enrolment rates and performance scores (Duru- Bellat *et al*, 2005). Everywhere working- class and minority students are significantly more likely to achieve a low score in standardised exams and drop out early, though early leaving rates and average scores vary among countries. Thus, the former programmes explore the opportunities to foster social inclusion from school policies, but these societal features can limit such opportunities and therefore become bigger challenges to social inclusion.

Our argument follows four steps. Firstly, we present an overview of the inclusive educational strategies that autonomous governments have deployed so far in Spain. Secondly, we ask if these strategies determine non-graduation rates in the seventeen autonomous communities. Although an initial expectation was that they made a difference, the available evidence severely curtails such hypothesis. Despite these innovative programmes, societal features instead of educational institutions explain the differences of non-graduation rates between the seventeen communities in Spain. Thirdly, we also ask whether this influence of societal factors is an immediate effect of recent educational expansion. Thus, we compare regional educational disparity and gaps between economic and educational development in Spain and other European countries where expansion took place some decades earlier. Finally, we use the capabilities approach in order to interpret these findings. Such an approach draws on normative principles of social justice (that we will only sketch here) and focuses on ‘positive’ empirical connections as judged by these principles. In Spanish education the main positive connection was family

aspirations triggering enrolment despite many shortcomings from the 1950s until the 1970s. Later on education reforms and increased expenditure contributed to raising graduation levels significantly in the 1980s. However, current trends do not show either persistent old connections or new influential ones that raise graduation and curb drop-out rates in upper secondary education in all the autonomies.

Autonomous educational policies for social inclusion

Autonomous governments have implemented several kinds of educational strategy for social inclusion since they have received the political responsibility to do so. Some of them have significantly enlarged the set of instruments that central government institutionalised in the 1980s, whilst others have simply continued to use the same set. 'Compensation' strategies only consist of distributing specialised teachers according to observed 'social' needs in schools. Autonomies use 'co-ordinate compensation' if their policy has established new frameworks for action at the infant, primary or secondary educational levels or even the whole region. The strategy is 'intensive compensation' if the policy includes the aforementioned new experiments (learning communities, priority areas, participatory intercultural education and so on). Finally, one single case combines educational and economic intervention on a more 'universal' basis.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

'Compensation' and 'co-ordinate compensation' may sometimes include free textbooks schemes. Normally, all students have to buy their textbooks, and changes to the list of these textbooks increase family expenditures. Following family associations' campaign for free textbooks in public schools, some autonomous governments have agreed to provide students with free books either in some or in all courses.

'Intensive co-ordination' is associated with the pedagogic organisation of rural, small, incomplete schools (whereas all schools are complete or 'graduate' in urban areas). In the early 1970s the dictatorship suppressed many rural schools on the grounds of economic efficiency, but popular action prevented the process in some areas. Thus rural schools have become a democratic symbolic vindication, and some governments are specially aware of their importance for territorial cohesion. But participatory experiments are the most visible marker of this broader view. Since the mid 1980s until 2002, Spanish schools had an elected council that included teachers, parents, students and support staff, which chose the principal and established the main guidelines. Municipal, autonomous and state-wide councils were also established. Besides teacher unions, parent associations (in public and private state-funded schools), student unions and private schools also participated at the different levels. Although the 2002 ERA promoted professional instead of elected direction, some autonomous governments have tried to open new participatory channels. A new reform has been just passed in 2005, now reinforcing the role of school councils.

The Basque country is a specific case due to its scholarship scheme, but a general though minimal scholarship scheme was implemented throughout Spain in the 1980s. The Basque government added complementary economic benefits so that lower class students finished their secondary post-compulsory courses. For this reason, this case is labelled as the 'most universal strategy'.

Finally, although globalisation is visible in education policy through international policy-borrowing (e.g. the comprehensive reform in the 1990s, the comparison of OECD student assessment after 2000), some autonomies have also borrowed education policies in Spain. Thus, some regional

governments which draw on either 'co-ordinate compensation' or simply 'compensation' are currently discussing 'equity' or 'cohesion' plans that look at learning communities, priority areas and even reception programmes as sources of inspiration. At first sight, a plausible but cautious guess might state that policy- borrowing is pushing towards more intensive compensatory education.

