

## TRANSCRIPTION

**Federico:** This is *Educational Segregation in Spain, Episode Three: The Causes*.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** Welcome to the third episode of *School Segregation in Spain*. In the last episodes, we presented a legislative initiative to take up school segregation in the Basque Country. We learned about their efforts to gather signatures to present in the Basque Parliament. We also learned about the extent of school segregation in Spain and in the Basque Country, and how it compares to the US. We learned about the complex language politics of the Basque Country and the history of Ikastolas as beacons of Euskera, the Basque language. We also learned different modes of instruction in the Basque Country with a model teaching in Euskera, a model teaching in a mix of Euskera and Spanish, and a model teaching in Spanish alone. At the end of the last episode, the initiative presented by *Zubiak Eraikiz* was gaining support. They were able to secure signatures and the support of three major political parties.

**Federico:** In this episode, we delve deeper into the causes of school segregation in Spain. We examine the causes advanced by the ILP, and we talk to the experts, to researchers, to see how they align or not with research findings. We conclude this episode comparing the causes of school segregation in Spain with the US. So, stay with us for another great episode of *School Segregation in Spain*.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** The ILP Initiative could not only present to the Basque Country that school segregation existed and was a problem. They also needed to propose an array of solutions and push for a political commitment from the parliament to adopt them.

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And to provide solutions, like any problem, one needs to understand the root causes, so the solutions address the roots that generates and perpetrate the problem, in this case school segregation. The report produced by Pablo provided some leads to understand the cause of school segregation in the Basque Country. So, let's take a moment and let's review what we found in that report.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** The Basque Country has the largest percentage of students attending to Escuelas Concertadas, not just in Spain but the entire Europe, only second to Belgium. Almost 50 percent of all students from early childhood to high school, attend to Escuela Concertada. To give a comparison, in the US, only 7 percent of students attend to a charter school, which are similar to Escuelas Concertadas. Around 10 percent of students in the public network are immigrant students, but at the Catholic Concertadas, that number is 5.8 percent, so almost half of it. In the Ikastolas, those schools that traditionally have taught the Basque language, 2.5 percent, four times less than in the public network. Students receiving free lunch services account for 39 percent of the enrollment in Concertadas network, but only 61 percent in the public network.

**Federico:** So, we start finding some patterns here. According to the ILP and based on the report, the problem—the major problem contributing to school segregation in the Basque Country was the dual system of Escuelas Concertadas, including Ikastolas and Catholic Concertadas, and the traditional public system. There were mechanisms that Concertadas implicitly or explicitly used to not enroll immigrant students and students from low socio-economic status. So, let's hear what Gonzalo Larruzea said about this.

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**Gonzalo:** [Spanish 00:04:18]

**Federico:** So, what Gonzalo explain [sic] is that while Concertadas are supposed to be completely free and subsidized by the government, they charge different kinds of fees, for example for materials. They may charge costs for the bus to get to a school or for lunch. And even Ikastolas, those schools that have historically been a beacon for the Basque language, have become co-operatives and for a parent to be part of that co-operative, they need to pay a fee to become a member. So, families who can't pay or don't want to pay ended up going to the public school system, particularly families from low socioeconomic status or immigrant families.

**Federico:** So, is that it? Can we just attribute school segregation in Spain to the dual system of Concertadas and public schools? It seems like a very simplistic answer to a very complex issue. Let's hear what the researchers have to say. First, Adrián Zancajo.

[Transition music]

**Adrián:** The first factor of segregation is the fact that we have a strong public system, but at the same time a very strong and important private—number of private schools that are publicly funded. So, this dual or this double sector in education, it's an important driver of school segregation. Because as you know, and maybe other people has explained you [sic], these private subsidized schools have important barriers of access in terms of student selection, but also economic barriers of access in terms of school fees. So, for—they didn't show that this is the first factor to explain the segregation in terms of economic status, but also in terms of immigration. So, this is one of the main challenge, because the difference between the number—the level of enrollment of immigrant students in public schools and in private subsidized schools, it's very important.

