

Article

Social Sustainability and School Segregation in the Region of Murcia (Spain)

Fina Antón Hurtado ^{1,*}, Fulgencio Sánchez Vera ², Javier Eloy Martínez Guirao ¹
and Anastasia Tellez Infantes ^{3,*}

¹ Departamento de Ciencia Política, Antropología Social y Hacienda Pública, Universidad de Murcia, 30100 Murcia, Spain; j.eloymartinez@um.es

² Departamento de Sociología y Antropología, Universidad de La Laguna, 38200 San Cristóbal de la Laguna, Spain; fsanchev@ull.edu.es

³ Departamento de Ciencia Sociales y Humanas, Universidad Miguel Hernandez, 03202 Elche, Spain

* Correspondence: fmanton@um.es (F.A.H.); atellez@umh.es (A.T.I.)

Abstract: In this article we show an anthropological analysis of the processes of distribution and segregation of students in the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia (Spain). This region has experienced an intense migratory flow in the last three decades from Africa, America and Europe. In a short time, the region has become a heterogeneous society, affecting social cohesion. The objective of the research was to analyze the degree and causes of school segregation by sex, socioeconomic reasons and origin of the students. In order to know the degree of segregation, we have carried out a quantitative analysis of the enrollment data from last five years through the databases of the Regional Center for Statistics of the Region of Murcia, and of the Ministry of Education and Professional Training, EDUCAbase. To understand the causes underlying this distribution, an ethnographic fieldwork was carried out visiting nine educational centers (four public, three subsidized and two private) that present a high segregation of students. Members of the management team of the centers, teachers and parents were interviewed, compiling their interpretations about the social reality of the center and the environment, as well as their point of view on education and the inclusion of diversity in the classroom. The information obtained sufficiently clarifies the reality and the causes of the distribution between the public and private network of immigrant students, and even makes visible important differences between the different groups according to their origin.

Keywords: school segregation; ghetto school; education; social polarization; social cohesion



Citation: Antón Hurtado, F.; Sánchez Vera, F.; Martínez Guirao, J.E.; Tellez Infantes, A. Social Sustainability and School Segregation in the Region of Murcia (Spain). *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 1580. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031580>

Academic Editor: Jose Balsa-Barreiro

Received: 29 November 2021

Accepted: 23 January 2022

Published: 29 January 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

As many authors have stated, the concepts of sustainable development or sustainability are often misunderstood [1–4]. On the one hand, since their origins, these concepts have referred more to environmental and economic aspects than to social ones; on the other hand, for many authors, they refer to the intersection of economic aspects, social justice and environmental protection [5–9]. As some experts have shown, the social dimension is very important to maintain long-term sustainability [10–12]. We understand social sustainability as the union of aspects such as respect for nature, social harmony, a good standard of living and a satisfactory and equal education, which allows the same opportunities for growth and development to the majority of the population [13].

As we know, the term “segregation” has multiple interpretations in the specialized literature, as Gorard and Taylor [14] have already noted. We can differentiate: socio-spatial segregation, residential segregation, school segregation, occupational segregation, political segregation, ideological segregation, social segregation, urban segregation, gender segregation, socioeconomic segregation, sexual segregation, religious segregation, etc. The segregation of people is generated by the existence of differences and produces exclusion. It is difficult to apply this concept because there is no clear definition shared by most authors.

This happens with the term “school segregation”, where there are various definitions and analysis approaches as evidenced by the studies of numerous experts [15–18].

In our research we focus on one type of school segregation, based on ethnic origin. We have followed, on the one hand, the approaches of studies on racial segregation and ethnic minorities carried out by authors in the United States [19,20]. On the other hand, our analytical approach is in line with research on school segregation developed in other countries focused on the concentration of foreign students in certain educational centers [21–23].

We defend that social segregation, and, in particular, school segregation, harms the social sustainability of a population. We consider that school segregation reflects social segregation in a community, where low-income immigrant students are discriminated against in front of the local population. School segregation that corresponds, in most cases, to socioeconomic residential segregation.

A recent study, carried out in 24 large urban regions on six continents, has analyzed the relationship between income inequality and social segregation and has shown that the increasingly growing social and socioeconomic inequality in cities represents an enormous challenge for future social sustainability since not everyone can access to the same labor opportunities [24].

Analyzing international research on educational segregation we can verify that other studies have shown that there is usually a significant imbalance of immigrant students between the various educational centers of the same city or school district [25–29].

In 2015, the United Nations approved the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, a roadmap for countries to guide their policies and improve the lives of all, leaving no one behind [30]. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter, SDG) range from the elimination of poverty to the fight against climate change, education, equality for women, the defense of the environment, the design of our cities, the peace and justice, and it is argued that sustainable development requires concentrated efforts to build an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet. Social Anthropology is emerging as most suitable discipline to analyze this new perspective from a diachronic and holistic approach.

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between learning and educating. Learning is not specifically human. There are different types of learning, some of which we share with other animals [31]. In the “situational individual learning”, humans and animals learn from our own experience. In the “social situational learning”, we learn from other members of the social group [31], what from Pedagogy is called “learning by models” [32]. This is one of the keys to understanding the uniqueness of the current moment, in which the models are not our congeners, but images or representations in electronic devices. Finally, there would be “cultural learning”, exclusively human, which depends on our symbolic capacity and is learned from childhood. We do this type of cultural learning unconsciously, when we acquire it from birth and incorporate it into our daily lives, and, consciously, when our parents teach us behavior patterns. Further, the observation and subsequent imitation make up mechanisms of cultural learning in our species, ascribing values and projecting beliefs in our actions [31]. In this case, we would be talking about education and not just learning.

The UN proposal should therefore be situated in cultural learning. It is not just about teaching content and strategies, but about improving the lives of humanity. A strategy to know if we achieve the SDGs is to use the changes in response to the “chronotope complex” [33] and apply the model of “culture modules” by Álvarez Munarriz [34]. This author proposes four modules: the techno-economic, institutional, ideal and ecological. To achieve sustainable development, the UN considers it essential to harmonize three basic and interrelated elements: economic growth (techno-economic module), social inclusion (institutional module) and protection of the environment (ecological), but it obviates the importance of the ideal module in which the beliefs, values and norms that emanate from both are located, or in other words, the culture, in which the necessary changes are based to promote sustainable development that generates opportunities for all, reduces

the inequalities, improve basic living standards and promote equitable and inclusive social development [30].

There is no doubt that Education is the key to achieving many Sustainable Development Goals. Education is often cited as the great social balancer. Bourdieu [35] considers education as the elevator of socioeconomic mobility that is key to getting out of poverty, reducing inequalities and achieving gender equality. There is no doubt that the school plays a decisive role in this challenge. In addition, education and the school institution are a basic pillar to promote mutual knowledge of the different social groups that make up our societies, fostering respect and tolerance among people, which results in the development of more cohesive and more peaceful societies [36].

It is understandable that an objective of the SDG Agenda is dedicated to education, specifically Objective 4 seeks to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and among the goals to achieve it are indicated:

4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

4.5. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

After the family, the school is the second space for socialization as it is the most basic and direct way to educate [37]. Thus, “as a secondary socializing framework, the school represents a social world of enormous importance and significance for the person, an institutional context with explicit educational intentionality that cannot be mechanically substituted by other social agents” [38]. Consequently, when the school does not facilitate the coexistence of boys and girls with different personal or social characteristics, it is hindering coexistence and mutual knowledge. We can affirm that a school system that segregates encourages the reproduction of social inequalities, in addition to legitimizing them [39].

We understand by school segregation the concentration of students in certain educational centers based on the socioeconomic situation of the families, the student’s country of birth, belonging to an ethnic or cultural group, their academic performance, etc. When this concentration reaches values higher than 50%, we speak of ghetto centers or school ghettos [40,41]. A ghetto center denies the possibility of the center becoming a space for encounter and interrelation among cultures [42]. The separation of students by some characteristic prevents the development of educational equity, inclusive economic growth and social cohesion. Educational research has confirmed that the best educational systems are those that promote equity, that is, they work so that all students, regardless of their social and economic circumstances, are able to develop all their abilities, avoiding the social reproduction of poverty and social inequalities [43–45].

In this sense, Spanish legislation on education, both the Organic Law of Education [46] and the recently repealed Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality [47] of the Popular Party, recognize the need to promote an equitable educational system. The current Organic Law 3/2020, of December 29, which modifies Organic Law 2/2006 [48] has a very special impact on this aspect, setting the ultimate objective of reinforcing equity and the inclusive capacity of the system. Thus, in Article 109, it indicates:

1. In scheduling the offer of places, the educational administrations will harmonize the demands derived from the obligation of the public powers to guarantee the right of all to education, through a sufficient supply of public places, under conditions of equality and the individual rights of students, fathers, mothers, and legal guardians.