Regional educational inequality

Autonomous governments have implemented increasingly broad educational inclusion strategies, but have they made a difference? Tables 1 and 2 explore the impact of societal and institutional factors on non-graduation rates in order to estimate the influence of these strategies. The percentages of the graduate labour force (in upper secondary education) and the youth unemployment rates account for societal factors, whereas expenditure measures institutional margins. Graph 1 plots all the communities according to the percentages of the graduate labour force (in upper secondary education), which turns out to be the most powerful determinant of non-graduation rates.

Table 1 shows that secondary compulsory education students (*Educació Secundària Obligatòria,* ESO) experience a significantly higher probability of failing their exams in a Spanish region if the educational level of the region is low and public resources devoted to the regional educational system are scarce. The gross non-graduation rate indicates the number of sixteen year-olds who have not attained their ESO degree. In a sense, they are the target of compensatory and broader interventions aiming to counter educational disadvantage and inequality. The percentage of the labour force with at least upper secondary education is the indicator of average educational levels commonly used in Ministry reports. Similarly, public educational expenditure per student measures the public resources devoted to education by both the central and the regional or autonomous government. In 2001 these two factors (namely, average levels and public expenditure) explained a substantial part of non- graduation in the seventeen regions inasmuch as they accounted for 49% of its variance. Therefore, data concerning school failure show a robust regional effect between generations, since the labour force includes everybody from sixteen until sixty-five years-olds. In other words, where the labour force has not received much education and the school system is not underpinned by many resources, more teenagers fail their exams in compulsory secondary education. Generally speaking, this finding reflects the influence on class origin on academic performance, which is well known by sociologists of education. But the replication of this effect at the regional level is not an automatic consequence of the general pattern (as table 3 will show).

[TABLE I ABOUT HERE]

Table 2 reports that academic secondary post-compulsory education students (*Batxillerat* or baccalaureate) experience a significantly higher probability of failing their exams in a Spanish autonomy if the educational level of the region is low, the labour market is open to youth and scarce public resources are devoted to the regional educational system. The gross non-graduation rate records the number of eighteen year-olds who have not attained their baccalaureate degree. As in table 1, the percentage of the labour force with at least upper secondary education indicates the educational level of an autonomy, and public educational expenditure per student measures educational resources. But here the unemployment rate of the 20-24 years-old population impinges on non-graduation (i.e. the dependent variable) even more than resources. In 2001 these three factors (respectively, educational level, youth unemployment and public expenditure) explained the bulk of non- graduation in the seventeen regions, because

they accounted for 80% of its variance. Thus, once again Spanish data concerning school failure show a robust regional effect between generations. In other words, where the labour force has not received much instruction, the youth have some labour opportunities and schools lack some financial support, students are more likely to downplay their examinations, or at least are more prone to fail their baccalaureate. A cumulative effect can be observed between the situation of the middle-aged generations (as indicated by the labour force average) and the situation of the younger generations (as indicated by unemployment and educational expenditure).

Graph 1 shows relatively small influence of educational inclusion strategies in terms of regional differences. In the graph the main line represents the proportion between the two main factors, namely the percentage of the labour force with at least upper secondary and the gross non-graduation rate in academic upper secondary education (or baccalaureate). That is, Extremadura, Castilla- Mancha, Andalusia, Valencia, Murcia, Galicia, Rioja, Castilla- Leon, Cantabria, Aragon, Navarre and Madrid roughly keep this proportion at different scores, whereas Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Catalonia, Asturias and the Basque Country are significantly deviant cases.

The Basque Country not only shows a high average educational level but also achieves a non-graduation rate even lower than the proportional line. Such a pro-education position is even more salient when this autonomy is compared to Madrid or Navarre, where average education levels are similar but non-graduation rates are slightly above the proportion. Thus, the most universalistic and inclusive strategy seems to yield the most satisfactory outcome. Let us notice that this policy combines pedagogic instruments with economic support of teenager students coming from a lower class position.

Asturias offers another successful story, though this cannot be attributed to its inclusion strategy, because the Asturian government has not so far significantly enlarged the basic compensatory scheme. Rather, a relatively high expenditure and youth unemployment explain this second positive position of an extremely de-industrialised region.

