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Policies of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Andalusia (Spain): Development, Trends and Privatization Effects

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POLITICHE DI EDUCAZIONE E CURA DELLA PRIMA
INFANZIA (ECEC) IN ANDALUSIA (SPAGNA): SVILUPPO,
TENDENZE ED EFFETTI DELLA PRIVATIZZAZIONE

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the consequences of the development of the Early Childhood Education for 0 to 3 years old model implemented in Andalusia (Spain), whose enrolment achievements have been based on extensive reliance on private providers. The analysis is based on in-depth interviews and statistical data from official sources. The findings show how reliance on a privatized model generates economic and territorial barriers to access, as well as affecting the quality of services and schooling conditions. These are negatively affected by the economic constraints of private schools, worse working conditions and difficulties in training and coordination. As a result, schools prioritize basic welfare aspects over educational projects and pedagogical innovation.

Keywords: Early childhood education; Education markets; Equity and quality; Privatisation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Privatisation of ECEC03 increases social-class disparities in access and undermines schooling conditions. Private nursery schools generally fall short of the standards of the public schools, which tend to involve families more actively, receive more guidance and supervision of their pedagogical projects and offer better salaries, training opportunities, and time for coordination within working hours.

Giving the complexity of the Spanish ECEC03, case studies are essential for assessing the effects of privatisation. This paper will analyse the recent history, current trends and schooling conditions in the field of ECEC03 in Andalusia, the most privatized market of ECEC03 in Spain, focusing on how extensive privatisation affects equity and quality.

2. FORMAL CHILDCARE MARKETS AND PRIVATIZATION TRENDS: INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Childcare markets are increasingly fragmented within countries, as is in Spain (León *et al.*, 2022). Research has therefore sought to classify prevailing ECEC03 models. Penn (2014, p. 453) established four of them in Europe: (i) countries promoting private provision with lax regulation; (ii) those with almost universal public provision that discourage private investment; (iii) countries that favour private provision under strong regulation; and (iv) countries with minimal implementation and little familiarity with private provision.

The identification of different ECEC03 models has been completed by identifying international trends. Under neoliberal policies, the privatisation of ECEC03 has expanded with relatively little contestation. Opening the ECEC03 to market dynamics and diversifying providers has meant a private absorption of significant global growth in enrolment and schools. Privatisation is commonly argued for increasing families «freedom of choice» while improving coverage and territorial distribution (Falabella, 2014, p. 3).

OECD data (2020, p. 170) show that almost half of ECEC03 children attend private schools, though there are differences between countries. Anglo-Saxon countries exhibit longstanding, near-total privatisation. England and the Netherlands are the most studied (Meyers & Gornick, 2003, p. 382; Penn, 2007; McLean, 2014, p. 123; Moss, 2014). Nordic countries, traditionally associated with strong public networks, have also moved towards intensive privatisation processes. Finland is currently out-

sourcing provision to private companies to reduce public expenditure (Laiho & Pihlaja, 2022, p. 953). Outsourcing is another trend in privatisation processes, along with incentives that encourage the market to be filled by private providers (Trættemberg *et al.*, 2023). Norway's ECEC03 was already more than 50% private in 2018 (OECD, 2018). In South America, ECEC03 also shows high levels of privatisation (Verger *et al.*, 2017, p. 73), but with differences between countries. Chile's «escuelas iniciales» are regulated but still have accessibility, availability and affordability barriers (Adlerstein & Pardo, 2019; Barco & Carrasco, 2020), whereas Brazil combines privatisation with limited regulation, contributing to lower quality (Bastos & Cristias, 2012).

Privatisation in ECEC03 has been normalised partly because it is often framed as a work-family reconciliation measure rather than an educational stage with its own identity, crucial for compensating inequalities. Private involvement has enabled rapid expansion of the supply and increased coverage (Dýrfjörð & Magnúsdóttir, 2016, p. 92; Trættemberg *et al.*, 2023, p. 165). Yet privatisation implies risks for social justice, curricular relevance, professional autonomy, working conditions, homogeneity of services, and efficient use of public resources, often invested in maintaining or relaunching private schools (Fernández & Falabella, 2023, p. 14).