In any case, the objective of social cohesion and the consideration of the heterogeneity of students as an educational opportunity will be pursued.

2. The teachings regulated in this law will be programmed by the educational administrations considering the existing offer of public centers and the one authorized in the subsidized private centers, ensuring the right to education and articulating the principle of effective participation of the affected sectors as suitable mechanism to adequately ad-

dress the rights and freedoms and the choice of all interested parties. The principles of programming and participation are correlative and cooperative in the elaboration of the offer that will entail an adequate and balanced schooling of students with a specific need for educational support, as a guarantee of equity and quality of teaching.

The commitment to equity obliges the educational administration to establish programs to avoid or, where appropriate, reduce social segregation in schools. If problems are identified with high-poverty, high-concentration minority, and low-performing schools, then the education administration must seek policy options within its scope of control to try to address inequality.

However, the education system is often segregated, by origin and income, a consolidated situation that needs to be analyzed and visualized at the micro-social level and in specific educational centers and regions to develop corrective policies [49].

Spain, as in other Mediterranean European countries, has received a significant number of immigrants in recent decades, which has been reflected in its multicultural society. This phenomenon has caused socio-cultural changes that have been reflected in schools and that makes it necessary to analyze, as we do in this article, the degree of school segregation that exists in public, subsidized and private schools. For this we have selected a Spanish region, the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia (CARM), where this migratory phenomenon has been especially important in the last 30 years.

The CARM is one of the 17 communities that make up the Spanish State. The total population is 1,513,161 inhabitants, of which 217,487 are of foreign origin [50], since the region has experienced an intense migratory flow in the last three decades. It is worth noting the diversity of the migrant population: some come from developed Europe in search of a better climate, comfort and services in the residential areas of the Mediterranean coast, while others migrate for economic reasons, mainly from North Africa and South America. The reception of this migratory and multicultural management has caused certain social tensions that have been reflected in the educational field. The rapid increase in foreign students has caused bewildered families to make school decisions based on fear and prejudice [49].

Although public policies advocate the inclusion and non-discrimination of foreign students in educational centers at a theoretical and legislative level, and have a strong impact on teachers [51], the truth is that they are teachers who have to respond directly in their classes to this inclusion process that avoids segregation within the center itself, through their daily educational activities [52,53]. The management teams of the educational centers play a key role in integrating these immigrant students into their local host community through their inclusive measures that promote intercultural education and respect for ethnic diversity [51–55].

In this sense, the main objective of this article is to analyze the degree and the main causes of school segregation between the education centers (from Infant, Primary, Secondary, Bacca-laureate and Vocational Training) of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia. To achieve this, we follow the perspective of anthropology and a methodology based on quantitative and qualitative techniques. The complexity of the objective forced us to divide it into two parts or specific objectives with different research approaches:

1st. To analyze the main segregating trends at the global level in the CARM, specifically the distribution of students by sex, socioeconomic level and origin. We made use of quantitative techniques, mainly statistical analysis of the student enrollment data.

2nd. To understand the causes of segregation, we conducted an ethnographic field-work in schools with a high concentration of students, making use of interviews with members of the educational community of the center (parents, teachers and management teams).

2. Materials and Methods

To analyze the distribution of students among the CARM educational centers, the enrollment data in General Regime Teaching during the 2020/2021 academic year, but

also data from the 2016/2017 academic year, were used because it was the last period in which the regional administration shared data of origin of the students. Consequently, methodologically it is a quantitative analysis of census-type information. Our sources of information are the databases of the autonomous community, the Regional Statistical Center of the Region of Murcia (CREM); and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of the Government of Spain, EDUCAbase. These official sources provide us with detailed information at the regional and municipal level, but the information on the distribution of students among the centers of the same municipality is hidden. In any case, the information provided is sufficiently clarifying about the reality of the distribution between the public and private network of immigrant students, and even makes visible important differences between different groups according to their origin.

On the other hand, to understand the causes that underlie this distribution, an ethnographic field work was carried out visiting nine educational centers (four public, three subsidized and two private) that present a high segregation of students. Members of the management team of the centers, teachers and parents were interviewed, compiling their interpretations about the social reality of the center and the environment, as well as their point of view on education and the inclusion of diversity in the classroom. The first studies began during the 2015/2016 academic year and were interrupted in the 2019/2020 academic year due to the global SARS-CoV-2 pandemic; the last part of the field work was developed during the 2020/2021 academic year. The research techniques used were the classic ones of the ethnographic methodology, specifically, documentary analysis, open interviews and participant observation.

The ethnographic methodology has allowed us to adopt an anthropological perspective, focusing on the depth of information and a holistic approach. Through the application of these techniques and their triangulation, we have been able to access shared meanings and the observation of social interactions between Spanish students and foreign students, teachers and students, Spanish families and immigrant families, etc.

In this way, direct and participant observation allowed us to know the social behaviors in the daily life of school and local life, that is, “what people do”. With the open interviews we were able to access the speeches, that is to say, what “people say or say they do” and compare it with what they actually do. They were made from a script with topics to be discussed based on previously established analytical categories, such as: conformation of the ghetto centers, expansion and strengthening of the private and subsidized private centers network, schooling process, economic factor, transport, investment in educational services and supply, centers beliefs and values, municipal management, reception policy of the centers, family expectations and cultural affinity.

The analysis of the speeches of the interviews was carried out from the codification of the information based on these categories. Along with them, new ones emerged that were used following the grounded theorization [56].

This approach has allowed us to observe the beliefs and values of fathers, mothers, teachers and managers. In this way we have been able to reveal the network of expectations, relationships and particular misgivings, as well as the covert policies of the centers.

The following table (Table 1) reflects the characteristics of each center visited and the interviews carried out.

Table 1. Characteristics of each of the centers visited and interviews conducted.

| Center ID | Type of Center | Types of Educations | Educational and Service Offer | Diversity of Students | Number of Interviews |
|-----------|----------------|---|---|--|--|
| 1 | Public | Infant, Primary | No extra service. School timetable: 9 a.m.–15 p.m. | Predominantly Spaniards | 4 female teachers, 1 head of studies, 1 principal, 1 secretary, 3 members of the association of parents, 6 mothers, 3 fathers Total: 19 |
| 2 | Public | Infant, Primary | Classroom of Speech Therapy and Therapeutic Pedagogy. Physiotherapy. Transport. Bank of books. School timetable: 9 a.m.–15 p.m. | Almost all the students are of foreign origin, especially Moroccan and Ecuadorian. | 3 male teachers, 6 female teachers, 1 head of studies, 1 secretary, 1 principal, 7 mothers, 5 fathers Total: 24 |
| 3 | Public | Infant, Primary | Classroom of Speech Therapy and Therapeutic Pedagogy. Transport. Bank of books. School timetable: 9 a.m.–15 p.m. | Multicultural school with high proportions of students of foreign origin (Europeans, Moroccans and Ecuadorians), there are hardly any Spaniards. | 8 female teachers, 1 head of studies, 6 mothers Total: 15 |
| 5 | Public | Compulsory secondary education, Baccalaureate, VET | Transport. School timetable: 9 a.m.–15 p.m. | It is a multicultural high school. More than half of the students are of foreign origin | 7 male teachers, 6 female teachers, 8 mothers Total: 21 |
| 4 | Subsidized | Infant, Primary, Compulsory secondary education, Baccalaureate, VET | Bilingual. Canteen. Transport. Extracurricular activities. School timetable: 9 a.m.–18 p.m. | There are no socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants. They are fundamentally of Spanish origin, and hardly foreigners. | 5 female teachers, 5 mothers, 1 principal Total: 11 |
| 9 | Subsidized | Infant, Primary, Compulsory secondary education, Baccalaureate | Bilingual Canteen. Extracurricular activities. School timetable: 9 a.m.–17 p.m. | It is a religious center. Spaniards predominate. There are no socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants, and none are of Moroccan origin. | 5 male teachers, 6 female teachers, 5 mothers Total: 16 |

Table 1. Cont.

