

Spain (Basque Country)

The 'other' in Education: Media representations of foreign immigrants and Gypsies in Basque schools

Daniel Muriel

Collective Identity Research Centre, University of the Basque Country (CEIC/UPV)

Summary

The central theme followed in this workpackage has been education. We have concentrated on the Media material that, in the press, mentioned education with respect to the selected target population: Gypsies and foreign immigrant population. The content on education in the Basque Country during the last two years (2010 and 2012) has been monitored in five newspapers: El Correo, El Diario Vasco, El País, Deia and Gara.

The main problem that is articulated in the Media with respect to the Gypsy community refers to the process of ghettoization: they tend to concentrate in the same schools, which still employ model A (Spanish only) and in very specific neighbourhoods. Although the press seems to reflect that this problem refers to a question of a structural type, due to which the Gypsies have traditionally been marginalized, there is also a strong representation of this community that makes them responsible for their own exclusion: their marginalization in the field of education is explicable in terms of internal problems inherent to themselves.

With respect to the press treatment of foreign immigrants and their relation to education, they rarely have a direct presence through their own voice. The greatest representation in the press concerning the situation of the foreign immigrant with respect to education corresponds to the space that the former provides to the discourse of the government institutions. In these news items a connection is now made between foreign immigrant children and a problem that must be dealt with specifically, in terms of manageability. To a large extent the immigrant is held

responsible for her own situation of marginalization in the schools, since although the Education Department attempts to avoid their concentration, it is the immigrants themselves who form groups again.

Not only is the immigrant collective itself held to be responsible for its situation, but moreover it is represented as excessively vulnerable: these images in the press are at the same time mixed with recognition of their precarious situation together with a stereotyped image of them as an ignorant collective with few resources, which leads them to take decisions resulting in their self-exclusion.

Following the public institutions, there are certain claims and actions proceeding from civil society (parents' associations, neighbourhood associations, associations related to the education of children and adolescents, NGOs, etc.) that have most presence in the press. In this case, a narrative is produced that describes the magnanimity with which the autochthonous population deals with the problem of education and immigration, which to a certain extent also permits a certain condescension of the host society towards the immigrant to show through, although in any case this is done while always stressing the initiative of the community as an example of managing a situation of marginalization.

One of the issues with the most impact in the press in the last two years has been that of unaccompanied minors. Disputes are visualized that encompass both the most hostile representations towards these minors – who are often accused of lying about their age and of committing more offences than other social groups – as well as more inclusive ones – in which their being abandoned and the conditions of precariousness in which they live are denounced. It is the narrative of a double suspicion that is narrated through concrete cases: suspicion of foreign immigrants even though they are minors, and of the institutions that have to take charge of them.

Finally, with less presence but with a certain relevance, different studies can be found that contain data on racism and the rejection of the other in schools. In general, it can be said that what stands out in the press is a non-problematic image of Basque schools, in which the immigrants do not feel themselves to be subjected to marginalization or xenophobic actions, although space is given to studies that determine that racism is growing in the classrooms with the increase of foreign immigrants.

Introduction

This report presents the analysis of the work done by the WP4 (Framing racism and intolerance: public issues and denunciations), which deals with the Media treatment given in the press of the other in relation to education in the Basque Country. In our case two great groups of 'others' have been studied: Gypsies and the foreign immigrant population (proceeding from countries considered as non-western).

Thus, on the one hand, there are the Gypsies. This is a population that has, in general, been the object of social discrimination and, in particular, has been and still is the object of specific discrimination in the field of education. In relation to the issue of education, the Gypsies tend occasionally to have a specific space of representation in the mass media, as a population in constant risk of exclusion, which can become conflictive.

On the other hand, there is the immigrant population proceeding from countries not considered as "rich"¹, or described as "developing". In the area of education, in the Basque context, foreign populations proceeding from Latin America and Morocco are given a special visibility on a regular basis, although mention is also made of other nationalities but on fewer occasions. In any case, on many occasions, in the mass media they are referred to as an "immigrant population" or "foreign population" in an undifferentiated way.

As mentioned above, the central issue to be monitored was education, as a way of continuing the basic theme of the case studied in WP3, *Intercultural policies in a multicultural neighbourhood: experiences in three primary schools in San Francisco, Bilbao*. In this case, we have concentrated on the Media material that in the press refers to education, basically primary and secondary school, with respect to the target population that we have selected here (Gypsies and the foreign immigrant population). Within this material an attempt has been made in every case to observe: what representations were made of the immigrant or Gypsy other; what language was used to describe them; how their problems were depicted; to what extent those problems were related not only to education but also to other questions with a more generic significance at the social level; and, in general, all those issues that, setting out from the concrete case of education, could be linked to questions of (anti)racism, (in)tolerance, exclusion or discrimination.

¹ Generally, immigration proceeding from the European countries, the United States, Canada, Japan, etc., are not usually mentioned in the local or national mass media in connection with the field of education, at least not in a "problematic" sense.

The mass medium analysed was the press, and its contents on education in the Basque Country during the last two years (2010 and 2012) were monitored. Five newspapers were analysed, four with a local scope in the Basque Country, and one with a national scope. The selection attempted to reflect the whole political spectrum (left and right; Basque nationalist or not; moderate and radical). The newspapers selected were: *El Correo* (<http://www.elcorreo.com/>), a moderate-conservative newspaper with a local character and the most widely read in the Basque provinces of Bizkaia and Álava; *El Diario Vasco* (<http://www.diariovasco.com/>), a newspaper from the same group as *El Correo*, published in the Basque province of Guipúzcoa (where it is the newspaper with the highest sales) and that follows the same line although there is a certain presence of Euskera; *El País* (<http://elpais.com/>), a progressive newspaper with a national distribution; *Deia* (<http://www.deia.com/>), a Basque nationalist newspaper with a conservative character, with a certain presence of Euskera; *Gara* (<http://www.gara.net/>), a left-wing Basque nationalist newspaper, with a local scope and a greater presence of Euskera.