Research consistently shows that increasing supply through market mechanism leads to negative consequences. In ECEC03, privatisation affects quality and limits the compensatory potential of early education, especially for vulnerable children. Claims that privatisation increases efficiency or quality lack of global evidence (Verger *et al.*, 2016, p. 3). What is proven is that differences in how childcare markets are regulated and financed negatively impact on accessibility, affordability and quality (Ball & Vincent, 2005; Mclean, 2014, p. 131; Sirén *et al.*, 2020, p. 646). Liberal, highly privatised countries show the widest inequalities in service use across social classes, affordability and availability (Meyers & Gornick, 2003, p. 406; Penn, 2007, p. 201).

Neoliberal ideas of privatisation are based on free choice, efficiency and quality through competition between schools (Akgündüz & Plantenga, 2014, p. 380; Trættemberg *et al.*, 2023, p. 171). Free choice for families is, however, a chimera. Their choices are constrained by affordability, distance, and the need to maintain care stability (Plantenga, 2012; González & Saurí, 2023). In fact, research confirms earlier OECD (2006, p. 11) findings from a decade ago: public ownership and management offer higher quality care and more equitable access than private models, even when the latter include subsidies to families, tax incentives or public financial aid (Meyers & Gornick, 2003, p. 389; van Lancker & Ghysels, 2016, p. 327).

Subsidies for private nursery schools are widespread (Gallagher, 2014, 119; Knijn & Lewis, 2017), though often overlooked by education privatisation advocates. Across all countries in TALIS (OECD, 2018), governments had to support private ECEC03 during the Covid-19 crisis.

We will see that Andalusia has similar characteristics to those highlighted in the international literature. Although privatisation increases supply, barriers persist. Imbalances in availability remain and privatisation generates problems in schooling conditions and quality.

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FROM 0-3 YEARS OLD IN SPAIN

In Spain, early childhood education is divided into two voluntary stages. The first is for children between 0-3 years old, the second for those 3-6. However, while 3-6 achieve rapid universalisation by being largely integrated into the free school network, ECEC03 has instead been provided by non-attached to primary school's centres. Enrolment in ECEC03 has grown steadily, and most regional administrations, together with municipalities, have approached the Barcelona Target of 50% enrolment. Overall, Spain's ECEC03 enrolment is above both OECD and EU averages.

There have been achievements. However, ECEC03 in Spain also faces significant challenges. Enrolments remain strongly stratified by social class: 61.9% of children from high-income, highly educated families attend, compared with only 35.5% from low-income households (Meil *et al.*, 2021). Intercultural barriers persist, reflected in unequal inter-ethnic allocation of places (Save the Children, 2019, p. 40). Moreover, enrolment tends to occur mainly between ages 2 and 3, even though places are available from around 4 months, especially for the group that needs it earliest and most: the most vulnerable children.

Widespread privatisation of ECEC03 largely explains these persistent inequalities (Navarro-Varas, 2022). Public investment of GDP in ECEC03 in Spain represents only 0.2% compared to 0.5% for 3-6 (OECD, 2020, p. 185). Household spending is still very high: Spanish families make the EU's second highest investment in ECEC03, surpassed only by household spending on university education (Bonal & Scandurra, 2019, pp. 6-9). Only about 25% of Spanish families receive fully free places, while more than half pay the full cost. 52% of families who did not enrol declared that they could not afford to pay for it (Vélaz *et al.*, 2020, p. 61).

Although people living in severe poverty can access free places, they have little access to these services due to bureaucratic barriers («non take up»). In turn, many low-wage dual-earner households self-exclude themselves from ECEC03 for economic reasons, frequently forcing working-class women to reduce or quit paid work to manage care. Beyond economic and cultural barriers, territorial imbalances persist, alongside mismatches between parental leave, working hours and nursery schedules (Romero *et al.*, 2022; González & Saurí, 2023; Turienzo *et al.*, 2025).