A small effect of inclusion strategies can be observed by comparing Andalusia (intensive compensation), Galicia (co-ordinate compensation) and the Valencian Country (compensation). Once again average education levels are similar but the former two cases score much better than the latter; furthermore, expenditure contributes to a relative success of the inclusion strategy in Galicia.

Balearic Islands, Canary Islands and Catalonia have become the negative cases. Actually, the schooling system is relatively worse in Balearic Islands and Catalonia, which are thriving regions but suffer dramatically high non-graduation rates (see Table 4). Youth unemployment is the main factor that accounts for their position below the proportional line, as Table 2 estimated and a simple comparison with Asturias illustrates. Tourism is the main resource in the islands and provides very important inputs to the Catalan economy, where industrial areas and a big city also create many jobs for young people. However, a second but significant factor is the small expenditure that the two rich and Mediterranean governments devote to their schools.

[GRAPH 1 ABOUT HERE]

In short, not only regional educational levels instead of educational inclusion strategies explain non-graduation rates in most autonomies, but also the main exceptions to this rule can be attributed to other factors. These pedagogic interventions have impinged on the outcome in the Basque Country, although economic parallel support has reinforced them there. When intensive

compensation has been implemented without a similar support in Andalusia, Aragon and Catalonia, the final outcome has been either proportional to the educational level (Andalusia and Aragon) or has scored below the proportion (Catalonia).

Regional disparity and economic- educational development in a comparative perspective

Average educational levels of the labour force are the main predictor of non-graduation rates at the end of both compulsory and post-compulsory academic secondary education in the seventeen autonomous communities. Is this effect a consequence of sharp regional disparity due to the recent expansion of schooling in Spain?

Table 3 shows that middle-term trends have drawn a relatively heterogeneous regional educational map in Spain. The table reports the enrolment of the younger generations (i.e. a gross rate of upper secondary students compared to the 15-19 years-old population) and the educational level of the whole population (i.e. the proportion of population aged 15 and over who lack this degree) in a small sample of European countries with available data on regional educational disparities. Notably, the gross enrolment rate of teenagers holds a robust (R^2= 0.55) and negative correlation with the gross non-graduation rate used in table 2. Besides, these figures explore middle-term change by comparing younger and older generations. This information is relevant to questions on whether educational regions are heterogeneous in countries where compulsory schooling is universal, whether regional patterns can be attributed to the date of expansion, or whether we should look for correlates somewhere else. It also provides important evidence in estimating the geography of educational disadvantage.

According to these data, in Spain the gross rate of upper secondary students is low (42%), with Malta alone having an even lower score (30%). A simple comparison shows that regional disparity is moderate, and discredits any view attributing its importance directly to recent expansion of schooling. Firstly, in Spain inter- regional variation (8,63%) is high compared to France (2,58%), where schooling expansion started earlier, but such a expansion also started earlier in Austria and inter-regional variation of teenagers' enrolment in this country (7%) is similar to Spain. Even more, the Netherlands were also early developers of schooling and show a higher inter-regional variation (25,75%) than Spain. Secondly, the population's educational levels show a higher inter-regional variation in France (14,66%) compared to Spain (8,62%), although French regions are more homogeneous with regards to secondary students. Even more, this variation is similar in the Netherlands (8,19%) despite the sharp disparity concerning students' completion rates. And thirdly, a simple correlation analysis between these two variables finds out similar R^2 coefficients in Austria (0.33), Spain (0.24) and Italy (0.22), zero values in France and the Netherlands, and a robust level in the Czech Republic (0.64), showing no general pattern of regional variation concerning students' completion and population's average education.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

If recent expansion cannot account for the weak influence of inclusive strategies, economic development might explain it. In fact, there is a general correlation between economic and educational development if the latter is measured by literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (UNDP, 2005). Since Spain enjoys a high human development index (HDI), here the significant focus is on enrolment at seventeen. Students who are at school at this age are likely to finish their upper secondary education, whereas those who are not will undoubtedly fail to complete. Although secondary graduation does not indicate such a basic capability as HDI components (e.g. literacy or primary enrolment), it is an important one for future

work careers (OECD, 2003) and the academic performance of future generations (OECD-UNESCO/ UIS, 2003). On the other hand, two other indicators estimate if economic and educational development match in Spanish autonomies, namely the proportion of the labour force with at least upper secondary education and the regional Gross Domestic Product per capita.