Finally, we would like to indicate the inclusion of an *addendum* that summarizes the *press monitoring* carried out between 5 and 19 December 2011, on questions that have appeared in relation to (in)tolerance, racism, immigration, exclusion, etc., in those same newspapers so that, eventually, they can be compared with news items that appeared in the same period in other countries.

1. Analysis of the press dealing with education in the Basque Country: Gypsies and foreign immigrants

Given that in the press they appear as clearly delimited and differentiated populations, since they are rarely included in the same space of representation as an 'other' or a subject at risk of exclusion, Gypsies and immigrants will be dealt with separately in the analysis. Nonetheless, in the conclusions the general elements affecting both populations as 'others' will be summarized.

1.1. Education and Gypsies in the press

Press items that speak specifically about Gypsies in education are less frequent than those that allude to the 'other' as a foreign immigrant. In any case, their differentiated treatment is justified insofar as they have their own space in the mass media and are practically never mentioned in the area of education together with other collectives such as the Latin Americans, Maghrebis or other nationalities when questions related

to discrimination, processes of *ghettoization* or their participation at school are dealt with. In short, the Gypsy collective has its own representation in the mass media, irrespective of its occasionally sharing its problems of discrimination and exclusion with other 'others'.

The principal problem articulated in the Media with respect to the Gypsies, a problem which they partially share with other subjects at risk of exclusion, such as immigrants from non-western countries, refers to the process of *ghettoization*: they tend to concentrate in the same schools that still have model A (Spanish language) and in very specific neighbourhoods, finding themselves left with increasingly few options in the public school.

Testimony to this effect is given in a news item published by *El Correo* and *Deia*, which echoes the complaints of the associations *Iniciativa Gitana [Gypsy Initiative]* and *Asociación de Familias de Otxarkoaga [Association of Families of Otxarkoaga]*, about the closure of a public school in the Bilbao neighbourhood of Otxarkoaga, where a great number of people of the Gypsy ethnic group have traditionally lived. The news item recounts that, in the words of these associations, there has been "a resounding failure of the policy of the Education Department of the Basque Government" (Deia, 2011), in allusion to the fact that more than 2,000 children must go to study in schools outside the neighbourhood. The news item also records the complaint of these associations that all the schools in Otxarkoaga were model A (all the teaching in Spanish), which led to their lack of viability in the long term: "The obstinacy of the Education Department in maintaining that system – referring to model A – has ruined the schools in the district" (Igea, 2011a).

In this case, the mass media are permitting the voice of the other to have a strong presence, besides denouncing the existence of a problem of marginalization of the Gypsy collective in specific schools which tends to perpetuate their *status as excluded people*, as they are crowded together in model A schools, far removed from model D (only in Euskera) which is the majority option amongst the autochthonous population. Following the same line, there is the interview with one of the workers of the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano [Gypsy Secretariat Foundation]* published in *Deia*, who denounces that a type of dual education system is being established in which the need to segregate the Gypsy collective is taken for granted:

The principal position of the foundation is for these kids to remain in the normalized educational system, with support if needed, but not on the margin. The temptation to think that an alternative to the normal system might help them to improve must be avoided. That would become an exclusion that would place a greater distance between the Gypsies and the educational system, and therefore it would be a form of exclusive work that would generate many prejudices against the Gypsy community, not achieving their full incorporation (Ibarra, 2011).

Thus, what is being pointed to is a practice of exclusion that is prejudicial to the Gypsy collective, using the excuse that it is a population that requires certain exceptional forms of attention, since this specialized treatment results in their not being fully incorporated into the society they live in. In this respect, the mass media are making possible the emergence of a discourse – which originates in members of their collective – on the Gypsy who is a victim of an organization that, at the institutional level, is postponing her full social integration.

Nonetheless, although the press appears to reflect that this problem refers to a question of a structural type, due to which the Gypsies have traditionally been marginalized, a representation of the Gypsies also emerges strongly that makes them partly responsible for their own exclusion. They are presented as a collective with difficulties in learning, uninterested in studying, distrustful of the *payos* (non-Gypsy autochthonous people) and of institutionalized culture in general, even holding certain sexist ideas. Their marginalization in the educational field would thus be explained as being due to problems that are internal or inherent to themselves.

In the same interview we have just quoted, the interviewer himself poses questions like the following: “Is there a clear willingness in this collective for real coexistence?” (ibid). The formulation of this question already implies a certain suspicion about the Gypsies themselves as being responsible for their resistance towards coexisting with the rest of society, a question that the interviewer then goes into more deeply when he asks the interviewee for “Some example of integration...” (ibid), assuming that cases where Gypsies coexist in a normalized way with the rest of the citizens are exceptional.

That is why it is not surprising to find more items in the press that represent the Gypsies as subjects who distrust the *payo*, as is reflected in the headline of an interview with a teacher of the Evangelical religion (the religious faith of the majority of Spanish Gypsies), who as a non-Gypsy affirms that “They distrust me because I am a *payo*” (El Correo, 2010). In spite of the fact that in the rest of the news item a relationship of normality can be observed between the teacher and his Gypsy pupils, the newspaper decided to stress that idea, well established in the collective imaginary, according to which the Gypsies are considered to be the first people to discriminate against the rest of society, and not the other way round.