| Center ID | Type of Center | Types of Educations | Educational and Service Offer | Diversity of Students | Number of Interviews |
|-----------|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| 7 | Subsidized | Infant, Primary, Compulsory secondary education, Baccalaureate | Bilingual. Canteen. Extracurricular activities. School timetable: 7:45 a.m.–17 p.m. | There are no socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants. They are fundamentally of Spanish origin, and none are of Moroccan origin | 4 male teachers, 6 female teachers, 7 mothers Total: 17 |
| 6 | Private | Infant, Primary, Compulsory secondary education, Baccalaureate | British education system. Bilingual. Canteen. Transport. Extracurricular activities. School timetable: 9 a.m.–16:30 p.m. | There are no socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants. They are fundamentally of Spanish origin, and none are of Moroccan origin | 7 mothers, 5 female teachers, 2 male teachers Total: 14 |
| 8 | Private | Infant, Primary, Compulsory secondary education, Baccalaureate | British education system. Bilingual. Canteen. Extracurricular activities. School timetable: 9:15 a.m.–16:30 p.m. | There are no socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants. They are fundamentally of Spanish origin, and none are of Moroccan origin | 5 mothers, 2 female teachers, 2 male teachers Total: 14 |

Source: Own elaboration.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Sex Segregation

The recently approved Education Law (LOMLOE) [48] establishes that in the process of admission of students both in public and subsidized centers “they will have the necessary measures to avoid the segregation of students for socioeconomic reasons or of another nature”, among them the sex of the students, and “they will develop the principle of coeducation in all educational stages” and “they will not separate the students by their gender”.

However, the Nelva and Monteagudo centers, belonging to the company Fomento de Centros de Enseñanza, which manages thirty-two centers spread over several Spanish communities, segregate by sex at the Primary, Secondary and Baccalaureate levels. The regional government has financed these subsidized centers with public funds. The pedagogical approach to sustain this segregation, which among its followers is called “differentiated education” is based on the idea that boys and girls have different maturational and learning rates. Consequently, educating them separately allows better academic results for both since their education is more personalized or adapted to the characteristics of boys and girls [57,58]. They defend that in this way equal opportunities between boys and girls are achieved, an argument that legally and pedagogically is highly questionable [59–61].

Undoubtedly, segregation by sex has a symbolic impact and defines the ideological positions of the regional political elite. However, other types of segregation for reasons of origin and socioeconomic have a quantitative impact of greater significance at the regional level.

3.2. Socio-Economic and Origin Segregation

At CARM, the phenomenon of immigration began three decades ago, accelerating in the late 1990s. The impact on the education system can be seen analyzing the schooling

of foreign students since 2000. In the 2000–2001 academic year, the percentage of foreign students was 1.9% in the region, passing in the 2007–2008 academic year to 12.6%, an increase of more than ten points in just seven years that was a huge effort for the education system and especially for teachers. Since then, and with the influence of the economic and employment crisis of 2007, the figures have grown slightly, so that in the last decade the percentage can be considered stabilized [62].

According to the Murcia Regional Center for Statistics (CREM), for 2016–2017, the last year for which it offers these data, the student body enrolled according to teaching and ownership of the center, out of a total of 290,679 students, 205,624 were enrolled in public centers and 85,055 in private centers, of which 71,875 were in subsidized private centers (receives public resources for funding) and 13,180 in private centers (without public funding) [63]. In the 2020–2021 academic year, there were 299,654 students enrolled in the General Regime at CARM, of which 209,621 were in public schools and 90,033 in private ones (Table 2) [64]. This means that 30% of teaching is private, either subsidized by the state or paid by families.

Table 2. Students enrolled in General Regime Teachings by ownership and education type (2020–2021).

| Type of Center | Total | Public | Private |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Infant—1st cycle | 7637 | 3909 | 3728 |
| Infant—2nd cycle | 47,595 | 32,593 | 15,002 |
| Primary Ed. | 107,614 | 74,856 | 32,758 |
| Special Education | 1752 | 1188 | 564 |
| Compulsary secondary Ed. | 75,298 | 51,785 | 23,513 |
| Baccalaureate | 24,479 | 20,281 | 4198 |
| Distance Baccalaureate | 1474 | 1474 | 0 |
| Basic Vocational Training Cycles | 4458 | 3639 | 819 |
| Vocational Training Cycles Middle Grade | 11,047 | 8021 | 3026 |
| Vocational Training Cycles Middle Grade distance | 2295 | 790 | 1505 |
| Higher Degree Vocational Training Cycles | 13,267 | 9785 | 3482 |
| Distance Higher Degree Vocational Training Cycles | 2112 | 1039 | 1073 |
| Other training programs | 626 | 261 | 365 |
| TOTAL | 299,654 | 209,621 | 90,033 |

Source: Own elaboration from Statistics of Non-university Education. Subdirectorato General for Statistics and Studies of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Ref. [65] Report: Statistics of non-university education. Enrolled students. Course 2020–2021. Advance Data.

Among the 299,654 students enrolled in the General Regime Teaching, 43,017 are foreigners and 37,700 are distributed in public centers and 5317 in private ones (Table 3). This means that 14.4% of student body in the CARM is foreign: in public schools it is 12.6% and in private schools only 1.8% of the student body.

Seen in another way, 87.6% of foreign students are enrolled in public schools and only 12.4% in private ones (Table 4), which shows a high inequality in the distribution of students. In addition, foreign students are not evenly distributed by nationality. A total of 93.29% of students from Africa are enrolled in public schools, while those from North America are 70% and from the European Union 80%.

The CARM published in 2018 the latest reference on the distribution of students according to nationality and type of center, referring to the 2016–2017 academic year (Table 5). Analyzing this information, we observe that there are about ninety nationalities, but with a significant concentration, since the student body from Morocco accounts for 52.6% (17,651 students), followed by Ecuador with 12.9% (4632 students) and at a certain distance from Bolivia (5.3%) and Romania (4%), while the rest is distributed in percentages below 3%.

Table 3. Foreign students by ownership of the center and education.

| | Total | Public | Private |
|--|--------|--------|---------|
| Infant | 8492 | 7454 | 1038 |
| Primary | 18,861 | 16,975 | 1886 |
| Special Ed. | 244 | 168 | 76 |
| Compulsary secondary Ed. | 9162 | 7854 | 1308 |
| Baccalaureate (1) | 2006 | 1856 | 150 |
| Basic Vocational Training Cycles | 871 | 752 | 119 |
| Vocational Training Cycles—Middle Degree (1) | 1345 | 982 | 363 |
| Vocational Training Cycles—Higher Degree (1) | 1259 | 996 | 263 |
| Other Training Programs | 147 | 35 | 112 |
| Artistic Teaching | 122 | 121 | 1 |
| Language Teaching | 507 | 507 | 0 |
| Sport Teaching | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 43,017 | 37,700 | 5317 |

Foreign students who study this education in face-to-face and distance regimes are included in the Baccalaureate and Middle and Higher Level Training Cycles. Source: Own elaboration from [65]. Report: Foreign students by ownership of the center, community/province and education.

Table 4. Foreign students by ownership of the center and geographic area of nationality.

| | Total | European Union (27) | Rest of Europe | Africa | North America | Central America | South America | Asia | Oceania |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Public | 37,700 87.64% | 3011 81.22% | 1614 72.80% | 24,282 93.29% | 82 70.09% | 979 83.32% | 6471 79.55% | 1,255 76.99% | 6 75.00% |
| Private | 5317 12.36% | 696 18.78% | 603 27.20% | 1746 6.71% | 35 29.91% | 196 16.68% | 1664 20.45% | 375 23.01% | 2 25% |
| Total | 43,017 | 3707 | 2217 | 26,028 | 117 | 1175 | 8135 | 1630 | 8 |

Source: Own elaboration from [66]. Report: Foreign students by ownership of the center, community/province and geographic area of nationality.

We can observe that, although 88.1% of foreign students are enrolled in public schools, in the case of Moroccan students, 93.8% are in public schools, 6% in subsidized private schools, and 0.3% in private schools. A similar trend occurs with Romanians, Bulgarians and Algerians. On the contrary, 63.3% of English students are welcomed in public centers, 20.6% in subsidized schools and 16.1% in private ones. Similarly, 70.1% of Chinese students enroll in public schools, 23.5% in subsidized private centers, and 6.4% in private. These data point to a segregation that is reflected in the origin of the student, although in part it is explained by socioeconomic factors.

Regional data reveal two important trends; the first, widely known and debated, is that immigrant students are primarily educated in public schools; the second, less publicized, is the disparity in the distribution according to the nationality of the migrant student.

