Is Catalonia Immune to Racism? An Analysis of Intolerant Political Discourses of Mainstream Party Representatives (2010–2011)

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Despite the reduced presence of the far-right in Catalonia, anti-immigrant stances and discourses have occupied a central position during political campaigns for local, autonomous, and national elections in 2010–2011. The Catalan case is based on the analysis of three case studies: the local exclusion from the census of undocumented immigrants by the city of Vic, the campaign of the People's Party candidate in Badalona containing hate speech against Roma, and the burqa bans issued by the city of Lleida. Representatives of mainstream political parties, mainly right wing, became the main exponents of intolerance in Catalonia by putting forward that cultural pluralism and diversity challenge the possibility of living together in society.

KEYWORDS   "Convivencia," far-right, Platform for Catalonia, burqa, cultural racism

Spain has long been perceived as at odds with the European landscape because of the reduced presence of the far-right in the country and because it was characterized by fairly tolerant policies and attitudes toward resident immigrants. No far-right representative holds seat at national or regional levels or has managed to attract more than 1 percent of voters at the national level since 1978. On the other hand, despite experiencing a steady foreign immigration since the 1990s and despite the economic crisis that erupted in 2008, the governments and their policies have not given vent to the backlash against multiculturalism and immigration that has become common in other European countries (Arango, 2013). Instead, Spain has designed over the years integration policies perceived as being

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among the most open to migration (Huddleston & Niessen, 2011). Catalonia in particular has been in the front line to design integration and diversity policies.

Several reasons have been brought as an explanation. At the beginning of the 2000s, immigrants were relegated to segregated spaces, especially in the job market, and as such did not compete directly with locals (Baldwin-Edwards, 1998; Calavita, 2005). The majority of immigrant workers were undocumented until the middle of the 2000s and laws and policies on immigration were designed to address only economic and job-market necessities (Calavita, 2005). Policy making was then mainly limited to reception and social assistance and much less developed in terms of integration. With the durable settlement of immigrants, policies at national and regional levels have grown more and more comprehensive, focusing on integration, diversity policies, and citizenship.

The political culture that has been built after Franco's dictatorship also accounts for the absence of far-right parties. After the end of the ultra-right dictatorship, extreme right-wing forces have been discredited and have had trouble organizing. In addition, moderation and consensus have become important elements of the democratic culture, and immigration policies have been particularly exemplary in this way (Encarnacion, 2004). The delegitimization of Spanish nationalism, contrasting with vivid minority nationalisms, also makes it complicated for the far-right to mobilize on this basis (Zapata-Barrero, 2013; Nuñez, 2001).

Nevertheless, this situation seems to be challenged in Catalonia. The apparition in 2003 of a new anti-immigrant party, the Platform for Catalonia (PxC), and its growing audience have been perceived as a challenge for the Catalan party system. The party claims to counterattack mainstream parties' strategies and discursive repertoires about migration. It attracted more voters than any other far-right party since 1978 in Catalonia with councillors in 40 municipalities since 2011, either in rural and suburban areas. However, it still remains weak in terms of global electoral support (around 2.3% during the last regional and local elections), especially in comparison with far-right support in other European countries. Despite the low scores, the Platform for Catalonia has undeniably introduced a novelty in the Catalan party system and marks the passage from "old" pro-Francoist parties to a "new" radical right influenced by European standards (Hernandez Carr, 2011). The party is characterized by its anti-immigrant ideology, and most of its discourses, campaigns, and "shock" actions express anti-Muslim and anti-Moroccan views. Its controversial charismatic leader, Josep Anglada, and its street activism contributed to give audience to the party in public debates. Even if it makes it close to other "new-right" parties (King, 1987), PxC is not clearly nationalist. It opposes the independence of Catalonia but avoids referring in general to a Catalan or a Spanish definition of national identity. Instead, PxC opposes

a vague "local" or "home" culture with no clear territorial reference to migrants' culture. It is as well around this "local" space that the party organizes its political activity.

The present article departs from the fact that despite the reduced audience of the far-right in Catalonia, anti-immigrant stances and discourses have occupied a central position during political campaigns for local, autonomous, and national elections in 2010–2011. Despite the emphasis in policy documents and in the political debate on questions of integration and the conditions to ensure the so-called *convivencia* (i.e., living together), changes in the discourse took place in 2010. This happened singularly in Catalonia and not in other parts of Spain or at state level, while electoral processes were taking place in other regions, as well. Seeking to highlight the contribution of political elites in this process (Cea d'Ancona, 2004; Van Dijk, 1993), we focus on the way mainstream political parties have articulated anti-immigrant discourses in Catalonia in the years 2010–2011.

How far-right parties' success influences mainstream parties and the party system has raised the interest of many scholars (Pettigrew, 1998; Schain, Zolberg, & Hossay, 2002). Some have shown that not only right-wing parties but all mainstream parties, and in particular opposition parties, are more vulnerable to contagion effects (van Spanje, 2010). Models have been built to study the effects on the electorate of an articulation of anti-immigrant stances in the political arena (Arzheimer, 2009; Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002). Studies have shown that anti-immigrant stances articulated by the far-right are much less influential on people's attitudes than when they are expressed by mainstream, either left or right, political parties (Bohman, 2011; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006) and facilitated in return the success of anti-immigrant parties (Dahlström & Sundell, 2012). As we see, research provides arguments both in favor of the direct influence the far-right success has had on the party system and of the way mainstream parties influence the success of the far-right depending on the way they articulate immigration.