This is the same Media strategy used in another interview with a young Gypsy woman, where the headline stresses one of her phrases: “We must put an end to the myth that studying makes you into a *payo*” (Basurto, 2010). In the interview with this young woman, who belongs to two associations of the Gypsy collective (*Kale dor*

Kayiko [Gypsies of Tomorrow] and *Mujeres Gitanas SIM ROMI [SIM ROMI Gypsy Women]*), questions keep arising that constantly allude to these stereotypes about Gypsies: “Are Gypsy women reluctant to take part in this type of associations?”, “Perhaps because there has been excessive sexism in the Gypsy world?”, “Are Gypsy women evolving at the same rhythm as the rest of the women, or are they anchored in the past?”, “Nonetheless, Gypsy women continue to get married very young”, or “You studied Auxiliary Nursing, did your parents place any obstacles in your path?”. In spite of the fact that the interviewee herself answers in a natural manner and tries to undermine some of these stereotypes, the whole interview falls especially into this tendency to regard responsibility for the Gypsies’ state of exclusion as being due to causes internal to themselves.

In any case, the Gypsies are at least subjects in the press, from a point of view proportional to the number of articles dedicated to them, their voice has a greater presence than that of other collectives, who in general barely have their own discursive space. Amongst other things, this is shown by the coverage given to the three principal associations in the Basque Country in the newspaper *Gara*, with the aim of giving them the possibility to talk about the problems that affect them: a meeting held with representatives of *Iniciativa Gitana*, *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* and *Kale dor Kayiko*, in which the headline stands out, although once again a difference is marked between who is a Gypsy and who isn’t: “The advances in interculturality between *payos* and Gypsies progress but with a number of difficulties” (Goti, 2011).

1.2. Education and foreign immigrants in the press

With respect to the press treatment given to foreign immigrants – always referring to countries from outside the western sphere – and their relation to education, they rarely have a direct presence in their own voice; instead they are the object of a representation made from the host society² (whether this be inclusive, neutral or hostile). Thus, following van Dijk’s proposal for a qualitative focus in the analysis of semantic macrostructures (1997: 84-96), there are four principal foci of representation of the immigrant with respect to education, which function as themes: that emanating from the government institutions (those with greater weight and visibility in the press); that relating to different news items that proceed from civil society (principally from neighbourhood associations or from associations of support for immigrants or other vulnerable collectives); that revolving around the situation of unaccompanied immigrant

² In this case the saying formulated by van Dijk is followed, according to which “the European press in general does not define the ethnic situation in terms of the ethnic protagonists themselves” (2006: 26).

minors (in general Moroccans and Sub-Saharan); and that sketched by different academic studies or analyses.

In the first place, the greatest representation concerning the situation of the foreign immigrant with respect to education in the press corresponds to the space that the latter awards to the discourse of the government institutions. In these news items, foreign immigrant children are already linked to a problem that must be dealt with in a specific way, hence the echo given to the statements by the Educational Counsellor of the Basque Government, Isabel Celáa, that found reflection in two different newspapers with practically the same headline: “The figures on immigration in the classrooms are manageable, we don’t know for how long” (Vasco Press, 2010a), and “The figures on immigration are manageable, we don’t know for how long” (Vasco Press, 2010b).

In both cases stress is placed on the fact that the immigrant population has become, in the field of education, something subject to the terms of manageability, that is, it is represented as a potential problem, since it is a phenomenon that at any moment – “we don’t know when” – might become overwhelming, unmanageable. Given that numerically the figures of other European countries have not been reached, immigration within education is earmarked as a latent problem, which might erupt at any time.

In any case, there seems to be more concern about something that also affected the Gypsy population: the unintentional creation of a type of *school ghettos*, which involves the immigrant population tending to concentrate in certain schools. Once again, as occurred with the Gypsies, the immigrant is held to be largely responsible for her own marginalized situation in the schools, since there are several news items that contain the institutional reflection according to which although the Education Department attempts to avoid concentration, it is the immigrants themselves who group together again:

As the Education Counsellor explained, there are at present 22,213 foreign pupils in the Basque classrooms and avoiding their concentration in a few schools constitutes a “puzzle that is hard to fit together”. “And when one fits it together one year, it becomes mismatched the next year”. The reason, according to the Councillor, stems from the “freedom to choose” that is exercised by these families, who “are not exactly high-powered, potent families that arrive with a high intellectual level”. “They are families that need grouping, self-help in order to get on,” she observes. The Councillor recognized that this is a “very hard” question because while “establishing the family of a researcher from Ikerbasque [Basque Foundation for Science] does not pose any difficulty, irrespective of whether they speak English or German”, a problem is however posed by “a destitute person who arrives wanting to meet up with her cousins”. (Tomé, 2011).

Not only is the immigrant collective itself held to be responsible for its situation, but it is also represented as excessively vulnerable, not well educated and having special

needs: these images in the press at the same time mix a recognition of the precarious *status* with a stereotyped image of an ignorant collective, with few resources, not only economic but also intellectual, which leads them to take decisions that are self-excluding. Besides, use is made of the contrast with another type of immigration, which as such barely finds space in the press – and much less as a problem: that of prestigious high-level scientists who proceed from western countries.