Table 4 compares the educational and economic development in the autonomies with France, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Recent expansion can be observed inasmuch as the labour force shows higher levels of education in France, the UK and Sweden than in Italy, Portugal, Spain and Spanish autonomies. However, more students leave school at a lower age in the autonomies compared to the other European countries included in the sample. For instance, Balearic Islands, the Basque Country, Catalonia and Navarre record a per capita GDP close to France, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Italy. However, GDPpc and post-compulsory enrolment indicators are only similar in the Basque Country, France and Italy. Catalonia and Italy share similar GDPpc scores, but the enrolment indicator is much lower in Catalonia; similarly, Balearic Islands have the same GDPpc than France and the UK, but its enrolment rate is the lowest in the sample. Besides, Madrid has the best per capita GDP in this sample, but other autonomies like Asturias and Castilla- Leon and European countries like France and Sweden achieve a better enrolment rate.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Reflections from the capabilities approach

Do these structural limitations of urban education eliminate the margin for school-based action for justice?. In our view, Nussbaum's (2000) and Sen's (1999) 'capabilities approach' suggests a relevant and useful answer to this question. Here, our reasoning starts with a brief summary of the normative framework concerning capabilities and points out the empirically observed potential. A further discussion of this potential leads us to review the negative effects of unintended targeted action and to introduce alternative ideas.

Capabilities constitute the human possibility to leading one's life according to one's view of the good, within the frame of universal morality. Nussbaum (2000) has advanced a list arguing that everybody should be endowed with enough resources to realise such possibilities; additionally, no capability should be denied to anybody on behalf on any other one. Such list includes logical references to education at several points such as senses, imagination, thought, emotions, practical reasoning, affiliation (caring, self-respect), play and the political control of the environment. The set of actual capabilities constitutes a person's freedom, which is the crucial leverage of development too. That is, development consists of meeting people's needs so that everybody is able to deploy his or her capabilities. Freedom plays a constitutive role in development inasmuch as it establishes the ultimate criteria for its evaluation, but it also plays an instrumental role such that some freedoms can effectively contribute to the achievement of other freedoms. For example, women's autonomy is crucial for family planning and children's health, democracy is the best guarantee against famines, and universal services are able to enhance human development despite low economic growth (Sen, 1999).
The points raised in previous sections highlight instrumental connections between institutional and societal factors of educational development. Two institutional factors offer potential positive outcomes that unfortunately have not been met in recent decades. On the one hand, autonomous governments have started to experiment with educational strategies for justice that broaden former compensatory education programmes. However, co-ordination and intensification initiatives have not yielded a clear impact up to now, probably because they have only been pilot

innovations. On the other hand, upper secondary education outcomes partially depend on educational expenditure, and public educational expenditure in Spain has stagnated at the 4.9% GDP level, that is, one point below the EU average (OECD, 2004). Thus, although better articulation of new experiences and more resources could eventually produce positive change, this has not so far been achieved.

The most decisive societal factor it seems is family educational level and educational aspirations, with economic development and policy as second factors. Family aspirations have already contributed to educational expansion starting some fifty years ago. Despite of a lack of school places, after the hard times of the 1940s, initial and tentative indications of economic improvement, as well as increasing marriage and birth rates, occurred simultaneously to growing enrolment in the post-compulsory 'basic baccalaureate' (Pérez, 2001). Paradoxically, this connection loosened when compulsory education was extended until fourteen in the 1970s, since the trend of graduation rates stagnated (probably due to the chronic lack of resources and a strict reaction of untrained teachers against massive schooling). However, in the 1980s new possibilities emerged when democratic governments devoted more resources to schools, a reform standardised across public and private state-funded schools, and both primary graduation and secondary enrolment and graduation also rose (Carabaña, 1999). Interestingly, family projects have been the main societal trigger for educational development, since economic development only played a certain role in the 1960s and universal compulsory enrolment was not attained until the 1980s despite economic recession. The influence of a crucial institutional factor as expenditure has only been decisive for a short term since the democratic transition (1977-8) until the early 1990s.