From a macro point of view, the imbalance in the distribution of students among public networks, subsidized private centers and paid private centers, while important, is not enough to explain the existence of ghetto schools. Let us think that globally, even though the public school is assuming the schooling of the majority of foreign students (87.6%), it is about 14.4% of the total network, a percentage that can undoubtedly be distributed equally more balanced. Therefore, it is logical to think that another important factor may be the distribution of the foreign school population throughout the regional territory. Thus, analyzing this reality by municipalities, revealing data appear. Nine municipalities exceed 20% (Table 6). Under these conditions, the challenge to achieve a correct distribution of the student body is undoubtedly much more complex since some municipalities double and almost triple the regional average. These are municipalities in the regions of Guadalupe and Cartagena-Mar Menor where there is intensive agriculture, carried out mainly by

the Maghreb population. The towns in the coast concentrate a large part of the regional tourism, both seasonal and residential, which requires labor in the service sector. In the municipality of Totana, the Ecuadorian population is the majority, especially during the real estate bubble due to the social support network that it formed [67,68].

Table 5. Foreign students enrolled in non-university education according to country of nationality and ownership/concert—2016/2017.

| | Total | | Public | | Private | | Private Subsidized | | Private Paid | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Morocco | 18,824 | 52.6% | 17,651 | 93.8% | 1173 | 6.2% | 1125 | 6% | 48 | 0.3% |
| Ecuador | 4632 | 12.9% | 3702 | 79.9% | 930 | 20.1% | 877 | 18.9% | 53 | 1.1% |
| Bolivia | 1880 | 5.3% | 1584 | 84.3% | 296 | 15.7% | 276 | 14.7% | 20 | 1.1% |
| Romania | 1443 | 4.0% | 1328 | 92.0% | 115 | 8% | 103 | 7.1% | 12 | 0.8% |
| Ukraine | 972 | 2.7% | 848 | 87.2% | 124 | 12.8% | 115 | 11.8% | 9 | 0.9% |
| China | 894 | 2.5% | 627 | 70.1% | 267 | 29.9% | 210 | 23.5% | 57 | 6.4% |
| Bulgaria | 746 | 2.1% | 694 | 93.0% | 52 | 7.0% | 51 | 6.8% | 1 | 0.1% |
| United Kingdom | 651 | 1.8% | 412 | 63.3% | 239 | 36.7% | 134 | 20.6% | 105 | 16.1% |
| Colombia | 580 | 1.6% | 456 | 78.6% | 124 | 21.4% | 104 | 17.9% | 20 | 3.4% |
| Algeria | 410 | 1.1% | 374 | 91.2% | 36 | 8.8% | 36 | 8.8% | 0 | 0% |
| Paraguay | 298 | 0.8% | 263 | 88.3% | 35 | 11.7% | 34 | 11.4% | 1 | 0.3% |
| Nigeria | 284 | 0.8% | 200 | 70.4% | 84 | 29.6% | 75 | 26.4% | 9 | 3.2% |
| Argentina | 279 | 0.8% | 236 | 84.6% | 43 | 15.4% | 30 | 10.8% | 13 | 4.7% |
| France | 261 | 0.7% | 111 | 42.5% | 150 | 57.5% | 17 | 6.5% | 133 | 51% |
| Brazil | 235 | 0.7% | 191 | 81.3% | 44 | 18.7% | 38 | 16.2% | 6 | 2.6% |
| India | 233 | 0.7% | 212 | 91% | 21 | 9% | 21 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| Russia | 220 | 0.6% | 146 | 66.4% | 74 | 33.6% | 31 | 14.1% | 43 | 19.5% |
| Portugal | 212 | 0.6% | 196 | 92.5% | 16 | 7.5% | 16 | 7.5% | 0 | 0% |
| Senegal | 164 | 0.5% | 141 | 86% | 23 | 14% | 21 | 12.8% | 2 | 1.2% |
| Italy | 155 | 0.4% | 113 | 72.9% | 42 | 27.1% | 26 | 16.8% | 16 | 10.3% |
| Poland | 148 | 0.4% | 129 | 87.2% | 19 | 12.8% | 16 | 10.8% | 3 | 2.0% |
| Venezuela | 140 | 0.4% | 120 | 85.7% | 20 | 14.3% | 19 | 13.6% | 1 | 0.7% |
| Lituania | 134 | 0.4% | 121 | 90.3% | 13 | 9.7% | 10 | 7.5% | 3 | 2.2% |
| Nicaragua | 130 | 0.4% | 115 | 88.5% | 15 | 11.5% | 15 | 11.5% | 0 | 0% |
| Dominican Republic | 123 | 0.3% | 107 | 87% | 16 | 13% | 15 | 12.2% | 1 | 0.8% |
| Honduras | 109 | 0.3% | 102 | 93.6% | 7 | 6.4% | 7 | 6.4% | 0 | 0% |
| Rest (less than 100 students) | 1618 | 4.5% | 1334 | 82.4% | 284 | 17.6% | 188 | 11.6% | 96 | 5.9% |
| Total | 35,775 | 100% | 31,513 | 88.1% | 4262 | 11.9% | 3610 | 10.1% | 652 | 1.8% |

Source: Own elaboration from CREM and Educational Evaluation and Quality Service. Statistics of non-university education [44].

Table 6. Foreign students enrolled in non-university education according to municipality 2016–2017 academic year.

| Municipality | Total of Students | Foreign Students | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| Torre-Pacheco | 8476 | 2527 | 29.8% |
| Fuente Álamo | 3353 | 920 | 27.4% |
| Beniel | 2058 | 559 | 27.2% |
| San Javier | 5958 | 1526 | 25.6% |
| Mazarrón | 4824 | 1227 | 25.4% |
| Alcázares (Los) | 3511 | 834 | 23.8% |
| San Pedro del Pinatar | 4975 | 1166 | 23.4% |
| Alhama de Murcia | 4281 | 892 | 20.8% |
| Totana | 6102 | 1238 | 20.3% |
| Lorca | 18,068 | 3094 | 17.1% |
| Fortuna | 1784 | 302 | 16.9% |
| Santomera | 3665 | 579 | 15.8% |
| Puerto Lumbreras | 2701 | 424 | 15.7% |
| Blanca | 1019 | 154 | 15.1% |
| Lorquí | 1064 | 141 | 13.3% |
| Pliego | 667 | 83 | 12.4% |
| Mula | 3149 | 387 | 12.3% |
| Unión (La) | 4106 | 502 | 12.2% |
| Rest, less than 12% | 210,903 | 18,399 | 8.7% |
| Total of CARM | 290,679 | 34,954 | 12% |

Source: Own elaboration from [69].

The administration does not publish the distribution of foreign students in each municipality, but if we make an estimate by transferring the percentage of global distribution to the municipal level, we observe that the problem worsens in the public network depending on the size of the private network, a direct relationship proportional: the larger the private network, the more concentration on the public one. This relationship generates various scenarios, and the worst occurs in municipalities with a high percentage of immigration and a high number of subsidized private places, a fact that has already been pointed out in other investigations [70–73]. This is where we find ghetto centers. To overcome the limitation of official statistics and investigate the mechanisms that participate in the construction of segregation and ghetto centers, it is necessary to go down to the local contexts where the sociocultural devices of school segregation are expressed [49].

3.3. Analysis of the Conformation of the Ghetto Centers According to the Actors (Teachers, Management Teams, Fathers and Mothers)

This intense and accelerated multiculturalism that CARM has experienced has generated tensions that have their correlation in the educational field. The rapid increase in foreign students has taken teachers, schools and the educational administration poorly prepared. Meanwhile, as we have seen in our field work, many families deploy schooling strategies for their children driven by fear and prejudice. Thus, among the undesirable situations that have been generated is school segregation and school ghettos.

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 2012 of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the performance of immigrant students is lower than that of native students, results that are repeated in all autonomous communities. The OECD itself, when analyzing these data, points out that “the concentration of socioeconomic disadvantage in a school is strongly related to the low performance of students” and recommends “reducing the concentration of disadvantage in schools” as “an excellent first step in helping immigrant students to successfully integrate into school and ultimately into society” [45] (p. 4). For those who blame all the responsibility for failure on the characteristics of the immigrant students themselves, PISA provides interesting findings: “immigrant students from the same country of origin, similar cultural contexts and socioeconomic status obtain different results among host countries” [74] (p.

4). This fact tells us that failure is not linked to being a foreigner, not to culture, or to socioeconomic status, but to the educational policies of each country.