In any case, the discourse of the integration of the immigrant is always stressed, although not always for altruistic motives. The *positive* representation of the immigrant in the institutional discourse reflected by the press often rests on the idea of labour power or a source of biological replacement; that is, as a useful resource for being able to maintain the level of life and development of Basque society and ensure its reproduction: “the Basque Country needs ‘a lot of immigration’ since its population is very aged and ‘we need big pockets of immigration in order to be able to continue to confront the contemporary challenges that we must face as a country’” (Vasco Press, 2010a). We are, therefore, facing an instrumental vision of the immigrant.

The concentration of immigrants in certain schools seems to be a focus of concern in the press in the case of Vitoria, the capital of the Basque province of Álava and also of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The headline of one of the news items reads as follows: “Six public schools in Vitoria have more than 50% of foreign pupils” (Pérez de Nanclares, 2011). In the government institutions of Álava it is considered that a school that exceeds 30% of children of foreign origin is at the “limit established for the school to be able to fulfil its mission of socially integrating the immigrants without running the risk of becoming a ghetto” (ibid). And once again the reasons for the occurrence of this ghettoization are mixed up:

The task of sharing out those pupils through the educational network has become an extremely difficult challenge for the Administration, since it is dealing with a collective the great majority of which opts for the few Spanish language classrooms in the network, and for primary and secondary schools already attended by other children of the same origin. In parallel, the autochthonous parents flee from a school when the proportion of those youths escalates (ibid).

On the one hand, allusion is made to a structural rejection by society, according to which it is the autochthonous parents – that is the language that marks the difference between *the local* and *the ‘other’*: autochthonous and immigrant – who leave the schools where there are high proportions of children of foreign origin. Nonetheless, on the other hand, there is a return of the image given by the press of the immigrants being co-responsible for their marginalized situation: they opt for primary and secondary schools with children of the same origin (what is known as the *call effect*) and where the teaching model is solely in Spanish. In a similar way, this Manichean

approach is once again employed in an opinion article that takes up the news story of the concentration of foreign pupils in certain schools in Vitoria:

On both sides integration is a word that it is much more difficult to apply than to say. The local distrust of intermingling is at times combined with an aversion by the foreigner to accepting a mode of life, and both attitudes can enter into combustion (Resa, 2011).

This approach can be summarized as a distrust of intermingling by the autochthonous and an aversion to integration by the foreigner. Besides, the representation that is made of the problem in this case leads onto the terrain of the individual, since it concludes that people “are, or are not, worthwhile individually, aside from accent, colour or language” (ibid). However, some other interpretations also find space in the Media, such as that reflected in an opinion article in which a school teacher considers that “to deal with the issue of immigration, or better put that of interculturality, as a percentage to be distributed amongst educational centres, so as to dilute it, is not a good solution for a phenomenon that is not going to be a transitory one” (Fernández Ibáñez, 2010). Although perhaps to a lesser degree, this indicates that there is also room in the press for images that situate the problem at a structural level, which affects society as a whole:

The educational task does not only concern the teachers, within an enclosure and with a specific timetable, it is a job for the whole society. (...) Therefore education is something shared by many social agents, and we should work in coordination and in the same direction. (...) Interculturality is in the neighbourhoods, in the social circles of the municipalities and in the educational centre itself (ibid).

In any case, the possible ghettoization of some schools in Vitoria is one of the basic themes of the printed mass media within the educational field. That is why headlines like the following are stressed: “Vitoria wants to put an end to the ‘ghettoization’ of some schools” (Cancho, 2011) or, in an interview with the Delegate for Education in Álava, the headline that affirms that “All schools should have immigrant pupils in their classes” (Pérez de Nanclares, 2010). So there is a proliferation in the press of the reflection of semantics related to the production of plans for integration and reception, even reaching the point of considering immigrants as “future citizens” – something which is unusual in the press.

After the public institutions, certain claims and actions proceeding from civil society (parents’ associations, neighbourhood associations, associations related to the education of children and adolescents, NGOs, etc.) have the most presence in the press in connection with the issue that concerns this report. In the majority of news items and opinion articles, the press echoes the disputes over the policy carried out by the government institutions with respect to the distribution and opening and closure of schools.

One of the cases that has received the most Media attention in recent years has been that of a public school in the Old Town of Vitoria, known as Gasteiz (or also as Ramón Bajo), which is represented by the Media as a model of integration to be followed, an issue demanded by several associations and other types of neighbourhood organizations. The news items narrate the story of a school that in 2001 only had foreign and Gypsy pupils, where teaching followed model A (everything taught in the Spanish language), in spite of the fact that the majority of the population of the district was autochthonous. Over time, the model was changed and model D (everything in Euskera) was adopted, and it is now a school where children of all origins coexist in an integrated way, as is expressed in an opinion article by a teacher and member of a parents' association from the school:

The numbers are increasingly balanced and the school has ceased to be a ghetto and has become a centre with a strong neighbourhood identity where children of different origins have the opportunity of learning together. This process has not been promoted by the administration but by the school community itself, in which the staff and the association of families, working jointly, have carried out a huge labour of social transformation. The experience has obtained prestige in the educational sector and has been closely followed not only by the social agents of the neighbourhood, but also by agents of the university (Teacher Training Schools of the University of the Basque Country and the University of Mondragón), it has been presented at conferences and educational and anti-racist meetings, and it has been the subject of specialist publications. In a word, the school of the Old Town is a reference in inclusive and intercultural quality education. Moreover, all the associations and social agents of the vicinity have given it their support (Barquín, 2010).