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- Adrián:** And the other big issue is the capacity of choice of families. We know that in those municipalities where the number or the percentage of immigrant is high, and autochthonous families try to different differentiate themselves to—to—to—obtain some level of social closure from these immigrant students that are perceived as a threat for the educational opportunities and the academic territory of these children. So, we have these two phenomenon that play a role at the same time, because these families fight to find some level of social closure, and they have this sector of private subsidized schools offering them this kind of social closures by putting high levels, or establishing high levels, of school fees, or even doing some kind of student selection.
- Adrián:** So, I will say that these are the two main factors. On the one hand is the private and the public sector that are playing an important role in the segregation dynamics in the Spanish education system, particularly in some regions and in some urban areas. And the fact that the immigrant population is concentrated in some municipalities in some particular regions of Spain, and this created a dynamic to avoid these immigrants from the autochthonous families.
- Federico:** Hmm. And you talk about the dual system, one of the major forces driving this segregation. But what about residential segregation? What about communities coming and locating where people like them are, right?
- Adrián:** Yeah. The fact is that the south of Europe, this is a common trend in many countries, in Italy, Greece, even. The level of residential segregation is lower than in other countries in Europe, like Germany, even the northern countries of the UK. So, we have a big problem of residential segregation. In fact, the levels of residential segregation of the big cities of Spain: Barcelona, Madrid, Sevilla, Zaragoza, are much lower than big cities in north of Europe.

**Adrián:** So, this is not a problem. We know that the school segregation is much, much higher than the residential segregation. And here what plays a role is the capacity of school choice for families. So, your residential decisions play an important role in terms of—in terms of the schooling of your children, because you have so many options of enrollment. So, I will say that compared to other countries, even in the US, I will say that residential segregation, of course it's a factor that explains part of the school segregation, but is not one of the most important ones.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** Adrián Zancajo reinforced the findings of the ILP around the issue of the dual system with Concertadas and the public network, but also talked about the capacity of families to exercise choice and how that creates inequality itself as well. And very interesting how residential segregation is not such a big factor in Spain as it is in the US. Now, let's hear about Toni Verger talking about issues of fees that Concertadas schools charge, but also about some cultural barriers for immigrant families.

[Transition music]

**Antoni:** Escuelas Concertadas, that are how we call charter schools in Spain, charge fees to families, and these fees are a de facto mechanism of school segmentation and student selection.

**Federico:** And do you have an idea of the range of these fees? I mean, if they're so exclusionary, I imagine there must be.

**Antoni:** Yeah, yeah. Actually, what's important to say, is that in a way, many public schools in Spain also charge fees for extracurricular services through the parent

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association, and sometimes these fees also in the public sector can be very, very different. So, in the private sector, what we observe is that they have gone a step further in charging for these extra fees. As I said, in some cases with the legitimate propose to compensate for the under public—under public funding.

**Antoni:** However, here, the range is very broad, which also reflect the fact that they are some of these Escuelas Concertadas that can have a public ethos and they charge the minimum possible to sustain the service. But we also have another extreme of Escuelas Concertadas that are behaving like elitist schools. And they can charge, let's say perfectly, to say it in dollars, \$800 a month for a student.

**Federico:** Wow.

**Antoni:** Plus, the public subsidy. So, this is, these are the two extremes. And then we have a lot of schools in the middle that maybe they could—they could behave in a more socially-inclusive way if the right educational policies were in place.

**Federico:** But are they allowed—is there a cap of how much can they charge?

**Antoni:** The thing is that, of course there is a cap, and actually gratuity in education is declared by law. So, it's not possible for any school that is part of the public system to charge fees. So, what happens is that these fees, we know that they are de facto fees, but they are usually charged through volunteer donations to private foundations that are attached to the school provider. So actually, they are not violating the law because it's not the school that is charging a fee, it's a parallel foundation that is asking for voluntary donations to families. So, everybody knows, and everybody plays this game, and we know that they are de facto school fees, but legally they are not school fees. Ergo, they are not—they are not unfulfilling the law.