After years of strong growth, the Spanish ECEC03 now faces serious economic strain, intensified by declining birth rates. Many private schools are in crisis, and public places remain insufficient. In recent years, some regions and municipalities have increased their public ECEC03 network (MEFP, 2024). However, the reality of ECEC03 in Spain is very heterogeneous. In fact, along with widespread privatisation, the main characteristic of the Spanish ECEC03 is its fragmentation (León *et al.*, 2022). Between regions there are notable differences in the weight of public versus private provision, in access criteria, in the cost of places and in enrolment rates.

4. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This paper has two objectives: (i) to analyse the development, evolution and current features of the Andalusian ECEC03 model; and (ii) to examine the consequences of Andalusia's reliance on private providers. We will address the following research question: how privatisation shapes accessibility, facets of educational quality, and the viability and economic future of Andalusia's ECEC03?

Analysing ECEC03 in Spain is challenging due to dispersed, incomplete and outdated administrative data¹. To address these gaps, this research draws on recent national and international statistics and 15 in-depth interviews with professional experts in the field of ECEC03, gathered within the project «Estudio sobre acceso equitativo y calidad en Educación Infantil de primer ciclo (0-3 años) en Andalucía», funded in 2019 by Save the Children - Andalucía and led by Manuel Ángel Río.

Interviewees included mostly directors² of public and private schools, representatives of trade unions and the private sector in ECEC03, as well

¹ E.g., most common source, Living Conditions Survey, has not been updated since 2016 and lacks sample size for regional comparisons.

² To ensure confidentiality, no interviewees or nursery schools are named.

as experts in ECEC03 and public administration officials with management responsibilities in ECEC03. Interviews were conducted in six Andalusian provincial capitals, using intentional sampling but ensuring diversity. Considering the feminisation of the sector, most interviewees were women. Interviews lasted between 75 and 210 minutes and were held in the participant's workplaces.

The reconstruction of professionals' experiences from daily contact with the families plays a key role here: allowed for a more comprehensive understanding, explanation and interpretation of the limited data on access barriers and schooling conditions. The interview script addressed availability and diversity of places, accessibility (regulations, pricing, subsidies), quality (regulation, ratios, salaries, training, educational approach), among other dimensions. Analysis followed procedures and principles of sociological discourse analysis such as qualitative saturation through continuous comparison and structured templates to identify themes aligned with the emerging topics and specific research objectives.

5. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FROM 0-3 YEARS IN ANDALUSIA

Andalusia³ is Spain's largest and most populated region, with the country's highest percentage of children aged 0-4 (about 20%⁴). It also has one of Spain's highest ECEC03 enrolment rates. However, it is by far the region in Spain with the greatest number of ECEC03 places and private nursery schools.

The Andalusian ECEC03 system is quite recent. Until 2008-2009⁵, there was no legislation guaranteeing the right to a place (though not free of charge), defining competences – previously split across social services, education and municipalities – or regulation educational and care standards such as ratios, infrastructure and staff qualifications.

In terms of accessibility and affordability, when demand exceeds supply, priority goes to dual-earner families rather than vulnerable households. Ironically, these dual-earner families are also less likely to qualify for the subsidy plan that, since 2008-2009 has helped families cover part or all

³ Andalusia is a Region with 8 provinces with municipalities of varying size.

⁴ Data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE). Consulted on 24/05/2024.

⁵ Decree 428/2008, of 29 July, establishes organisation and teaching of ECEC in Andalusia (BOJA 19/08/2008).

the childcare fees, allowing the most vulnerable households to obtain free places.

Private schools – free to set their own prices – represent a minority mostly reserved for higher-income families. Publicly subsidised private schools dominate in Andalusia. Subjected to a price fixed by the administration, families enrolled in these schools receive income-based subsidies. A smaller number of public nursery schools share the same fixed pricing and subsidy system, but in addition receive funding from the regional government.

5.1. An expansion of the system through private providers

Over the last decades, Andalusia has significantly increased ECEC03 enrolment. As *Figure 1* shows, rates grow continuously – except during Covid-19 – and have exceeded national averages for the past decade. This evolution is more striking if we consider that Andalusia is among Spain's top poorest regions. Enrolments multiplied between 2007 and 2010, due to the implementation of legislation sought to guarantee sufficient supply but mostly relying on private providers.