Public policies and the initiative of educational companies constitute the instrumental dimension that defines social reality [75]. Thus, under an instrumental rationality adjusted to their ideological and political project, they define and guide the regional educational system and, by extension, the municipal one.

Next, we present an analysis of this rationale, and the policies that Murcian political leaders have carried out and whose consequence has been the current situation of school segregation and the generation of school ghettos:

1. Expansion and strengthening of the private and subsidized private centers network in view of the reduction in size and investment in the public network.

In this line, the latest impulse is the new law of subsidized schools [76]. This law expands the possibility of subsidizing private centers that provide vocational training and baccalaureate. Consequently, knowing the traditional segregating effect that subsidized private education has had since its existence, extending this network is a way of further forcing segregation.

“My son has been in this [subsidized] center since kindergarten and if the government does not subsidize high school, he will enroll in the public one, because I cannot pay the cost of private high school”. (Mother with a son enrolled in the fourth year of ESO)

“Until now, when the students of this [subsidized] center finished their compulsory secondary education, they enrolled in high school in ours [public], because till now the high school was not subsidized, but with this law they will stay in it, and we will lose teachers and resources”. (Principal of the public center)

“For several years we have asked the administration to increase the number of places in our vocational training cycle, and we have also asked for others VET courses that we know are in demand. Now, with this law, instead of expanding the public offer, they will give it to the private sector”. (Vocational teacher from a public center)

2. Schooling process

The model, recently implemented throughout the Region of Murcia, is based on the concept of “single district”. Theoretically, this initiative allows families the maximum freedom to choose a center.

“This center is far from my home and I have to drive to take my two children to school every day, but it is a much better center than others that are closer to me. For me it is worth the effort, I do it for the education of my children, because here there is a better educational level and families are more involved in the education of their children” (Mother with two children enrolled in a subsidized center far from her home)

“We were lucky because my children were accepted at the neighborhood school, and when they were younger their mother walked them to school, now they go by themselves. [. . .] If they gave us another center it would have been a big problem, because we only have one car at home and I need it to go to work”. (Immigrant father with three children schooled in a ghetto center)

From the academic world, the relationship between freedom of choice and increased segregation has been widely studied and documented [77–80]. The conclusion is clear: not all families have the social, educational, and economic resources to make the most of this freedom of choice. For this reason, organizations such as the OECD [45] warn of this relationship and recommend “balancing freedom of choice and limiting the negative effects on equity”, proposing “controlled choice schemes” that allow “combining parental freedom of choice with a more diverse of students”. Both the opinion of international organizations

and the academic world and common sense itself indicate that these schooling criteria, which favor freedom of choice for families, intensify the segregation of students with more vulnerable conditions.

3. Economic factor

Regarding the phenomenon of school segregation, traditionally, paid private education remains outside the political and academic debate. In the legal framework and in the prevailing discourse, it is assumed that private centers are free to select students and impose fees for their services under the principles of freedom of enterprise.

Obviously, these centers are only accessible to students belonging to the economic elites of the region, mainly Spanish and, to a lesser extent, immigrants from Western Europe. The number is relatively small, but it is still having an impact on school segregation.

On the other hand, the subsidized centers, although it should be totally free, the families inform us that the beginning of the course involves a significant monthly outlay per student, due to the purchase of textbooks, school supplies and uniforms, in addition to a “voluntary” monthly payment that it is requested to cover certain expenses.

“We live next to the subsidized school, but I cannot afford the cost of the uniform, books and the tuition. So, I take my children to the center [name of the public center] where they do not ask for anything, there is even a free book bank”.
(Mother of Maghreb origin)

“I have two children and at the beginning of the year we have expenses of more than 1200 euros, including books, uniform and materials”. (Spanish mother with children in a subsidized center)

These amounts are acceptable for the middle classes, but excessive for the immigrant population and Spaniards with precarious socioeconomic conditions, who necessarily flee from these centers.

4. Transport

The characteristics of the neighborhoods near each center, together with the possibilities of displacement of the different groups of families, define another mechanism of structural segregation. Only families with better means can assume the costs of daily travel to access educational centers further away from their residence, while others will have as their only option the center of the neighborhood or those where they reach through school transport.

“My son goes to this [public] school because it is the only one with school transportation”. (Immigrant mother who lives in the countryside)

“School transport picks up students from the countryside of the municipality, most of them immigrants, however the center [name of the public center] does not have a school transport service, so all these children come to our center”.
(Principal of a public school)

“We live in a neighborhood three kilometers from the town and there is school transportation to the school [name of a public school], but we like this school [subsidized school] better, because there is less emigration and the level is better. [. . .] My husband takes the children to school in the morning before going to his work and I pick them up in the afternoon. It’s an effort, but it’s worth it”.
(Mother with two children in a subsidized school)

This can be a compensating element when it is used to improve distribution, or a segregating element when it intensifies the concentration of a type of student body in very specific centers. In addition to constituting a polluting factor that aggravates global warming, contrary to what the UN recommends with the SDG.

5. Low investment in educational services and supply.

The school canteen and after-school activities in the afternoons are essential for families in which both parents work, in addition to the demand for language teaching.

“My wife and I work all day, so we bring the child to this [subsidized] center because it is the only one in town with a school canteen and it also has activities in the afternoon” (Spanish father)

The lack of investment in the educational offer, in complementary services such as the dining room and in extracurricular activities within the public network contrasts with the offer of the private and subsidized private centers network. The stagnation of public network services compared to the advance of the private one is another element of structural segregation.

6. Centers beliefs and values

Each center is free to define its own educational project based on beliefs and values, ideological or religious, that will guide the teaching and education of students. In this sense, the public school is governed by internal pluralism and neutrality since it welcomes and respects all ideological and religious expressions that occur in society and does not take sides with any of them. For its part, in private centers this internal pluralism is optional since the Spanish Constitution allows them to define their own ideology, of course within respect for constitutional principles. In the private network, Catholic ideologies are undoubtedly the most widespread. Let us bear in mind the religious history in this country and the collective historical memory of the Christians (Catholics) who fought against the Muslims for centuries and who are symbolically represented as enemies in the Iberian Peninsula in traditional festivals such as the “Moorish parades and Christians” in the Spanish Levant.

“I enrolled my son in this center [subsidized Catholic], not because I am Catholic but because there are no immigrants” (Student’s father)

“Where will the Muslim students go? to our [public] center, because the subsidized center is Catholic. They have no other alternatives”. (Teacher at a public school)

The religious character of a center has significant implications, since in municipalities with the presence of subsidized private Catholic centers, non-Catholic students have automatically reduced their possibilities of choice. This fact is, without a doubt, relevant in the Region of Murcia, given the number of subsidized private religious centers and because most of the immigrant students are Muslim, which results in significant structural segregation. It is evident that the Catholic character of a center is a structural factor of segregation of the entire Muslim population; but it does not inhibit non-religious Spaniards when it comes to avoiding ghetto centers.

However, the segregating device does not close here. Everything that is proposed from the instrumental dimension suffers the “sociocultural, intersubjective mediation, of the senses, values and ends” [75] of the local actors. Consequently, the segregating device is also made up of elements that act from this cultural dimension. Certain mechanisms of the segregation device are located in the ideal module [34] based on beliefs and values of educational actors—directors, teachers and families—who act from their own intersubjectivity, shaping the reality of the municipal educational system. Next, we present the four elements that have the greatest impact on school segregation:

1. Municipal management

The vision and objectives set by the town hall and the schooling commission can dramatically improve or worsen the municipal situation. This is demonstrated in studies such as the one coordinated by Xavier Bonal [81], where six experiences of local politics are analyzed to fight against segregation.

“Despite the fact that the legal framework does not grant excessive powers to city councils, the reality of the municipalities studied shows us that by way of

joint responsibility and, on occasions, going beyond what the legal framework itself makes possible, it is possible plan for equity and apply measures aimed at balanced schooling". [81] (p. 235)

"The city council is not doing anything to remedy the concentration of foreigners in the center, it could improve services or seek transportation to take them to other centers, and the schooling commission is not worried either. We [the ghetto center] really see the problem, not the families. There is no social demand. In general, most of the families are satisfied. Here Moroccans are the majority, and they feel welcome, so why would they ask to be in another center?" (Principal of the public center)

Consequently, the understanding and sensitivity of the local administration on the implications of the concentration of the students together with the majorities that make up the municipal schooling commission constitute in our case a factor of segregation.

2. The reception policy of the centers

We can see that each center has its own explicit or hidden objectives. They seek to preserve their advantages by activating protection mechanisms, promoting their elitist aspirations in the case of private and subsidized schools, the rejection of students with educational support needs, or openness, attention, even fraternal welcome in most public schools.