- Federico:** Yeah. So, it seemed that at least this contribution to segregation, like a market-driven contribution to educational segregation, will segregate mostly on basis of class and income. Does it have an effect on ethnic or language segregation?
- Antoni:** Absolutely. Absolutely. And of course, the fees is a key factor of socioeconomic segregation and the fact that migrant population are usually overrepresented in the lowest socioeconomic status quartiles also makes that there's a sort of endogeneity between migrant and social class segregation. But we have also to take into account that the very nature of these charter schools, or Escuelas Concertadas as we call them, as Catholic schools also operate as a cultural barrier for some immigrant families, that they come for instance from the north of Africa. So yeah, I would say that definitely these public-private partnerships is [sic] a key driver of school segregation, but not only for socioeconomic reasons.
- Federico:** When you mean cultural barriers, that's because they don't provide certain services that families will need, or—or how?
- Antoni:** Yeah, yeah of course the adaptation of the school meals is not so well regulated as in the public sector. There are also many symbols of the Catholic Church all around the school, even the presence of religious people. They understand delivery in the curriculum of religion as indoctrination, not as understanding the history of religion. So, these are these cultural barriers to the access of non-Christian or non-Catholic population.
- Federico:** And are there other Concertadas that may be from other religions?
- Antoni:** Very little. Very little. That's interesting. Usually the groups of—the groups of immigrant, for instance, from some Arab countries that are coming here, maybe they are from an elite and maybe they create their own private schools or they join

international schools that are totally private. So, maybe because they don't know how the mechanism works, or in theory it would be illegal to apply for a PPP contract with the state, but the numbers are very low. Even for the Jewish, I would say that maybe there's only one Concertada in the whole—in the whole country.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** So far, Adrián Zancajo and Toni Verger kind of reinforced and supported with ILP have founded. But I don't think the story ends there. Lucas Gortazar also tell us about other factors that goes beyond the dual system between Concertadas and public schools that also contribute to school segregation.

[Transition music]

**Lucas:** Other factors, you know, can be, for example, the language structure and the language barriers. And it's not only about the historic—what we call historic regions like the Basque Country, Catalonia or Galicia, but also regions like Madrid who has started a bilingual education program in English and Spanish, and which has acted as a middle-class flight type of service and, you know, has made a lower-class and immigrant population get out of these schools.

**Lucas:** I think the existence of Concertadas is one of the drivers, but we have high segregation within the Concertadas system and within the public—publicly provided or state-owned schools. In fact, it's like 20 percent of the total segregation is explained by the existence of the Concertadas network. The remaining 80 percent, according to the composition data from PISA and other service, is what happens within the networks. It's easy to focus on Concertadas because it's easy to focus on something, and on something we can look at in



certain, specific schools. It's easier to look at the group of schools where you start to work with.

**Lucas:** And of course, there are always also vested interests in making the problem of segregation a matter of Concertadas versus state-owned. And it's also, there are interest by Concertadas schools to make these kind of wars so that they are less accountable. "We are being attacked by state-owned schools. We are under risk." And then a whole new discussion.

**Lucas:** That being said, there is clear knowledge of what are the mechanisms that the charter schools have, to segregate or to give parents to segregate themselves. And of course, they were well identified by the legislative proposal. And I think, of course, you know, addressing them would be of great help, but it wouldn't be solving all the issue, or perhaps it would be creating other—other problems. I think it's good to include the Concertadas as a key actor in the discussion, but if we start playing games, we probably won't be able to move strong towards, you know, a better—better future.

**Federico:** Hm.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** Xavier Bonal also talk about within-network segregation.

[Transition music]

**Xavier:** One of the other things that we have recently, which is worrying, is that what is happening is that, as I mentioned, the level of public demand has increased very much, but we have middle classes that are demanding public schools, high quality

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public schools, and we have higher and higher levels of segregation within the public system, which is highly significant.