Therefore, educational action for justice eventually became an unintended form of targeted action. Targeted action consists of anti-poverty initiatives that aim to define who are the poor in a precise way so as to concentrate resources on this population. Similarly, educational targeting consists of defining what educational disadvantage means so as to concentrate educational resources on this group. Thus, if educational expenditure devoted to the whole system and to compensatory programmes is severely constrained, these very programmes become partial and uncoordinated, with the logical consequence that, at best, only some disadvantaged groups receive attention in Spanish schools.

According to this interpretation, in Spain inclusive strategies are likely to suffer the main perverse effects of targeted action, namely information and incentive distortion, stigma, high administrative costs and weak political sustainability (Sen, 1999). Certainly, while the example given is not a pure case, since targeting is not an explicit political aim, this particularity is relevant for this evaluation. The eventual incoherence of these measures is crucial in order to understand why international comparative studies show mediocre performance scores, moderate performance gaps and significantly low post-compulsory enrolment in Spain (Duru- Bellat *et al*, 2005).

To start with, although informal and residual action is not likely to accumulate high administrative costs, it is nonetheless likely to distort information dramatically and threatens to stigmatise beneficiaries. The information problem is due to the general difficulty of combining urban and educational criteria as a means of selecting schools for targeted intervention (EURYDICE, 2004). However, the problem is also enhanced due to the blurred definition of catchment areas. Formally, all students attend public and private state-funded schools in their areas, but there are no general or explicit criteria to decide their limits, extension and social composition. Thus, the occasional concentration of immigrants or students with special education needs can be compensated for, either with area-based (in Andalusia) or school- based (in Catalonia) action or

with participatory programmes (Comunidades de Aprendizaje, 2005). However, the deep processes that produced that situation remain unaffected. Even worse, in Catalonia the specialists' discussion summarised in Carbonell's (2000) report has already warned that the label 'intercultural education' has become a real stigma for many schools. In sum, many current practices of targeting eventually replicate or enhance these negative effects.

Secondly, incentive distortion is secondary but salient in some autonomies. Doubtless, incentives are quite different if we make reference to anti-poverty income schemes or to educational intervention. However, incentives are relevant in some programmes as far as post-compulsory enrolment is concerned. In fact, the model summarised in table 2 points out a trade-off between (un)employment and (non)graduation for young people between twenty and twenty-four years. Although young unemployment is not so important as average levels of education in determining non-graduation rates, it plays a significant role. García Espejo and Gutiérrez (2000) have convincingly illustrated this by comparing Asturias and Valencia. The former has a successful academic story together with massive unemployment due to de-industrialisation, whilst the latter has roughly the average education/non- graduation proportion for the whole country. These researchers have found out that tertiary education yields a positive rate of return in Asturias but a neutral one in Valencia. In order to explain this finding they have signalled that light industries and tourism provide precarious but abundant labour opportunities to early school leavers in the latter region which have students away from school. Therefore, incentive distortion also constrains the effectiveness of compensatory intervention in some autonomies.

Thirdly, a rapid overview of the changes between the 1990 and the 2002 ERA reveals the weakness of the political support for compensatory strategies and educational inclusion. The first reform aiming to tackle educational disadvantage drew on curriculum adaptation and child-centred pedagogy. Before the Conservative government drafted and passed the second reform, it had deeply damaged the popular image of the former strategy by exploiting opinion surveys. The general conclusion was that teachers and parents do not perceive pro-school attitudes in low performing students (INCE, 1998), and the inferred recommendation is that a new culture of endeavour must be instilled into these as well as other students.