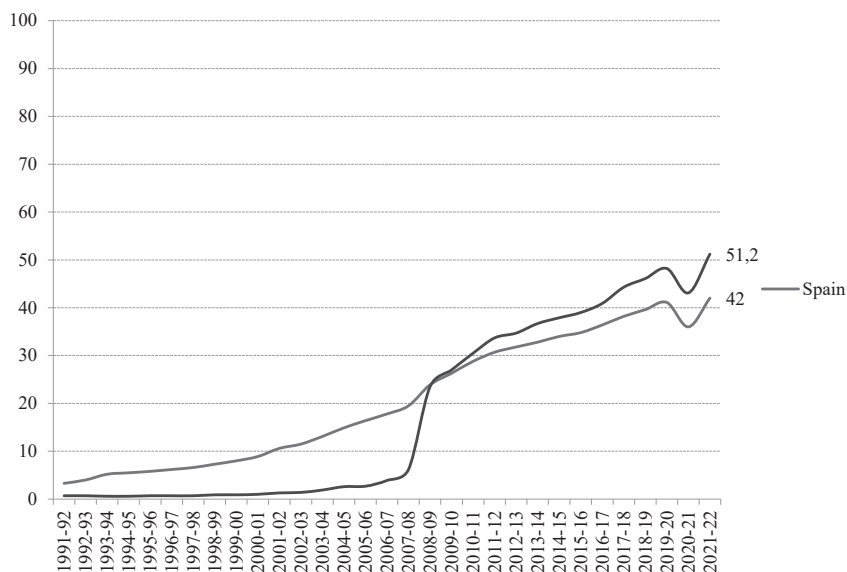


*Figure 1. – Net schooling rate in 0-2 years old from 1991-2022, Andalusia and Spain.
Source: author's own elaboration from data of MEFP, 2024a.*

Regional comparisons reveal wide disparities. Andalusia's current enrolment rate for ages 0-2 (51%) is among the highest in Spain. Before Covid-19 it ranked first, though today is surpassed by wealthier regions such as the Basque Country and Madrid (*Fig. 2*).

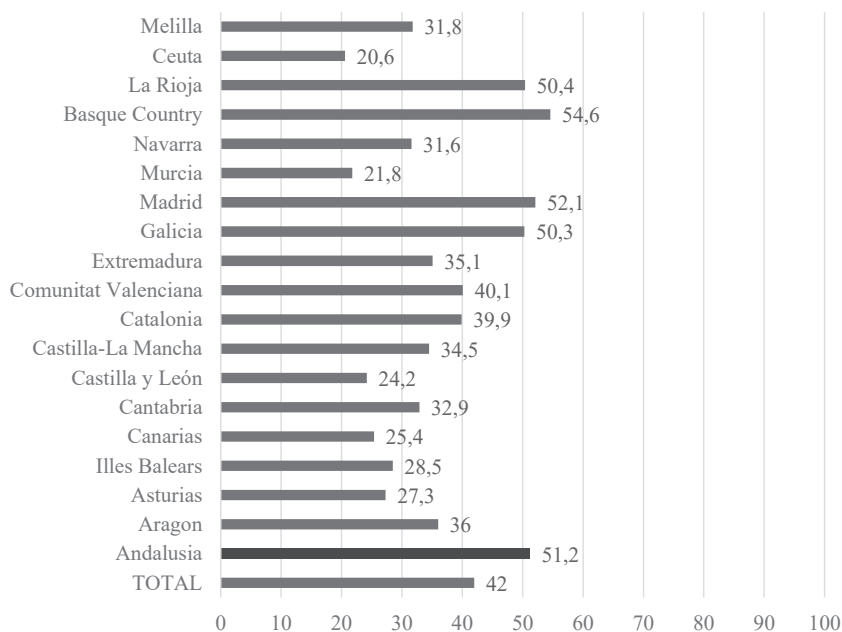


Figure 2. – Net schooling rate in 0-2 years by Autonomous Community (2021-2022).

Source: author's own elaboration from data of MEFP, 2024a.