Anti-immigrant discursive framing in Catalonia presents similarities with the expression of intolerance in other European contexts (Ambrosini, 2013; Kitschelt, 1997). Its distinctiveness lies in the fact that the emphasis is put on the civic culture associated with Catalan identity and not on nationalism. Moreover, since the beginning of the economic crisis, frames concerning culture and competition over resources are also emerging.

The first part of this article presents the case studies and methodology. In the second part, we proceed to the descriptive analysis of the discursive frames present in the three case studies with an emphasis on requirements of civility. As a conclusion, we highlight the ways these discourses relate to the particular context of Catalonia and discuss whether they mark a durable inflection in the way to manage diversity.

CASE STUDIES AND METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology has been used to study anti-immigrant political discourses and policies. It builds on a comparative case study analysis and combines a content analysis of secondary sources and semistructured qualitative interviews.

We selected three controversies that took place in the years 2010–2011 in Catalonia. These controversies are situated at the local level but they have all received an extensive media and public attention at the national level. We consider that the local level is relevant to trace the variety of positions of party representatives (Garcès Mascarenas, Franco-Guillén, & Sánchez-Montijano, 2012). The first case concerns the local exclusion of undocumented immigrants from the local census (i.e., *padrón*), voted by the city council of Vic (40,000 habitants) in January 2010. All residents in Spain, including unauthorized immigrants, have to figure in the local census, and this grants them access to basic health and social coverage. The ban decided by the city of Vic came as a result of several complaints on behalf of local governments that asked for more funds to attend undocumented immigrants. The ban raised an important debate in Spain about the right of municipalities to do so and about the legitimate right for undocumented immigrants to access basic social coverage. The controversy ended with the decision of the Supreme Court to break the ban, considering it to be contrary to the law.

The second case study examines the campaign of the People's Party (PP) candidate Xavier Garcia Albiol for local elections in the city of Badalona (third-largest Catalan city in population). The candidate started in 2010 a campaign based on a tough policy toward immigrants and targeting in particular Romanian Roma, accused of producing insecurity and crime. Through this campaign X. Garcia Albiol attracted national media attention and appeared as the renovator of PP discourse on immigration. He was sued by antiracist and Roma organizations and the political party Initiative for Catalonia-Greens (ICV) for hate speech. He managed to be elected as the new mayor of the city in May 2011.

The third case examined is the so-called "burqa" bans that were issued by the city of Lleida, ruled by the socialist party, and several other towns of Catalonia in spring and summer 2010. They were the first bans on wearing religious veils covering the face in public buildings in Spain and generated an important debate across the country, as well as parliamentary discussions at regional and national levels.

Critical discourse analysis has extensively contributed to analyzing discriminatory political discourse (Van Dijk, 1984; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001) as well as discourses on immigration. Studies on language have shown that racism or prejudices against migrants and people perceived as different are not often explicit in discourses, in particular in the discourses of the political

elites and the media (Van Dijk, 1993). This oriented our research toward the study of discourses accompanying policies and interviews rather than party manifestos or public texts, which are much more controlled by the "political correctness" when it comes to migration and diversity issues. We examine altogether political discourses and practices to understand how discourses evolve during the development of controversies and the gaps between discourses and policies (Zapata-Barrero & Diez Nicolas, 2012). Focusing on controversies and not only on explicit anti-immigrant discourse of far-right parties allows us also to emphasize the plurality of actors and discourses involved. To do so, public discourses on the three case studies have been collected. We gathered newspaper materials providing discourses and opinions on the controversies for the period between January 2010 and June 2011 (end of municipal elections) in seven newspapers (Spanish, 3; Catalan, 4). The sample is of 48 articles for the case of the anti-Romanian campaign, 63 articles for the case on full-veil prohibition, and 68 articles for the case on undocumented immigrants' exclusion from municipal census. In addition, a sample of articles on the municipal campaign of 2011 has been collected and analyzed, especially when articles referred to migration issues in the campaign and to the radical-right political party, PxC. We also collected and analyzed administrative, policy, and civil documents (minutes of city councils and Catalan parliamentary debates, civic organizations, and party documents). In addition, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted between November and December 2011. Firstly, interviews were conducted with party officers in charge of migration issues in each of the main political parties of Catalonia (Initiative for Catalonia-Greens [ICV], Republican left of Catalonia [ERC], Socialists' party of Catalonia [PSC], Convergence and Union [CiU] and the People's Party [PP]). Secondly, we interviewed policy makers and stakeholders who took part in one or more of the controversies. This selection was based on secondary sources' analysis, which highlighted the main participants in the debates. The analysis of the interviews has been done by coding text materials and interview transcripts to extract the main categories used in the discourse on migration of the different actors. We identified several frames justifying intolerance toward immigrants or practices associated to migration.