"When foreign students go to enroll in [name of subsidized center], they send them to us. This cannot be done, but they do. And we receive them and help them, in fact we have learned some Moroccan dialect to help them". (Head of Studies of a public school)

"My son can only be seen in the public school, the subsidiary does not have a specialist for these children". (Mother of a child with special educational needs)

In short, the importance of the reception policy of the centers lies in the different attitudes they have towards the most disadvantaged: when some move away and others take in, another important factor of segregation is generated.

3. Family expectations

Native middle- and upper-class families aspire to educate their children in environments of equal or higher socio-cultural level, and believe that immigrants lower the educational levels of the class group, either due to lack of knowledge of the language or due to the low cultural level of the families. Along the same lines, the literature on school segregation warns that there is a tendency to withdraw native children from these centers to which immigrants have enrolled and these predominate [82], which accelerates the process of school segregation through the mechanism of the "White flag" (flight of whites, typical of the USA) and that here would correspond rather to the flight of the middle or lower-middle class to other public centers, if possible, or towards subsidized private centers-paid private centers [39] (p. 128). Through fieldwork we have observed that this position of families is not in relation to all the origins of immigrants. They are implicitly referring to the Moroccan immigrant, not so much to the Ecuadorian and, in no case do they consider the student of English origin, whose presence in classes is even seen as an advantage, since it can give their children the opportunity to improve their knowledge of the English language.

"There are English students in my daughter's class. That is fine for them to improve their English learning which is essential today". (Mother of a son in a private center)

"I wanted my son to come to this center, because there are no immigrants, and the level is much higher than the public". (Mother with a son in a subsidized center)

These perceptions about the impact of immigrant students on the performance of their native peers are unfounded [45,83]. As we have found in the field research, they persist and are fed by private centers, which carry out intense marketing campaigns selling educational

level, distinction and expectations of social progress, encouraging families to activate the “strategies of class”, in Bourdieu’s sense, using all his resources and contacts to get the best center. Consequently, the different expectations between immigrant and native families are another factor of segregation. Spanish families are more demanding and aspire to centers mostly with native, bilingual students and with complementary services and activities, while immigrant families feel satisfied with public centers.

4. Cultural affinity

In general, all families prefer centers where there are students with sociocultural characteristics like their own and they also refuse to be in those where they feel they are in an absolute minority. It is common to prefer to be with those who share a language, customs, concerns or motivations and to stay away from those with whom we do not share anything.

“The children are very well cared for in this center. And he has his cousins and friends who live in the neighborhood”. (Mother of Moroccan origin)

Cultural affinity is an important segregation factor, but not one more. The cultural affinity that is possibly always in potential is not expressed when all the centers have a balanced distribution of the different ethnic and social groups but is radically activated when segregation has already produced ghetto centers. At this point, cultural affinity is a factor that by itself stabilizes and perpetuates the various forms of concentration.

In short, the educational administration managed from a conservative ideology, since 1995, has not acted effectively in the sense of social inclusion and the balanced distribution of students in all schools. On the contrary, from their instrumental rationality, they have established a segregating device, which together with the mechanisms that act from the ideal module [34] based on beliefs and values of educational actors, configure and promote school segregation and the school ghettos in the CARM.

4. Conclusions

As we have analyzed in our research, in the Autonomous Community of Murcia (CARM), there is an increasingly high rate of social segregation that translates into school segregation due, in part, to the continuous flow of immigrant population from poor countries who come to this territory looking for employment and a better quality of life. Despite public policies aimed at the inclusion of foreign students, social ghettos and school segregation continue to be created and reproduced because in a short time, the region has become a heterogeneous society, affecting social cohesion.

Our starting objective was to study the main causes of school segregation in this specific territory, differentiating by variables such as sex, socioeconomic level and country of origin. We were interested in analyzing the distribution of foreign students in public, subsidized and private schools, to see if there was a correlation, showing that, indeed, foreign students from poorer countries are concentrated in the public-school network. This mainly showed, in addition, significant differences between the different groups of students according to their origin.

Regarding the socioeconomic level of the families of foreign students, our results confirm other previous studies carried out at the micro level that have shown that the ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the educational centers and the quality of the schools are important criteria for the choice of the educational center, thus producing school segregation [23] (pp. 221–240), [84–88].

In this study we have analyzed at a micro-social and ethnographic level how the educational centers of this territory are becoming more and more ethnically diverse, although this does not translate directly into intercultural, and where school segregation is reproduced.

As we know, the causes that cause and maintain school segregation with a strong temporal and contextual component are multiple and complex [23]. In this article we have demonstrated the complex processes of school segregation that occur in educational centers

in a Spanish territory, through the anthropological study of nine educational centers and the quantitative enrollment data analyzed during five years.

We agree in our results and conclusions with authors such as Bonal and Bellei [23] (p. 5), who show that there are four factors that produce and maintain school segregation in various countries analyzed, such as: the educational policies implemented, residential segregation, institutional characteristics of the educational system and the processes of admission of the students.

As we have seen, in the CARM, despite the current state educational laws that favor coeducation and equality between the sexes, in some private educational centers the segregation by sex of their students is maintained, the so-called “differentiated education” that separates the boys from girls, so we find school segregation by sex.

In addition, we have seen a significant school segregation in relation to the nationality of the students and their ethnic origin, since 14% of the students in this territory are from abroad, of which 12% are in private educational centers compared to the remaining 88% who are enrolled mainly in public schools, which shows high inequality and school segregation.

Another of the conclusions we have reached is that within the CARM there are localities where the immigrant population is more concentrated, due to the characteristics of the job market itself, which attracts this type of workforce. It is in the educational centers of these municipalities where there is a higher rate of foreign students who are concentrated in the public network, evidencing a high rate of school segregation and forming educational and social ghettos.

Analyzing the reasons why this occurs, we can highlight the measures that the educational policies of this region have been developing in recent years, which have led to the concentration of these low-income foreign students in public educational centers.

In short, as we have been exposing throughout this text, the regional data show two different trends: on the one hand, it is evident that immigrant students study mainly in public schools; on the other, there is disparity in the distribution according to the nationality of the migrant student.

With all that said, we can affirm that Goal 4, “to guarantee inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, of the 17 SDGs that the UN approved for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development is far from being fulfilled in the CARM. The neoliberal schooling policies practiced in this Spanish region are responsible for the current segregation in the school network and the development of ghetto centers.

Among the most prominent causes that have been analyzed in this article would be:

- The provision of financing to centers that practice gender segregation, to subsidized private centers that charge fees and to religious centers with exclusive ideologies.
- The lack of investment in public centers, which do not have basic school canteen services and extracurricular activities, which forces families to look for private centers that meet these needs.
- The design of an algorithm for the evaluation of candidates based on a single district that makes it easier for families with greater economic and cultural capital to take their children to centers far from their residence, but not for other families.

The result of these policies over the past two decades has resulted in a segregation of the education system and a lack of diversity in the classroom. Although school is the second space for socialization of the child, we cannot forget that it is the first to socialize with those who are ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically different.