Although Andalusia has overcome the deficit of ECEC03 places, this expansion was sustained by private providers. The public network grew only slightly after 2008-2009, when regulations were introduced. Private directors recount how many of today's private schools were established and multiplied by government encouragement:

They would say: «Please, set up a school there, we need more places». The Administration was really insisting [...]. They encouraged us to set up schools in certain places, because they didn't have enough to meet the demand [...]. We knew the network of places they promised. And said, «How are they going to do this?». They asked us to make our private and personal investment, but we are teachers, not entrepreneurs. (DIR8.Priv.Sev. BusinessRepresent)

The main consequence of this is illustrated below: Andalusia has by far the lowest occupancy of public places (36.5%), 17 points below the Spanish average and 10 points below Comunitat Valenciana (*Fig. 3*).

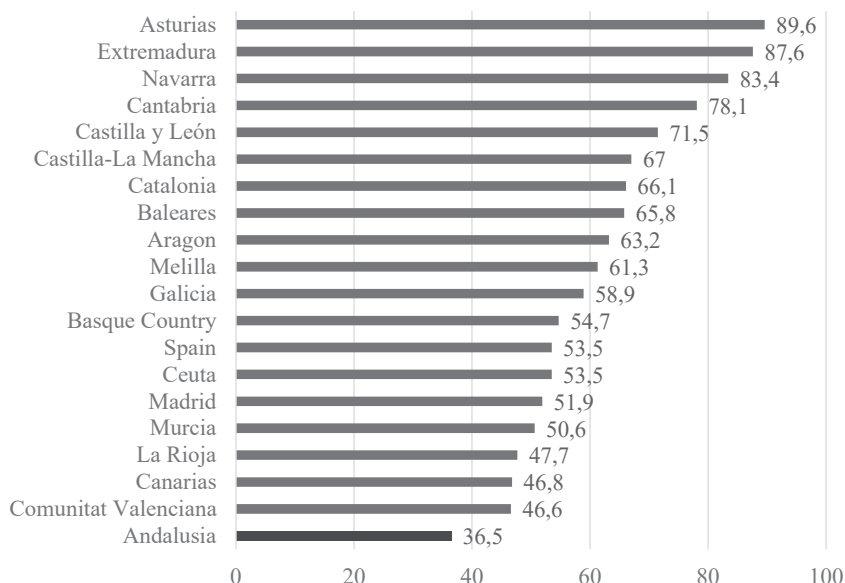


Figure 3. – Percentage of 0 to 2 years old in public schools by Autonomous Community (2021-2022).

Source: author's own elaboration from data of MEFP, 2024b.

Of Andalusia's 2,347 nursery schools, 1,618 are private (MEFP, 2024a). Over 90% of these receive public subsidies. Only 170 schools belong to the Andalusian administration. The rest are 560 municipal schools which are usually privately managed.

Despite the significant deficit of public places, the Andalusian government rejected € 120 million of EU «Next Generation»⁶ funds, dedicated exclusively to create public nursery schools. It is estimated that 12,000 new public places could have been created. Instead, the government prioritised sustaining a precarious model, particularly at risk due to declining birth rates, limited public funding and oversupply in many neighbourhoods⁷.

⁶ Andalusia returns the 119 million European funds for public nursery schools and thus protects its network of private centres (Morente, 2024).

⁷ At the beginning of 2023-2024 there were more than 40,000 unfilled places out of the nearly 125,000 offered. ECEC in Andalucía, another story of Private Welfare State (Bollero, 2024).

Municipal schools, built with public funds but mostly outsourced, represent the instability produced by outsourcing policies. When demand drops, providers (almost always multinationals) terminate their contracts. Families and workers are abandoned. The administrations must seek, amidst great legal difficulties, to relaunch and maintain «bankrupt»⁸ schools. Cutting costs by relying on market equilibrium often comes at a high price, especially in early childhood education.

When we had this increasing of schools, some municipalities opted for new public schools, which have then become property of Andalusia's government but privately managed by companies engaged in care services. But we've seen a tremendous slowdown, many of these companies have crashed. Now some municipal schools are bankrupt. (TECN1.And.Sev)

More data highlights the dominance of private provision in ECEC03. The 3-6 is predominantly public in Andalusia, unlike highly privatised regions such as Madrid or Catalonia. Yet for 0-3, as data shows below (*Tab. 1*), the situation is completely reversed: here private provision dominates.