All these unintended effects notwithstanding, targeted educational intervention seems not to be completely without use. On the contrary, concern with educational inequalities has doubtless stimulated pedagogic imagination and opened new channels of participation. For instance, learning communities and a few immigrant reception programmes aim to stimulate working-class and minority parents to engage with school activities. As we have argued, the main obstacle for educational intervention in Spain lies in its improvisation and lack of co-ordination. The experimental 'intensive' initiatives are patchy, but they might also be a first step to designing and implementing new strategies for educational inclusion that aim at universality. From this stance, any attempt at change should take account of the following three questions. First, universalistic strategies are impossible unless educational expenditure is sufficient; second, catchment areas should be defined in a transparent way so that monitoring the equity and effectiveness of both public and private state- funded schools is possible; and third, regulation and provision are viewed as important as pedagogy for tackling educational diversity.

Conclusion

Urban education is undergoing important transformations in Spain. Educational de-centralisation has coincided with a new interest in widening the scope of the compensatory education

programmes implemented in the 1980s and a rich array of experiments that have not yet been articulated as a comprehensive strategy.

Current initiatives broaden the scope of compensation rather than implement alternative strategies. Only the Basque Country has moved beyond this framework, for example by delivering generous scholarships to low income youth who decide to stay after their completion of compulsory education. Other strategies include immigrant reception programmes, affirmative action in favour of certain schools or areas, learning communities, distance education for rural areas and participatory local planning of after-school activities.

As far as achieving almost universal completion of upper secondary education, only the Basque Country tells a success story, since at least most youth graduate at this level in this autonomy. On the contrary, none of the latter strategies has impacted on non-graduation rates at the end of either compulsory or post-compulsory academic secondary education. Our empirical conclusion is that average educational levels, public educational expenditure and youth unemployment are much more influential than any type of compensatory educational inclusion.

Notably, neither the recent date of educational expansion nor economic development can convincingly explain this mid-term educational geography. The most significant pattern reveals inter-generational reproduction with regards to autonomous regions in Spain. Where population's educational levels are high, more students from recent generations leave school with their baccalaureate. As a consequence, the education systems of some autonomies are not sustainable, either because they have low average educational levels and low graduation rates at secondary education (mostly, Southern autonomies) or because they are extremely deviating negative cases with regards to the general proportion (mostly, Balearic Islands and Catalonia).

Thus, positive and negative instrumental connections between educational factors can be identified. In the end, inclusive strategies appear to be so partial that they only target the worst off often in an unintended way that cannot be easily monitored. However, this balance of pros and cons it is hoped provides a list of open challenges towards a new universalistic strategy. Besides the very articulation of the initial new experiences that draw on 'intensive' compensation, a higher expenditure and a clearly defined and equity-driven system of catchment areas might be the first steps in that direction.

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Figure 1. Different educational inclusion strategies deployed by Autonomous Communities in Spain

Educational inclusion strategy (Autonomous Community)	Characteristics
The most universal strategy (Basque Country)	• Immigrant reception and learning communities programmes. • Scholarships for fees, transport, books, stationery and lunch expenses (CEUI/GV, 2004). In the school year 2004-05 a family receives a 1.118- 2.348€ benefit provided its per capita yearly income is below 2.573€ and its offspring is enrolled in post-compulsory academic or vocational programmes. The average expenditure per person in the Basque Country was 2.237,52€ in 2004 (INE, 2006)
Intensive compensation (Andalusia, Aragon, Catalonia)	• Immigrant reception and learning communities programmes (Aragon, Catalonia), participatory intercultural education and priority areas (Andalusia). Governments propose educational pacts to civil society. • Several participatory Local Educational Plans (Catalonia). Special emphasis on innovative rural education (Aragon)
Co-ordinate compensation (Canarias, Castilla La Mancha, Galicia, Madrid, Murcia, Navarre)	• These governments aim to foster cohesion or equity with new plans. Some of them focus on a school level, such as the Equity Plan in Compulsory Secondary Education (Castilla- La Mancha) or Infant School at Home (Galicia). Others try to improve co-ordination (Madrid, Navarre). • Free textbooks schemes are being extended
Compensation (Asturias, Balearic Islands, Castilla Leon, Cantabria, Valencian Country, Extremadura, Rioja)	• Basic compensatory programme basically including specialised teachers for students who need 'attention to diversity' • Extremadura and Rioja are also extending free textbooks schemes • Voucher system for infant schools in Balearic Islands (and some Valencian municipalities)

Table 1. Influence of average educational levels and public expenditure on the gross non- graduation rate in compulsory secondary education (Spain, 2001)