**Xavier:** And then that's interesting because you don't have any more, like one voice for the public system, and one voice for the private. Within each sector, you start having like very, very different voices, and you have middle classes actually asking for more schools of certain type. And—for—"I don't agree to go to this public school. I want to go to a public school which is innovative and with a specific school ethos." So, asking for diversity within the public system, which increases segregation within the public system, very much. And this is more recent. We are talking that we don't have any more double network of schools; we have a triple network of schools because public schools themselves are being segregated and very much differentiated.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** So, let's take a pause and summarize and digest what we learned from talking to the researchers. First, we can say that in a sense, and to an extent, the ILP was right. The dual system contributes to school segregation in Spain. And that is because—not just because the fees, as Gonzalo was saying, but also about cultural barriers that Toni Verger pointed to in our interview. Residential segregation seems to not play a big role in school segregation in Spain.

**Federico:** But what is interesting, that language politics do. As Lucas Gortazar was telling us, language can be a sorting mechanism for students, not just in terms of historical language, like the Basque language, the Catalan or the historical language in Galicia, but also for example in Madrid, with schools that wants to include English as a bilingual instruction. And more important and interesting, what we start seeing in Spain is segregation within networks, as even within the public system, there is

also school segregation as there is a diversification of options for families that contributes to middle-class families choosing particular kinds of schools.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** So, in regards of language models of instruction as being a contributor to segregation, let me tell you a little personal example. When I arrived here to the Basque Country I had—I still have them, two children. One that at that time was three years old, and the other one who was six. The one who was three-year-old, we started actually both in Modelo A which is just in Spanish, because we want them to learn Spanish, and we were a little concerned about them trying to learn Spanish at the same time to learn the Euskera, which is actually a very difficult language to learn. But in the second year we gathered some courage, and we move our youngest one, that was entering kindergarten, to the Modelo D, just in Euskera because we saw that she had a very strong already Castellano, Spanish language. But with the older one, we decided to not and keep him in Modelo A which is just in Spanish. He's still going just in Spanish. He's in right now in third grade.

**Federico:** And we notice a huge difference between the classrooms. The Modelo D, which is in Euskera, it's mostly Basque families, and some families from Spain who still decided to put the kids in the Basque instruction language, because they're having long term plans to stay here. But in my third-grader classroom, which is the Modelo A, just in Spanish, they're only, only immigrant families who go to that classroom. So, I can start seeing some of the things that the researchers were saying about language as a form of segregation. But language politics is so sensitive here in the Basque Country that, as you'll see in the last episode, will have a role to play in the final decision about the ILP. But now I think we should

turn to think about how this compares to the causes of school segregation in the United States.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** When comparing the causes of school segregation in Spain and the United States, we can find some stark differences, but also some commonalities. Residential segregation in the US have played a historically important, significant role in the school segregation. And this residential segregation is not due to natural causes such as people choosing where to live, but it has been produced by state-sanctioned policies, such as red lining practices, loan practices, zoning, public housing, how public housing was arranged, Jim Crow laws, as well as private practices, from block busting strategies from real estate agents to whites using racially restricted governance and violence to exclude Blacks and other minoritized communities from white areas. And more recently, the white flight model has been also one of the main explanations for school segregations, where whites flight or move away from areas that are increasingly becoming diverse.

**Federico:** Over time, of course, these housing practices, these housing arrangements has had an impact on the cost of living also, sorting families not just in terms of race but also in socioeconomic status. And despite that in 1954, *Brown vs. Board of Education* declared school segregation illegal, there was a huge resistance at the local, at the national level, with huge backlashing [sic] to efforts to desegregate schools. And despite some widespread success in the 1970s and '80s, desegregation completely stalled in the 1990s.

**Federico:** So, Spain does not share this unfortunate history of racism that we see in the United States. Let me clarify: I'm not saying that there is no racism in Spain. That is a much longer discussion for another podcast. What I'm saying is that racism did

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not shape the residential arrangements in Spain as it did in the US, and therefore did not have such a big impact in school segregation. Funding is also an interesting issue to discuss here, because in the US, the large portion of school district funding comes from property taxes, creating huge funding inequities marked by racial lines. In Spain, funding is more centralized and does not depend on property taxes, which results in a more equitable way to distribute funding, even to those schools who are segregated.