*Table 1. – Percentage of children enrolled in ECEC03 and 3-6 years and management model (public or private) in Andalusia (2019-2020).
Source: author's own elaboration from data of MEFP, 2024a.*

	PUBLIC SCHOOL	PUBLICLY SUBSIDISED PRIVATE SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL	TOTAL
0-3 years	40.50%	54.00%	5.50%	100%
3-6 years	76.90%	20.40%	2.70%	100%

While families' demand for places has been met, today's oversupply reflects weak planning in a private sector overwhelmingly supported by public subsidies. Many providers have reacted to recession by acting as pressure groups, demanding higher subsidies and resisting the creation of public places in «saturated» areas where occupancy had fallen below 80%.

5.2. *Consequences of privatisation (I). Territorial imbalances and economic barriers to access*

Supply dominated by private providers promotes territorial imbalances. Private schools cluster in densely populated, economically dynamic areas

⁸ Neither subrogation nor moratorium: the Junta de Andalucía leaves 73 nursery school workers in the street (Cenizo, 2019).

and avoid poorer neighbourhoods as they offer less business opportunities. In small municipalities (<2,000 inhabitants) ECEC03 is almost entirely public. In semi-urban municipalities (2,001-10,000 inhabitants), public schools remain significant, although private provision is much more common. Private schools dominate in Andalusia's eight major cities: of 750 ECEC03 schools, 667 are private⁹ and only 83 are public. Sevilla and Malaga the lowest percentage of public schools: 7% and 6% respectively.

Territorial imbalances are also seen by provinces. *Figure 4* shows that small provinces such as Jaén and Huelva approach the national average public enrolment, while larger provinces like Malaga and Seville show notably higher privatisation with differences of almost 25 points.

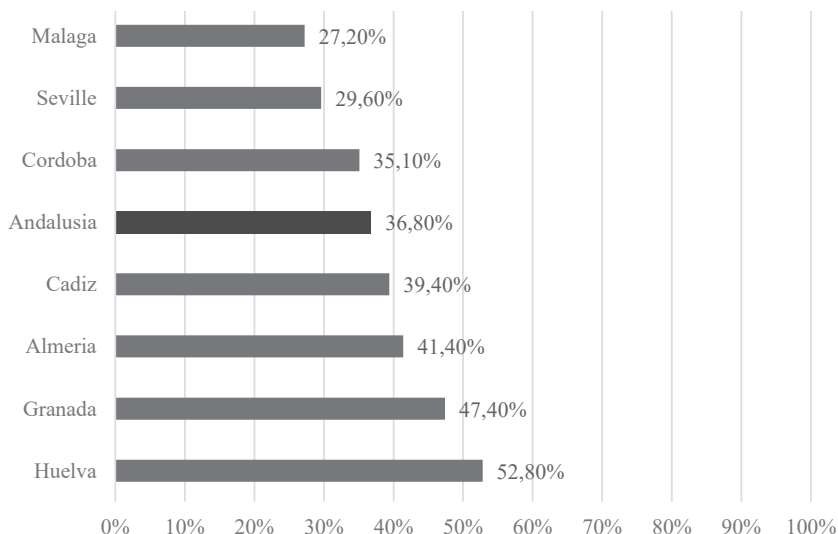


Figure 4. – 2 years old enrolled in public schools by province in Andalusia (2022-2023).

Source: author's own elaboration from data of MEFP, 2024b.

Privatisation also promotes economic barriers to access. Andalusia has lower average incomes and higher poverty rates¹⁰. With the Aid Plan from 2008-2009, in 2019-2020, nearly half of families who applied during enrolment period qualified for full subsidies, and another 21% receiver partial

⁹ Nursery schools for 0-3 year-olds in Andalusia: private in the big cities, public in the rest (Gutiérrez, 2024).

¹⁰ Spanish's 2019 Poverty Risk Rate was 21% and 28.5% in Andalusia. Source: National Institute of Statistics, Living Conditions Survey (2020).

reductions on the fixed 350 € price. Nevertheless, families still bear 28.3% of total system cost, which represents an excessive financial burden for low-income households just above the poverty threshold (Río *et al.*, 2022).