It is noteworthy that this is not an institutional initiative, proceeding instead from the school community itself and from the families of the neighbourhood, and that it has had a great repercussion in the academic field as a referent of inclusive and intercultural education. The relevance of the case is due to the fact that the school, in spite of being extolled as an example of coexistence and multicultural integration, is at risk due to certain building works in the Old Town of Vitoria that might affect the school, as it might be necessary to temporarily change the location of the pupils and the transfer has not been set. Hence the mass media are echoing the citizens' claims:

The future location of the school in a building other than the present one, and the project's lack of precision have given rise to uncertainty. (...) That is why, "tired" of being left in the dark, and fearing that this situation might affect future registrations, they have decided to take measures. So far they have opted to place banners on the facades of the school and mail informative notes about the situation they find themselves in, for which they are demanding a solution from the Agency for the Revitalization of the Historic City (Corral, 2010).

This is a narrative describing the magnanimity with which the autochthonous population has dealt with the problem, while to a certain extent also allowing a certain condescension of local society towards the immigrant to show through, although in any case this is done by emphasizing the community's initiative as an example of managing a situation of marginalization:

From 45 registrations in the year 2001 there are now 165, and as described by Iban, a parent from Gasteiz-Ramón Bajo, it has advanced from being a ghetto to become a model of integration, and from model A to model D. “There is a new educational project, a neighbourhood school, ecological and family oriented, which has filled the autochthonous population with illusion”, according to Maite, another parent, while Iban observes that all of this has been done “without displacing the immigrant” (Amestoy, 2010, <http://www.gara.net/paperezkoa/20101202/235490/es/Rechazo-casco-viejo-Gasteiz-de-museo-sin-nueva-escuela>).

That is the majority image projected by the press on the participation of civil society in the field of education and intercultural integration, where there is a tendency to prioritize this type of inclusive representations and languages, but where there is also room for another type of discourse which is perhaps not represented in its full dimension: that portraying a society which is more hostile towards the other. Thus, in a news item in which the residents, who are autochthonous, of a new Bilbao district demand the creation of a new school, they are doing so because they refuse to allow their children to attend schools where there is a majority of immigrants:

And the Miribilla public school. The latter, situated in Bilbao La Vieja, relatively close to the neighbourhood, in 2008 had pupils from 24 different countries and a truancy rate of close to 22%, which is why it is not to the liking of the parents. “It isn’t a problem of racism, but they have turned it into a ghetto with kids from dysfunctional families”, they argue in their defence. “Nor would it be a stable solution”, they add (Igea, 2011b).

Thus, the press does not always reflect initiatives in favour of the inclusion of the other by the receiver society, but also, in a more veiled way and less frequently, it stresses the latter’s hostility and rejection of what is different, which is situated in the field of *dysfunctionality* and *marginalization* – the ghetto – and even raising the concept of *racism*.

Another of the issues that has had the most impact in the press over the last two years is that of unaccompanied minors, generally of Maghrebi or Sub-Saharan origin. This is one of the questions that gives rise to the most controversy in the press, whose display of the disputes covers both the more hostile representations of these minors, who are often accused of lying about their age and of committing more offences than other groups, as well as more inclusive representations, in which their abandonment and the precarious conditions in which they live are denounced.

This is clearly shown in a news item in which the political parties, PNV (the traditional conservative nationalist party that has a majority in the Basque Country), EA (a nationalist party with a more progressive orientation, created following a split in the PNV) and PP (right-wing party with a national scope) passed a proposal in the Basque Parliament which called for “the setting of a quota of unaccompanied foreign minors for each autonomous community depending on its population” as well as the

establishment of the verification of their age on the basis of “a single and reliable system” (Europa Press, 2010).

Thus the news item echoed, on the one hand, the negative representations of these foreign minors, who appear as subjects who lie about their age, that is, adults who “pass themselves off as minors” (ibid), or who deliberately commit offences in order to improve their conditions, as denounced by a parliamentarian from the PNV when criticizing the present Basque Government (formed by the PSOE, socialist party with a national scope):

Antia, besides, has expressed her “unease” over the “extremely grave” statements made yesterday by the Justice Councillor of the Basque Government, Idoia Mendia, who affirmed that some minors choose to commit offences in order to be admitted to reform centres – which are dependent on the Basque Government – instead of remaining in child custody centres – managed by the Deputations – given that the former offer better care (ibid).

This idea of foreign minors as dangerous individuals, who in spite of being under the guardianship of the public administration are suspected of lying about their ages and of committing offences to a greater extent than other groups, is countered, on the other hand, in other spaces of the press. An example of this is the interview held with an academic expert in psychology and pedagogy who – in connection with his participation in a conference titled “Minors without rights? Unprotected foreign childhood, penalized youth” – considers that “it is a trap that society should talk about dangerous youths when it is wasting resources” (Etxeberria, 2010). That is why he criticizes the dominant institutional position that has also been taken up by society as a whole:

The institutions experience it as a problem. But this is a falsification of reality. A child is never a problem. We live in a society that is really subjected to fear, to insecurity prefabricated artificially, but subjected to that insecurity. We view what should create the most hope and illusion for us as being something dangerous. (...) We must know how to feel for the immigrant, we have to create something in common with the immigrant (ibid).

This problem is dramatized in a concrete case, which is related to the denunciations of an NGO – SOS Racismo, which works in favour of equal rights and against racism and xenophobia – about the situation of foreign minors in a children’s shelter in the province of Guipúzcoa, who, according to SOS Racismo, were subjected to maltreatment and prevented from attending educational and training centres. In this respect, the press emphasizes above all the denunciation of the infringement of rights related to the education of minors:

“The answer to those profiles of minors at risk does not consist of control, isolation behind a fence – like that which was placed in Deba [the name of the shelter for foreign minors] – but of an individualized educational intervention instead, which should be capable of getting these minors to accept their responsibilities and, in the cases where they are the protagonists of antisocial acts, they should receive a corrective intervention, but one seeking

to change their behaviour” Aierbe points out (Velasco, 2010, <http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20100305/al-dia-local/deba-modelo-repetir-20100305.html>).