**Federico:** And then in the 1990s in the US, there has been an emphasis on school choice, with an expansion and diversification of public-school options, including charter schools, selective enrollment schools, specialty schools like our focus schools, which has contributed to education segregation. And I think here we can draw some parallels with which we have been learning in Spain. First, we see in both places that school choice serve [sic] as a mechanism for furthering segregation in different ways.

**Federico:** First, not all families are able to obtain important information of schools or know how to search for information on a school, or even process that information, making sense of it about, for example, school quality. Information about school is also generally transmitted and evaluated through social networks which are racially and social economically segregated as well, which contributes to differential access to schools.

**Federico:** Second, families are not equally able to choose all possible schools. Families have different resources that they need to be able to navigate when they think about school options, as well as constraints like transportation, for example. And finally, and we see this again both in Spain and the US, schools have not been welcoming to all students. There are a variety of ways in which schools shift their student enrollment. For example, where they selectively market to some parents

and not to others, or when they charge fees as in the case of Spain, or where they try to promote a particular culture like Catholic schools or even Ikastolas, as we have reviewed in this podcast.

**Federico:** And then, very important, families, particularly middle-class families from dominant culture, like white families in the US or Spanish-born or Basque-born families in the Basque Country in Spain, they need to want to send their children with other children whose families are vastly different from themselves. And that—and that is an obstacle that also contributes to systemic racism and placeism that shapes school segregation.

**Federico:** We must note here and put a world of caution when we compare charter schools and Escuelas Concertadas. Escuelas Concertadas have a much longer and different history than charter schools, as we reviewed in episode one. And the forms of segregation evidence that in Escuelas Concertadas and charter schools are different. For instance, at the outset of charter school movement in the US, opponents of charter schools feared that charter schools will become havens for white flights, moving white students out of the public school system.

**Federico:** However, this has not occurred, but the opposite have [sic] happened. White flight is not the primary reason for school segregation, at least in regards to charter schools. The prevailing trend is for non-dominant students, particularly Blacks and Latinx, to self-segregate into charter schools. As a result, Black students, Latinx students, in particularly [sic] in charter schools, attend to more intensively segregated schools than their peers in traditional public schools.

**Federico:** In Spain, Escuelas Concertadas act differently. They act mostly as a vehicle from Spanish families or Basque families, middle-class families, to send their children with similar kids—with kids from similar families that their own, and also in some

case [sic], to inculcate religious values and to self-segregate in Concertadas schools. But let's remember also, that as we learned in this episode, there is a huge diversification also within the public system, causing similar forms of segregation.

**Federico:** So, it is important that we keep in mind, as we move to the next episode, all these causes that we have reviewed and how we can compare them with the US. Because in the next episode, we will begin to talk about solutions, and we'll see what happened when Sabin presented in the Basque Parliament.

[Transition music]

**Federico:** In the next and final episode, we delve deeper into the solutions proposed by the ILP, and we see how they compare to the solutions proposed from research, and also, with the solutions that have been tried in the US. We also found [sic] out what happened after Sabine presented at the parliament. The Basque Parliament take up the issue and really advance some serious solutions to deal with school segregation in the Basque Country? This and much more in our final episode of *School Segregation in Spain*.

[Transition music]

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## Educational Segregation in Spain, Episode Three: The Causes

*Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*

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The Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, a project of the Great Lakes Equity Center, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide technical assistance, resources, and professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout the thirteen-state region.

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Finally, the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center would like to thank the Indiana University School of Education Indianapolis at IUPUI, as well as Executive Director Dr. Kathleen King Thorius, Director of Operations Dr. Seena Skelton, and Associate Director Dr. Tiffany Kyser, for their leadership and guidance in the development of all tools and resources to support the region.

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