Moreover, these data include only families who enrolled during the normal application period. Many households do not apply knowing they will not qualify for aid and they are not compensated in terms of salary. Despite rising acceptance in Spain of nursery school as a preferred childcare alternative rather than family care (Romero *et al.*, 2022, p. 122; Turienzo *et al.*, 2025), more than half of families who did not enrol reported financial difficulties (Vélaz *et al.*, 2020). Strict income criteria exclude may «stabilised precarious families» (informally known as «mileuristas» in Spain) earning roughly 11,500 € per capita, who lose access to subsidies and delay or do not enrol. Given that the administration sets identical prices for public and private subsidised schools, economic barriers are manifested in both networks.

Right now, we're about 47% enrolled, the rest don't go to schools. Vast majority because they can't afford it. Mileuristas are excluded from public aid. [...]. Picture this: a family of two parents on a salary of about 1000 € doesn't get any public aid [...]. (DIR8.Priv.Sev.BusinessRepresent)

5.3. *Consequences of privatisation (II): the difficult economic sustainability of the private formal childcare market and its impact on different facets of educational quality*

Access to ECEC03 is not enough. Pedagogical effectiveness of ECEC03 – especially for vulnerable children – relies on high quality, which is more likely found in public services (Sandstrom, 2012, p. 24; Bassok & Galdo, 2016; Vandenbroeck *et al.*, 2018, p. 6; van Huizen & Plantenga, 2018, p. 216). Research shows that insufficient quality discourages enrolment, particularly among middle-class families who value educational quality but forgo schools that consider not up to their standards (Plantenga & Remery, 2005; Yerkes & Javornik, 2019, p. 534; Akgündüz *et al.*, 2020).

These findings converge with those identified in Andalusia. A central consequence of privatisation is underfunding. Over 90% of private schools depend on public subsidies tied to fixed prices that do not reflect real cost. Public investment per child in public schools is three times higher than in the subsidised ones. As a result, many private schools operate with minimal compliance regarding ratios and care standards and lack of resources for an ECEC03 with real pedagogical value.

We could do with some economic support. We've been working here for 12 years and the cost of a place in a public school is 3 times more than what they (the families) are paying to us (private schools) [...]. They themselves (the Andalusia's Department of Education) did a similar study and came to the same conclusion: the cost of a place in a nursery school is very expensive [...]. (DIR5.Priv.Hue)

There's big trouble with economic management [...]. They're making a big effort, but they work with lots of uncertainty. You can't manage a school properly in this way. [...] This leads to focusing on care aspects rather than on educational opportunities. (INSPEDU1.Sev)

Economic constraints undermine key aspects of quality. First, salaries and working conditions are low: private-sector annual wages range from 13,000 € to 19,000 €, slightly above the minimum wage in Spain. Staff with equivalent qualifications earn 25-30% less in private than in public ECEC03 schools. Disparities between 0-3 and 3-6 are even larger; ECEC03 educators earn 21.8% less on average and face greater job instability (León *et al.*, 2019, p. 573). Together with the sector's 97% feminisation, these conditions weaken the social recognition of predominantly female workers (Castro & Martínez, 2017), and hinder recruitment and retention of highly qualified educators, who tend to move to opt for public schools (Irvine *et al.*, 2023, p. 10).

According to recent comparative studies between public and private networks of ECEC03 (Río & Ortega, 2025), public schools offer opportunities for training and coordination during working hours, as well as pedagogical leadership, unlike private ones. The Andalusian system struggles fulfilling two key facets of quality: training and pedagogical coordination, often because these activities cannot be included in staff working hours. Similarly, infrastructure deficiencies are common, and although set minimum architectural requirements, evaluations focus little on the pedagogical adequacy of these spaces.