An educational system that segregates is increasing inequality, hindering coexistence, knowledge of others and social cohesion. In short, it is a system that is creating societies that share a territory, but where people live with their backs turned. These societies move away from social sustainability, constitutional values and the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the UN.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; data curation, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; formal analysis, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; investigation, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; methodology, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; project administration, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; validation, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; visualization, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; writing—original draft, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I.; writing—review & editing, F.A.H., F.S.V., J.E.M.G. and A.T.I. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Torgerson, D. Limits of the administrative mind: The problem of defining environmental problems. In *Managing Leviathan. Environmental Politics and the Administrative State*; Broadview Press: Peterborough, ON, Canada, 2005.
2. Smouts, M.C. *Développement Durable, Les Termes du Débat*; Armand Colin: Paris, France, 2008.
3. Zaccai, E. 25 ans de Développement Durable, et Après? Presses Universitaires de France: Paris, France, 2011.
4. Theys, J. Le développement durable face à sa crise: Un concept menacé, sous-exploité ou dépassé? *Dév. Durable Territ. Écon. Géogr. Polit. Droit Sociol.* **2014**, *5*. [[CrossRef](#)]
5. Bookchin, M. What is Social Ecology? 1993. Available online: http://psichenatura.it/fileadmin/img/M._Bookchin_What_is_Social_Ecology.pdf (accessed on 6 November 2021).
6. Achterberg, W. *Sustainability and associative democracy. Democracy and the Environment: Problems and Prospects*; En Lafferty, W.M., Meadowcroft, J., Eds.; Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK, 1996.
7. Torras, M.; Boyce, J.K. Income, inequality, and pollution: A reassessment of the environmental Kuznets Curve. *Ecol. Econ.* **1998**, *25*, 147–160. [[CrossRef](#)]
8. Lehtonen, M. The environmental-social interface of sustainable development: Capabilities, social capital, institutions. *Ecol. Econ.* **2004**, *49*, 199–214. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Murphy, K. The social pillar of sustainable development: A literature review and framework for policy analysis. *Sustain. Sci. Pract. Policy* **2012**, *8*, 15–29. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. O'Connor, M.; Martínez-Alier, J. Ecological Distribution and Distributed Sustainability. In *Sustainable Development: Concepts, Rationalities and Strategies*; Springer: Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1998; pp. 33–56.
11. Haughton, G. *The Imperatives of Sustainable Development*; Routledge: London, UK, 2017. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. Janker, J.; Mann, S.; Rist, S. Social sustainability in agriculture—A system-based framework. *J. Rural. Stud.* **2019**, *65*, 32–42. [[CrossRef](#)]
13. Medeiros, E. The territorial dimension of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. *Area* **2021**, *53*, 292–302. [[CrossRef](#)]
14. Gorard, S.; Taylor, C. What is segregation? A comparison of measures in terms of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ compositional invariance. *Sociology* **2002**, *36*, 875–895. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. Massey, D.S.; Denton, N.A. The dimensions of racial segregation. *Soc. Forces* **1988**, *67*, 281–315. [[CrossRef](#)]
16. Croxford, L.; Raffe, D. Differentiation and social segregation of UK higher education, 1996–2010. *Oxf. Rev. Educ.* **2013**, *39*, 172–192. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. OECD. *PISA 2009 Results: Overcoming Social Background. Equity in Learning Opportunities and Outcomes*; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2010. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. OECD. *PISA 2018 Results: Where All Students Can Succeed*; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2019. [[CrossRef](#)]
19. Fiel, J.E.; Zhang, Y. Three dimensions of change in school segregation: A grade-period-cohort analysis. *Demography* **2018**, *55*, 33–58. [[CrossRef](#)]
20. Fuller, B.; Kim, Y.; Galindo, C.; Bathia, S.; Bridges, M.; Duncan, G.J.; García Valdivia, I. Worsening school segregation for Latino children? *Educ. Res.* **2019**, *48*, 407–420. [[CrossRef](#)]
21. Karsten, S. School segregation. In *OECD, Equal Opportunities? The Labour Market Integration on the Children of Immigrants*; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2010; pp. 193–209. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. Nordin, M. Immigrant school segregation in Sweden. *Popul. Res. Policy Rev.* **2013**, *32*, 415–435. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Bonal, X.; Bellei, C. *Understanding School Segregation: Patterns, Causes and Consequences of Spatial Inequalities in Education*; Bloomsbury Academic: London, UK, 2019. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Van Ham, M.; Tammaru, T.; Ubarevičienė, R.; Janssen, H. *Urban Socio-Economic Segregation and Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*; Springer Nature: Basingstoke, UK, 2021.

25. Franzé, A. Un école difficile: Sur la concentration scolaire d'élèves d'origine immigrante. *Rev. Eur. Migr. Int.* **1998**, *14*, 105–120. [[CrossRef](#)]
26. Cobb, C.; Glass, G. Ethnic segregation in Arizona charter schools. *Educ. Policy Anal. Arch.* **1999**, *7*, 1. [[CrossRef](#)]
27. Owens, A. Unequal opportunity: School and neighborhood segregation in the USA. *Race Soc. Probl.* **2020**, *12*, 29–41. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. Kebede, M.; Maselli, A.; Taylor, K.; Frankenberg, E. Ethnoracial Diversity and Segregation in US Rural School Districts. *Rural. Sociol.* **2021**, *86*, 494–522. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Bernelius, V.; Huilla, H.; Lobato, I.R. 'Notorious Schools' in 'Notorious Places'? Exploring the Connectedness of Urban and Educational Segregation. *Soc. Incl.* **2021**, *9*, 154–165. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. UN. The Sustainable Development Agenda. 2015. Available online: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/> (accessed on 1 October 2021).
31. Kottak, C. *Antropología Cultural. Espejo Para la Humanidad*; McGraw-Hill: Madrid, Spain, 2000.
32. Khalaf, B.K.; Zin, M.; Bt, Z. Traditional and Inquiry-Based Learning Pedagogy: A Systematic Critical Review. *Int. J. Instr.* **2018**, *11*, 545–564. [[CrossRef](#)]
33. Antón-Hurtado, F. Antropología del Sinsentido. *Rev. Antropol. Exp.* **2012**, *12*, 349–371.
34. Álvarez-Munárriz, L. La compleja identidad personal. *Rev. Dialectol. Tradic. Pop.* **2011**, *66*, 407–432. [[CrossRef](#)]
35. Bourdieu, P. *La Distinción. Criterio y Bases Sociales del Gusto*; Taurus: Madrid, Spain, 2000.
36. Sánchez-Vera, F. Seguridad, cohesión social y educación. *Cult. Conciencia. Rev. Antropol.* **2015**, *1*, 75–96.
37. Fernández, J. Hacia una Redefinición de la Escuela Como Agente y Espacio de Socialización en Las Etapas de Educación Obligatoria. In Proceedings of the IV Jornadas de Investigación Social para Estudiantes UCM. [Paper presentation], Madrid, Spain, September 2021.
38. Tarabini, A. ¿Para qué sirve la escuela? Reflexiones sociológicas en tiempos de pandemia global. *Rev. Sociol. Educ.-RASE* **2020**, *13*, 145–155. [[CrossRef](#)]
39. González-de-Molina, P. La Segregación Escolar, las Desigualdades Educativas y el Modelo Educativo de la Derecha en España. Fundación 1° de Mayo: Madrid, Spain, 2021; Colección Informes, Núm: 157.
40. Martínez, L.; Ferrer, A. *Mézclate Conmigo. De la Segregación Socioeconómica a la Educación Inclusiva*. Save the Children España; Forum Europe de Administraciones de Educación: Aragón, Spain, 2018.
41. Ferrer, Á.; Gortazar, L. *Diversidad y Libertad: Reducir la Segregación Escolar Respetando la Capacidad de Elección de Centro*; EsadeEcPol Center for Economic Policy: Madrid, Spain, 2021.
42. Murillo, F.; Martínez-Garrido, C.; Belavi, G. Segregación escolar por origen nacional en España. *OBETS. Rev. Cienc. Soc.* **2017**, *12*, 395–423. [[CrossRef](#)]
43. Murillo, F. Midiendo la Segregación Escolar en América Latina. Un Análisis Metodológico utilizando el TERCE. *REICE. Rev. Iberoam. Sobre Calid. Efic. Cambio Educ.* **2016**, *14*, 33–60.
44. Musset, P. *School Choice and Equity: Current Policies in OECD Countries and a Literature Review*; OECD Education Working Papers, No. 66; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2012.
45. OECD. *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2012.
46. LOE. Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. *Bol. Estado* **2006**, *106*, 17158–17207.
47. LOMCE. Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa. *BOE* **2013**, *295*, 27548–27562.
48. LOMLOE. Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. *BOE* **2020**, *340*, 122868–122953.
49. Sánchez-Vera, F. La segregación étnica y social en el sistema educativo de la Región de Murcia. Análisis del dispositivo sociocultural generador de guetos escolares. *Rev. Nuevas Tend. Antropol.* **2017**, 114–145.
50. CREM. Población Residente Según Grupos de Edad, Nacionalidad (Española/Extranjera) y Sexo, por Fecha de Referencia. Enero. 2021. Available online: https://econet.carm.es/web/crem/inicio/-/crem/sicrem/PU1124/sec14_c1.html (accessed on 10 October 2021).
51. Fitzgerald, J.; Radford, J. Leadership for inclusive special education: A qualitative exploration of SENCOs' and principals' Experiences in secondary schools in Ireland. *Int. J. Incl. Educ.* **2020**, 1–16. [[CrossRef](#)]
52. Kaukko, M.; Wilkinson, J.; Kohli, R.K. Pedagogical love in Finland and Australia: A study of refugee children and their teachers. *Pedagog. Cult. Soc.* **2021**, 1–17. [[CrossRef](#)]
53. Margari, L.; Pinto, F.; Laforteza, M.E.; Lecce, P.A.; Craig, F.; Grattagliano, I.; Zagaria, G.; Margari, F. Mental health in migrant schoolchildren in Italy: Teacher-reported behavior and emotional problems. *Neuropsychiatr. Dis. Treat.* **2013**, *9*, 231. [[CrossRef](#)]
54. Faas, D.; Sokolowska, B.; Darmody, M. 'Everybody is available to them': Support measures for migrant students in Irish secondary schools. *Br. J. Educ. Stud.* **2015**, *63*, 447–466. [[CrossRef](#)]
55. Grannäs, J.; Frelin, A. Weathering the perfect policy storm: A case study of municipal responses to educational reform surges in Sweden. *Pedagog. Cult. Soc.* **2020**, *29*, 281–297. [[CrossRef](#)]
56. Glaser, B.G.; Strauss, A.L. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*; Hawthorne, N.Y., de Gruyter, A., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 1967.
57. Calvo-Charro, M. *Alteridad Sexual: Razones Frente a la Ideología de Género*; Ediciones Palabra, S.A.: Madrid, Spain, 2014.