This is the same line followed by the Ararteko (the Basque Ombudsman) in a report that he recently submitted to the Basque Parliament concerning the situation of minors, in which he drew special attention to the situation of those who are foreign and have arrived unaccompanied by an adult:

With respect to unaccompanied foreign minors (there are now five hundred sheltered by the Basque administration in a stable form), the report warns that some centres do not have “the minimum necessary conditions for offering sufficient and dignified care” to the kids (López, 2011).

Nonetheless, the mass media also give space to the rejoinder, made by those responsible for this question in the Deputation of Guipúzcoa and the tutors and monitors of the network of shelters for foreign children. It places the NGO’s perception of the problem in doubt, referring to specific cases and attitudes of the minors in the shelter:

Insausti questioned the validity of the criterion of SOS Racismo on the education of foreign minors. In this respect, he recalled that at a round table debate held in the last Summer Courses, a member of the NGO described the burning of a mattress by a minor as a “childish prank”. “I do not think, and I don’t suppose any citizen with common sense would either, that setting fire to a mattress with the intention of setting fire to the children’s centre, with the resulting risk for the residents, is the childish prank of an adolescent”. (...) The Childhood director wanted to put some of the denunciations made by the minors, advised by the NGO, into perspective. “They complained that they were given cold food. The facts are as follows. At the shelter they eat lunch at one o’clock. If some minor feels like eating at four o’clock, he has available a microwave oven for heating up the food. Some refused to do so; they wanted to be served, but obviously we didn’t: we aren’t waiters, nor mates of theirs, we are educators. Result: denunciation” (Segura, 2010).

By means of publicizing these occurrences, the NGO’s denunciation is placed in question and, once again, the image returns of foreigners as dangerous and reluctant to integrate themselves, which is why they affirm that they did “the best work possible with the difficult population” that they were caring for, reaching the point of placing their own “personal safety” “at serious risk on numerous occasions” (ibid). In any case, it is the narrative of a double suspicion which is recounted through incidental cases: suspicion of the foreign immigrants even though they are minors, and of the institutions that have to tutor them.

Finally, with less presence but with a certain relevance, there are different studies that gather together the data on racism and rejection of the other within the schools. In general, it can be said that what stands out in the press is an unproblematic image of Basque schools, in which the immigrants do not feel that they are subject to marginalization or xenophobic actions, although there is also space for studies that

show that racism is increasing in the classrooms with the growth in the number of foreign immigrants.

Thus, the headline of a news item in Deia reads that “Basque primary school pupils treat their immigrant companions as equals” (Fernández, 2010). This emphatic affirmation is accompanied by some figures, which also compare Basque children to those of the rest of the Spanish state:

Concretely, more than half (53%) of the 655 children who took part in the study answered that they make no distinctions with respect to their schoolmates of other nationalities, three points above the state average. Curiously, the Basques also surpass their companions from the state in another section, since “when it comes to looking at them strangely because they are different”, 13% (against 10% in the state) state that they do so. Nonetheless, 34% consider that “one can learn a lot from them” (ibid).

The interpretation made of the data is interesting, since although the headline would seem to indicate that there is complete equality of treatment, it turns out that there are 47% of Basque schoolchildren who did not answer that they don't make any distinction with their schoolmates of other nationalities, and only 34% think that it is possible to learn a lot from them. This does not mean to say that the press item is trying to camouflage the data, but it is at least possible to deduce that there is perhaps a certain bias involved in presenting the situation in the classrooms as being completely problem-free.

However, there are other news items that express the opposite of what is set out in the previous one; news items in which it is affirmed, as part of the conclusions of the *IV Seminar of Training in Human Rights* for educators, which included a session on immigration and racism in the classroom, that “rejection of the immigrant is growing in Basque schoolrooms” (Turrau, 2010). A situation of inequality is described which it seems difficult to overcome and in which there is once again a certain ambiguity, since it appears that it is not only a structural problem affecting the host society as whole, but that it also affects the capacities of the immigrants themselves, perhaps in a veiled way:

One obstacle to integration is the fact that the majority of immigrant schoolchildren are educated in the most underprivileged public schools that have the least resources. “They do not learn the host languages in a satisfactory way. This happens with Spanish in the Spanish state, and with Spanish and Euskera here”. (...) The immigrant schoolchildren achieve a poorer performance at school, according to Etxeberria's data. “The Pisa reports show that in mathematics, language, science and problem resolution, they come out 50 or 60 points below the natives. This is difficult with a view to future integration” (ibid).

In any case, the news item does not evade giving expression to the latent representation held by the local population with respect to the immigrant as simple labour power, as is pointed out by Aierdi, the director of the Basque Observatory for Immigration:

Our integration has a tendency towards assimilation. There is an opening to cultural plurality, but the vision of the economic functionality of the immigrant population is declining. The stereotypes are maintained (ibid).