Private schools need to be authorized; this requires government's supervision of the facilities. But some nursery schools are not up to scratch. [...] You see the Technician's report and read [...]. The law says you need to have «X» square meters, so «pun, pun», here it is. (INSPEDU1.Sev)

Overall, economic constraints force private schools to prioritise basic welfare aspects over pedagogical quality. Even the existing regulations, while maintaining control over ratios and qualifications, are to blame for gradually undervalue pedagogical requirements, instead of advocating for improvements in quality.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Andalusia represents the creation, consolidation and ideological normalisation of an ECEC03 privatised model. With its singularities, its characteristics align with international findings on childcare markets, as with the negative consequences of privatisation and can be defined as a model dominated by private provision but subject to regulation (Penn, 2014, p. 453). The development of a large private network of nursery schools expanded coverage and guaranteed places for families who could afford it, particularly in large cities. Andalusia leads Spain in ECEC03 enrolment rates despite high poverty and ranking first in Europe for academic failure. However, access alone is not enough. Within Spain, Andalusia has the lowest proportion of public places and political protection of the private sector continues. Proof of this is the recent refusal of the Andalusian government to use European funds that could be used to finance public places.

International research reveals the higher quality of publicly owned and managed schools (Bassok & Galdo, 2016; van Huizen & Plantenga, 2018, p. 216). Private providers often can only compete by extending opening hours and reducing labour costs (González and Saurí, 2023). Andalusia has ideologically implemented and normalised a policy of ECEC03 privatisation. Our results show how these policies widen social differences in opportunities and promote the precariousness of schooling conditions (McLean, 2014, p. 131; Sirén *et al.*, 2020, p. 646; Fernández & Falabella, 2023).

Current vulnerabilities come from demographic decline and insufficient public investment in private schools that heavily rely on subsidies. Public spending per private place is three times lower than per public place, explaining differences in working conditions and pedagogical quality. Economic constraints force centres to prioritise basic care over educational improvements, which require infrastructure, training and coordination that many cannot provide.

Privatisation also affects educational equity, accessibility, affordability and territorial balance (Meyers & Gornick, 2003, p. 406; Penn, 2007, p. 201). While the poorest population receive free places, many low-income families do not qualify for aid. Costs encourage the traditional «family model»: reliance on extended family or withdrawal from the labour market, especially by women. What's more, private providers avoid areas with low profitability, such as small municipalities and marginalised neighbourhoods.

ECEC03 – and Andalusia is no exception – a terrain of great promises and lowered expectations. To fulfil its promises of compensating for

social inequalities, Andalusia's ECEC03 needs a change of course. It must be aimed at promoting a network of publicly owned and managed nursery schools, with sufficient funding, with a greater focus on the pedagogical dimension, and with an improvement in the working conditions of educators. Generalisations are problematic, but the Andalusian ECEC03 model based on privatisation is not of sufficient quality. It is a model that generates economic and territorial barriers to access, one that is ineffective in terms of its pedagogical impact on the population that needs it most: vulnerable children.

Despite the advantages attributed to private provision systems, it is not an efficient model: there is too much supply. Public funding of private places to maintain an expensive stage of education has never been sufficient. Private schools find it difficult to stay open. Management lacks the financial resources to focus on pedagogical leadership and awareness-raising among families. The maintenance of employment in the sector comes at the cost of labour gaps that hinder the social dignity of ECEC03 professionals, almost all of whom are women.

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RIASSUNTO

Questo articolo analizza le conseguenze dello sviluppo del modello di educazione della prima infanzia per bambini da 0 a 3 anni attuato in Andalusia (Spagna), i cui risultati in termini di iscrizioni si sono basati su un ampio ricorso a fornitori privati. L'analisi si basa su interviste approfondite e dati statistici provenienti da fonti ufficiali. I risultati mostrano come il ricorso a un modello privatizzato generi barriere economiche e territoriali all'accesso, oltre a incidere sulla qualità dei servizi e sulle condizioni scolastiche. Queste ultime sono influenzate negativamente dai vincoli economici delle scuole private, dalle condizioni di lavoro peggiori e dalle difficoltà di formazione e coordinamento. Di conseguenza, le scuole danno la priorità agli aspetti assistenziali di base rispetto ai progetti educativi e all'innovazione pedagogica.

Parole chiave: Educazione della prima infanzia; Equità e qualità dell'istruzione; Mercati dell'istruzione; Privatizzazione.

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