58. Míguez-Macho, L. La polémica sobre la compatibilidad con el principio constitucional de no discriminación por razón de sexo de los conciertos de la administración con los centros que imparten educación diferenciada. *Rev. Pers. Derecho* **2015**, *72*, 237–264. [CrossRef]
59. Aláez-Corral, B. El Ideario Educativo Constitucional Como Fundamento de la Exclusión de la Educación Diferenciada por Razón de Sexo de la Financiación Pública. *Rev. Esp. Derecho Const.* **2009**, *86*, 31–64. Available online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24885980> (accessed on 10 October 2021).
60. Salazar-Benítez, O. Educación Diferenciada por Razón de Sexo y Derecho a la Educación. Sobre la Inconstitucionalidad de la Reforma del Artículo 84.3 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación. *Rev. Esp. Derecho Const.* **2016**, *106*, 451–478. Available online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24887393> (accessed on 10 October 2021). [CrossRef]
61. Navas Sánchez, M.N. La educación diferenciada por razón de sexo ante el derecho constitucional. Un debate con múltiples voces: Legislación, doctrina y jurisprudencia. *IgualdadES* **2021**, *4*, 239–253. [CrossRef]
62. EDUCABase. Foreign Students in General Regime and Special Regime Education by Ownership of the Center in CARM. 2021. Available online: http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado/series/extranjeros//10/&file=extran_01.px&type=pcaxis (accessed on 10 October 2021).
63. CREM. Alumnado Matriculado Según Enseñanza y Titularidad del Centro/Concierto. CREM y Servicio de Evaluación y Calidad Educativa. Estadística de la Enseñanza no Universitaria. 2018. Available online: https://econet.carm.es/web/crem/inicio/-/crem/sicrem/PU_EDUCNOUNIV/m16_17/sec3.html (accessed on 10 October 2021).
64. EDUCABase. Students Enrolled in General Regime Education by Ownership of the Center, Autonomous Community/Province, Sex and Education. 2021. Available online: http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado/2020--2021-da/comunidad/reg_general//10/&file=general_1_01.px&type=pcaxis (accessed on 10 October 2021).
65. EDUCABase. Students Enrolled in General Regime Teachings by Ownership and Education Type. 2021. Available online: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano/estadisticas/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado/2020--2021-da.html> (accessed on 10 October 2021).
66. CREM. Alumnado Extranjero Matriculado en Enseñanzas No Universitarias Según País de Nacionalidad y Titularidad/Concierto (Curso 2016/2017). 2018. Available online: https://econet.carm.es/web/crem/inicio/-/crem/sicrem/PU_EDUCNOUNIV/m16_17/sec78.html (accessed on 10 October 2021).
67. Murcia-ACOGE. Elementos facilitadores de la integración del colectivo ecuatoriano residente en Totana. *Scr. Nova Rev. Electrónica Geogr. Cienc. Soc.* **2001**, *5*.
68. Pedreño, A.; Hernández, M. *La Condición Inmigrante. Exploraciones e Investigaciones Desde la Región de Murcia*; Universidad de Murcia: Murcia, Spain, 2005.
69. CREM. Centro Regional de Estadística de Murcia-Datos Matriculación Referentes al Curso 2016/2017. 2018. Available online: https://econet.carm.es/web/crem/inicio/-/crem/sicrem/PU_EDUCNOUNIV/Indice2016AM.html (accessed on 10 October 2021).
70. Veredas, S. Sistema educativo e inmigración: ¿compensa la escuela? *Circunst. Rev. Cienc. Soc. Inst. Univ. Investig. Ortega Gasset* **2006**, *10*, 9.
71. Madruga, I.; Martínez, M.C. *La Escolarización de los Hijos de los Inmigrantes en ESPAÑA II*; Confederación Sindical de CC.OO.: Madrid, Spain, 2002.
72. Bonal, X. El balance público-privado en el sistema de enseñanza español: Evolución y efectos sobre las desigualdades educativas. *Educar* **2002**, *29*, 11–29. [CrossRef]
73. Poveda, D.; Franzè, A.; Jociles, M.I.; Rivas, A.M.; Villaamil, F.; Peláez, C.; Sánchez, P. La segregación étnica en la educación secundaria de la ciudad de Madrid: Un mapa y una lectura crítica. *A EMIGRA Work. Pap.* **2013**, *91*, 18.
74. OECD. *What Do Immigrant Students Tell Us About the Quality of Education Systems?* OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2013. [CrossRef]
75. Díaz-de-Rada, A. *Los Primeros de la Clase y los Últimos Románticos. Una Etnografía Para la Crítica de la Visión Instrumental de la Enseñanza*; Siglo XXI: Madrid, Spain, 1996.
76. CARM. Orden de 30 de Marzo de 2017, de la Consejería de Educación y Universidades por la Que se Establece el Procedimiento para la Aplicación del Régimen de Conciertos Educativos para el Periodo Comprendido Entre Los Cursos 2017/2018 y 2022/2023. BORM, Murcia, 2017. pp. 12869–12889. Available online: <https://www.borm.es/#/home/anuncio/01-04-2017/2424> (accessed on 10 October 2021).
77. Alegre, M. Casi-mercados, segregación escolar y desigualdad educativa: Una trilogía con final abierto. *Educ. Soc.* **2010**, *31*, 1157–1178.
78. Fernández, J. Igualdad y libertad de elección de centro docente: Una cuestión polémica para un acuerdo necesario. *Rev. Educ.* **2007**, *344*, 41–59.
79. Valiente, O. ¿A qué juega la concertada? La segregación escolar del alumnado inmigrante en Cataluña (2001–2006). *Profesorado. Rev. Currículum Form. Profr.* **2008**, *12*, 1–23.
80. Maroy, C. ¿Por qué y cómo regular el mercado educativo? *Profr. Rev. Curríc. Form. Profr.* **2008**, *12*.
81. Bonal, X. Municipis contra la segregació escolar. Sis experiències de política educativa local. *Fund. Juame Bofill* **2012**, *78*.

82. Frankenberg, E. The role of residential segregation in contemporary school segregation. *Educ. Urban Soc.* **2013**, *45*, 548–570. [[CrossRef](#)]
83. Carabaña, J. Concentración de inmigrantes y resultados escolares: Una falsa alarma. *Análisis Real Inst. Elcano* **2012**, *11*, 21–25.
84. Burgess, S.; McConnell, B.; Propper, C.; Wilson, D. *The Impact of School Choice on Sorting by Ability and Socio-Economic Factors in English Secondary Education*; CMPO, University of Bristol: Bristol, UK, 2005.
85. Noreisch, K. School Catchment Area Evasion: The Case of Berlin. *J. Educ. Policy* **2007**, *22*, 69–90. [[CrossRef](#)]
86. Boterman, W.; Musterd, S.; Pacchi, C.; Ranci, C. School segregation in contemporary cities: Socio-spatial dynamics, institutional context and urban outcomes. *Urban Stud.* **2019**, *56*, 3055–3073. [[CrossRef](#)]
87. Card, D.; Alexander, M.; Jesse, R. Tipping and the Dynamics of Segregation. *Q. J. Econ.* **2008**, *123*, 177–218. [[CrossRef](#)]
88. Caetano, G.; Maheshri, V. *School Segregation and the Identification of Tipping Behavior*; Working Paper 2013-252-50; University of Houston: Houston, TX, USA, 2013.