In short, these four – government institutions, civil society, unaccompanied foreign minors, and studies on racism – have been the principal axes that have arranged the representation made in the press with respect to the relation between school education and foreign immigration from non-western countries. In any case, it must be pointed out that this is not an issue that has a constant presence in the mass media; its appearance is motivated more by concrete cases – an institutional statement, a controversy raised by a neighbourhood association or by an NGO, the publication of a study or the presentation of the conclusions of a congress, etc. – than because there is a discourse and a series of representations maintained over time. In this respect, the press views the questions of racism, integration, multiculturalism and education as being marginal and incidental, rather than central and structural, issues of Basque society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be argued that in general terms the 'other' in the field of education only has a direct voice if she belongs to the Gypsy collective, but not to other minority groups within Basque society. In fact, coverage of the institutional discourse is higher than the rest of the themes, although in any case the main narratives in the newspapers are those elaborated by the socially dominant and majority groups, even when it is often a question of favouring the inclusion of the 'other'.

The main themes that revolve around the relation between education and ethnic minorities in the press do so according to the discourse of the government institutions, the initiatives of civil society, the problems of marginalization and ghettoization, problems related to unaccompanied foreign minors and the publication of data and studies. In any case, the representation that is made tends to be ambiguous: on the one hand, it refers to questions that structurally affect the whole of society, including a more or less veiled rejection of what is different; on the other hand, the other is also made responsible – at times directly – for her own situation, for her own inability to become socially integrated.

It is also notable that practically all of the press material related to this issue always refers to, or is articulated around, concrete cases and controversies: the closure of schools, denunciations by an association or an NGO, a parliamentary proposal, petitions by a collective, publication of the results of studies, conclusions of

congresses, seminars and conferences, neighbourhood controversies, political statements, etc. It is not an issue that has a continuous presence in the press; it always appears sporadically and in an irregular way. The main consequence of this is that themes such as racism (a word that only appears occasionally), integration (a word that often does appear in this type of news items), multiculturalism or the other and education, are viewed as incidental elements that do not require a deeper or continuous treatment. If there is some type of racism, violence or marginalization in the educational field with respect to the other, the press represents this as if it were a specific occurrence, never a structural one.

References

- Amestoy, I. (2010). "Rechazo a un casco viejo de Gasteiz «de museo» y sin nueva escuela", *Gara*: <http://www.gara.net/paperezkoa/20101202/235490/es/Rechazo-casco-viejo-Gasteiz-de-museo-sin-nueva-escuela>
- Barquín, A. (2010). "¿Revitalizar el Casco Viejo sin la escuela?", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20101109/opinion/revitalizar-casco-viejo-escuela-20101109.html>
- Basurto, J. (2010). ""Hay que acabar con el mito de que estudiar 'apaya'", *Deia*: <http://www.deia.com/2010/04/11/bizkaia/hay-que-acabar-con-el-mito-de-que-estudiar-apaya>
- Cancho, R. (2011). "Vitoria quiere poner fin a la 'guetización' de algunos colegios", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20111011/alava/vitoria-quiere-poner-guetizacion-20111011.html>
- Corral, B. (2010). "La escuela del Casco Viejo se rebela", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20101105/alava/escuela-casco-viejo-rebela-20101105.html>
- Deia (2011). "Denuncian el cierre de un colegio público en Otxarkoaga", *Deia*: <http://www.deia.com/2011/07/02/bizkaia/bilbao/denuncian-el-cierre-de-un-colegio-publico-en-otxarkoaga>
- Etxeberria, Z. (2010). "«Crear que los niños son peligrosos es vivir en una sociedad virtual»", *Gara*: <http://www.gara.net/paperezkoa/20101106/230461/es/Crear-que-ninos-son-peligrosos-es-vivir-una-sociedad-virtual>
- El Correo (2010). "«Desconfiaban de mí por ser payo»", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20100321/pvasco-espana/desconfiaban-payo-20100321.html>
- Europa Press (2010). "El Parlamento vasco propone fijar un cupo de menores extranjeros para cada comunidad autónoma", *El Correo*

<http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/20100325/mas-actualidad/sociedad/parlamento-vasco-propone-fijar-201003251238.html>

Fernández, J. (2010). “«Estamos hartos de las calumnias y manipulaciones de SOS Racismo»”, *Deia*: <http://www.deia.com/2010/08/12/sociedad/los-escolares-vascos-de-primaria-tratan-de-igual-a-igual-a-sus-companeros-inmigrantes>

Fernández Ibáñez, J. (2010). “Interculturalidad en las aulas”, *Deia*: <http://www.deia.com/2010/02/22/opinion/tribuna-abierta/interculturalidad-en-las-aulas>

Goti, N. (2011). “Los avances en interculturalidad entre payos y gitanos se abren camino con no pocas dificultades”, *Gara*: <http://www.gara.net/paperezkoa/20110328/256396/es/LOS-AVANCES-EN-INTERCULTURALIDAD-ENTRE-PAYOS-Y-GITANOS-SE-ABREN-CAMINO-CON-NO-POCAS-DIFICULTADES->

Ibarra, A. (2011). ““Hay que evitar la tentación de pensar que un sistema educativo alternativo puede ayudar al gitano a mejorar””, *Deia*: <http://www.deia.com/2011/03/21/sociedad/hay-que-evitar-la-tentacion-de-pensar-que-un-sistema-educativo-alternativo-puede-ayudar-al-gitano-a-mejorar>

Igea, O. (2011a). “Otxarkoaga se rebela contra el cierre del tercer colegio en 20 años”, *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20110702/vizcaya/otxarkoaga-rebela-contra-cierre-20110702.html>

Igea, O. (2011b). La falta de un colegio público vuelve a desatar las protestas en Miribilla, *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20110318/vizcaya/falta-colegio-publico-vuelve-20110318.html>

López, L. (2011). “El Ararteko critica la «insuficiente» protección pública a los menores”, *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20110504/pvasco-espana/ararteko-critica-insuficiente-proteccion-20110504.html>