Independent Variables	Estimated coefficient	Standard error	T statistic
Active population with at least upper secondary education (%) (1)	-.6066462	.2230803	-2.72
Public educational expenditure per student (1)	-.0778893	.067069	-1.16
Constant (1)	58.74696	9.201697	6.38
Dependent Variable: *Gross non-graduation rate in compulsory secondary education*	Prob > F = 0.00840	The relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable is not spurious (F< 0.05). Therefore, the model can explain the relationships between them.	
	R-squared = 0.4945	The independent variables explain 49% of the dependent variable variation	
	Adjusted R-sq. = 0.4223	If the number of independent variables is taken into account, the model explains 42% of the dependent variable variation	

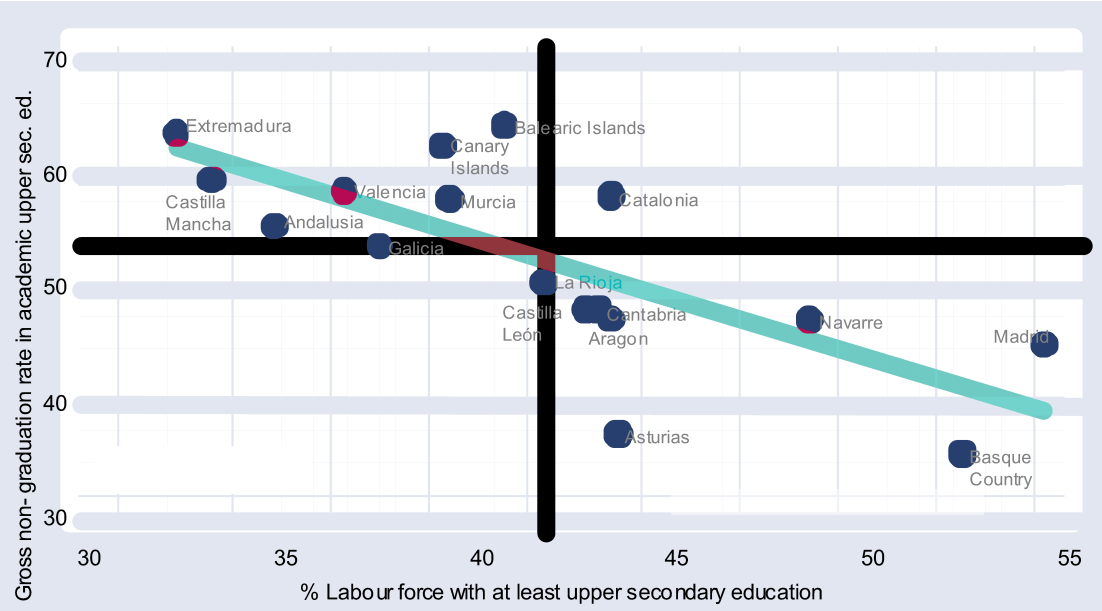
Note: (1)The influence of these variables is significant if T> 2. Source: MEC (2001, 2004) and INE (2000)

Table 2. Influence of average educational levels, youth unemployment and public expenditure on the gross non- graduation rate in academic upper secondary education (Spain, 2001)

Independent Variables	Estimated coefficient	Standard error	T statistic
Active population with at least upper secondary education (%) (1)	-1.029678	.1978508	-5.20
Unemployment rate of the 20-24 years-old population (1)	-.487231	.141609	-3.44
Public educational expenditure per student (1)	-.1186511	.0576154	-2.06
Constant (1)	119.4323	9.333185	12.80
Dependent Variable: *Gross non-graduation rate in academic upper secondary education*	Prob> F = 0.0001	The relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable is not spurious (F< 0.05). Therefore, the model can explain the relationships between them.	
	R-squared = 0.8003	The independent variables explain 80% of the dependent variable variation	
	Adjusted R-sq. = 0.7542	If the number of independent variables is taken into account, the model explains 75% of the dependent variable variation	

Note: (1)The influence of these variables is significant if T> 2. Source: MEC (2001, 2004) and INE (2000)

Graph 1 Gross non- graduation rate in academic upper secondary education and active population with at least upper secondary education (%) (Spain, 2001)