Pérez de Nanclares, N. (2010). “«Todos los centros deben tener alumnos inmigrantes en sus clases»”, *El Correo*:

<http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20101128/alava/todos-centros-deben-tener-20101128.html>

Pérez de Nanclares, N. (2011). "Seis colegios públicos de Vitoria tienen más del 50% de alumnos extranjeros", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20110316/alava/seis-colegios-publicos-vitoria-20110316.html>

Resa, A. (2011). "Buenismo' y demagogia", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20110316/alava/buenismo-demagogia-20110316.html>

Segura, F. (2010). "«Estamos hartos de las calumnias y manipulaciones de SOS Racismo»", *El Diario Vasco*: <http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20100311/al-dia-local/estamos-hartos-calumnias-manipulaciones-20100311.html>

Tomé, M. J. (2011). "Celaá apuesta por «incentivar» a los colegios con más inmigración", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20110326/pvasco-espana/celaa-apuesta-incentivar-colegios-20110326.html>

Turrau, C. (2010). "La xenofobia también va a clase", *El Diario Vasco*: <http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20100324/al-dia-local/xenofobia-tambien-clase-20100324.html>

Van Dijk, Teun A. (2006) "Discurso de las élites y racismo institucional" en Lario Bastida, Manuel (coord.). *Medios de comunicación e inmigración*. Murcia: Convivir sin racismo, 15-34.

Van Dijk, Teun A. (1997). *Racismo y análisis crítico de los medios*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Vasco Press (2010a). "Celaá: "Las cifras de inmigración en las aulas son manejables, no sabemos por cuánto tiempo"", *El Correo*: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/20100917/mas-actualidad/sociedad/celaa-cifras-inmigracion-aulas-201009171050.html>

Vasco Press (2010b). "Celaá: "Las cifras de inmigración son manejables, no sabemos por cuanto tiempo"", *Deia*: <http://www.deia.com/2010/09/17/sociedad/euskadi/celaa-las-cifras-de-inmigracion-son-manejables-no-sabemos-por-cuanto-tiempo->

Velasco, J. (2010). "Deba, un modelo «a no repetir»", *El Diario Vasco*: <http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20100305/al-dia-local/deba-modelo-repetir-20100305.html>

Addenda: Press Monitoring

In accordance with the *press monitoring* carried out between 5 and 19 December 2011, we now present the news items grouped according to the main themes that appeared in the newspapers studied.

Institutional initiatives and discourses

- The social agreement for the integration of immigration sponsored by the Basque Government:
 - The Government urges acceptance of immigration as a “stable and positive” phenomenon:
http://elpais.com/diario/2011/12/15/paisvasco/1323981603_850215.html
 - Reflection of two months prior work involving 15 experts:
http://elpais.com/diario/2011/12/15/paisvasco/1323981602_850215.html
 - Zubero: "It is an opportunity for the whole of Euskadi":
http://elpais.com/diario/2011/12/15/paisvasco/1323981604_850215.html
 - Social agents and institutions open a debate to reach a social pact for immigration: <http://www.elcorreo.com/alava/v/20111215/pvasco-espana/agentes-sociales-instituciones-abren-20111215.html>
 - The debate on the Social Pact for Immigration begins:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111215/al-dia-sociedad/comienzo-debate-sobre-pacto-20111215.html>

- Other institutional initiatives or discourses:
 - «The Basque Country is not attractive for immigrants»:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111212/al-dia-sociedad/para-inmigrantes-pais-vasco-20111212.html>
 - Getxo backs the immigrant population:
<http://www.deia.com/2011/12/06/bizkaia/margen-derecha/getxo-respalda-a-la-poblacion-inmigrante>
 - Human rights and immigration:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111215/costa-urola/derechos-humanos-inmigracion-20111215.html>
 - Getxo joins the Spanish network of intercultural towns:
<http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20111217/margen-derecha/getxo-suma-espanola-ciudades-20111217.html>

- The Moslem world (a question that is barely covered in the mass media as a local reality, which makes the appearance of these news items notable):
 - The mosque is now too small:
<http://blogs.elcorreo.com/inakicerrajeria/2011/12/07/la-mezquita-se-ha-quedado-pequena/>
 - The Moslems of Tolosaldea open a mosque in the area:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111210/tolosa-goierri/musulmanes-tolosaldea-abren-mezquita-20111210.html>

Civil society

- Debabe organizes a new “Aisa” course of Euskera for immigrants:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111204/bajo-deba/debabe-organiza-nuevo-curso-20111204.html>
- Nubi Elkarte closes down due to a lack of resources:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111207/alto-deba/nubi-elkartea-echa-persiana-20111207.html>
- A metaphor of multiculturalism: <http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111207/san-sebastian/metafora-multiculturalidad-20111207.html>
- The most humane night of Bilbao:
<http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20111208/vizcaya/noche-humana-bilbao-20111208.html>
- The Moroccan hairdresser who returned 400 lottery tickets stars in an advert:
<http://www.deia.com/2011/12/16/bizkaia/bilbao/el-peluquero-marroqui-que-devolvio-400-decimos-de-loteria-protagonista-de-un-anuncio>
- SOS racismo (organization in favour of equal rights for immigrants and against racism and xenophobia):
 - Meeting on anti-racist education in the classrooms:
<http://www.diariovasco.com/v/20111215/comarca/encuentro-sobre-educacion-antirracista-20111215.html>
 - Renting a flat is more difficult for foreigners:
<http://www.deia.com/2011/12/16/bizkaia/bilbao/alquilar-un-piso-resulta-mas-dificil-para-los-extranjeros>