Source: MEC (2001, 2004) and INE (2000)

Table 3. Rate of enrolment in upper secondary education and rate of population below that level in Austria, the Czech Rep., France, Italy and Spain (average figures compared to Germany, Malta and Portugal), 2003

		Country	Inter-regional Average	Inter-regional Standard Deviation	Inter-regional (coeff. of) Variation	Regression coefficient (R^2) between 'Pop. below u. sec. ed.' (2) and 'Up. Secondary students' (1)
Austria	Up. Secondary students	76,42	76,03	5,32	7,00	0,33
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	29,18	29,75	3,20	10,74	
Czech Republic	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	70,95	71,14	9,09	12,77	0,64
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	20,90	20,97	3,44	16,42	
France (3)	Up. Secondary students	65,91	65,99	1,70	2,58	0,02
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	n. a.	47,29	6,93	14,66	
Italy	Up. Secondary students	87,65	90,59	59,47	5,60	0,22
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	59,12	5,08	3,97	6,67	
Nether lands	Up. Secondary students	67,23	65,55	16,88	25,75	0,06
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	36,70	37,45	3,07	8,19	
Spain (4)	Up. Secondary students	42,24	43,54	3,76	8,63	0,24
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	60,66	61,21	5,28	8,62	
Germany	Up. Secondary students	60	Not available data			
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	25				
Malta	Up. Secondary students	30				
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	76				
Portugal (5)	Up. Secondary students	53				
	Pop. below u. Sec. ed.	77				

Notes: (1) 'Up. secondary students' states for the gross ratio between the number of upper secondary students (ISCED3) and 15 to 19 years-old population. (2) 'Pop. below u. sec. ed.' stands for the proportion of population (aged 15 and over) that has not attained upper secondary education (ISCED1 and ISCED2). (3) Overseas French territories are excluded. (4) Ceuta and Melilla autonomous cities are excluded. (5) Açores and Madeira are excluded Source: EUROSTAT (2005)

Table 4. Labour force educational level, enrolment at 17 and gross domestic product per capita (Spanish autonomies and some European countries, 2001-2002)

	Labour Force with at least Upper Secondary Education (LFUSE)	Spain (LFUSE) = 100	Enrolment at 17 (E17)	Spain (E17) = 100	Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDPpc)	Spain (GDPpc)= 100
Spain (total)	41,6	100	77,8	100	18893,5	100
• Andalusia	34,6	83,17	73,8	94,86	14050,3	74,37
• Aragon	43,2	103,85	85,6	110,03	20059	106,17
• Asturias	43,4	104,33	90,2	115,94	16173,7	85,6
• Balearic Islands	40,5	97,36	69,5	89,33	23546	124,62
• Basque Country	52,2	125,48	91,4	117,48	23443	124,08
• Canary Islands	38,9	93,51	76,3	98,07	17853	94,49
• Cantabria	42,9	103,13	83,8	107,71	18340,4	97,07
• Castilla –Leon	42,6	102,40	89,7	115,30	17449,2	92,36
• Castilla -La Mancha	33	79,33	73,2	94,09	15239,3	80,66
• Catalonia	43,2	103,85	70,7	90,87	22562,2	119,42
• Extremadura	32,1	77,16	71,6	92,03	12024,9	63,65
• Galicia	37,3	89,66	80,3	103,21	14904	78,88
• Madrid	54,3	130,53	87,5	112,47	25479	134,86
• Murcia	39,1	93,99	74,6	95,89	16143,4	85,44
• Navarre	48,3	116,11	87,5	112,47	23814,2	126,04
• Rioja	41,5	99,76	80,4	103,34	21578,4	114,21
• Valencian Country	36,4	87,50	70,9	91,13	18123,1	95,92
France	65	156,25	91,2	117,22	23480	124,28
United Kingdom	84	201,92	73,6	94,60	23543,7	124,61
Sweden	82	197,12	91,1	117,10	23818,4	126,07
Portugal	20	48,08	72,6	93,32	15782,4	83,53
Italy	46	110,58	75,3	96,79	22420	118,66

Source: MEC (2001) and OECD (2004)