INTOLERANT DISCOURSES OF MAINSTREAM PARTIES IN CATALONIA

Nontoleration/intolerance is part of the framing processes on immigration, which serves as a matrix to structure the experience and discourse of individuals and political actors (Goffman, 1974). Frames rely on basic and unconscious understandings, such as the perception of an opposition between "us" and "them," or elements that appeal to traditions or emotions,

as for example situations engendering sentiments of fear, of anxiety, or of injustice. In the case of political discourses that accompany policies or political campaigns, discursive framing may also be an active process with the purpose to mobilize (Gamson, 1992), strategically gain support, and produce new alignments (Snow et al., 1986). In the case of intolerance as a political discourse, it is helpful to recognize both senses of frames, passive and active, to understand the process. However, framing processes have limits, as do discourses appealing to intolerance.

Public discourses are highly constrained. In order to align with potential supporters' experience, frames must be coherent with the ideological system of the political party or leader, and with the belief system and experiences of the people one seeks to mobilize. How then does political leaders' anti-immigrant discourse align with the political culture of their party and with the Catalan context?

The elements of speech referring to nontolerance have been coded in different categories according to the different manners in which intolerance is justified, even if it is not supported by the speaker. In addition, we coded the stances in function of the limits they draw between what can be tolerated or not and in function of the modalities of exclusion they present for the conducts and values that cannot be tolerated.

Right-wing parties had a major role in articulating anti-immigration stances in the electoral campaigns during 2010 and 2011. Anti-immigrant framing in Catalonia is crossing the two main cleavages of the party system: the left-right and the nationalist cleavage. The "threat against the civic culture" is the most widespread frame in the political landscape. Secondly, exclusionary justifications based on nationalism and identity issues are in general more difficult to articulate in the Catalan context but have been growing over the years in conservative parties' discourses. Finally, the economic crisis experienced by the country has given new discursive opportunities to publicly reject immigration.

Civility as a Condition for Tolerance

The "claim for civility" is the framing that aligns better with the way migration is connected to questions of identity and culture in Catalonia. Philosophy of migration management contained in the third Citizenship and Immigration Plan (2005–2008) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2005) and in the National Agreement on Immigration (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2008), approved by all political parties except the PP, has departed from the principle of maintaining a "plural and civic" citizenry. As the Director of Immigration in the Catalan administration underlines:

> What we all have to do is a common culture. ... The Catalan culture is
> like a sponge, it absorbs, absorbs the contributions from outside, from

> people who come from outside and acts as a filter, some things are forgotten and others are integrated. (Personal communication, Catalan Immigration Department, December 7, 2011)

Presented as an inclusive and two-fold relationship between migrants and the host society under the term *convivencia*, civility has nevertheless been progressively redefined in some political discourses as a condition for the acquisition of social and civic rights. Immigrants are then required to understand and adopt everyday norms of civility.

In the debate about local bans on wearing the Islamic full-veil (the so-called niqab and burqa), intolerance was mainly justified by those requirements of civility. This discourse was shared by representatives and local governments led by Convergence and Union, the People's Party, and the Socialist party. While justifications in terms of security have been invoked such as the "feeling of insecurity" created by "the use of any element that completely conceals the face of a person" (City of Lleida, 2010, May 28), the ban is mainly motivated by the enforcement of norms of civility. Showing one's face is understood as a civil presentation of the self, which is closely linked to democratic codes of conduct and social cohesion. As stated by the CiU councillor who defended the ban in the city council: "On an individual level, the integration of a person whose body is entirely covered is impossible. This blocks dialogue, communication and the relation with other persons" (City of Lleida, 2010, p. 10). The right to look at another person's eyes and see her face is perceived as essential in liberal-democratic societies so as to feel respected and be placed in an equal position (City of Lleida, 2010, pp. 10–15).

Wearing the niqab was in addition pictured as a rejection of liberal-democratic norms. First of all, women's rights and gender equality were used to justify the prohibition of the full veil. The mayor and the city council underlined that the ban in Lleida was accompanied by measures of "pedagogy about the fact that the Catalan society bets on men's and women's equality" (La Vanguardia, 2010, May 28; City of Lleida, 2010, May 28). All interviewed political leaders, in favor of or against the ban, agreed that the full veil was a violation of women's rights. In addition, banning full veil was justified as a means to attack illiberal practices and to maintain social cohesion. While acknowledging that "the use of full veil is not widespread in Lleida," the city council justified the ban by the fact that it "is a sign that a group wants to perpetuate values that go against ours" (City of Lleida, 2010, p. 10). While acknowledging his support to Islam as the "second religion of Catalonia," the secretary for immigration of CiU reaffirms the need to fight against the manifestation of illiberal values and practices by some immigrants as reflected in the wearing of niqab:

> Islamist and anti-democratic—or fascist—behaviours conflict with the democratic values we have in Europe and Catalonia, and as such we

cannot accept them. And this is not a cultural feature that we should respect; this is an attack to democracy—to human rights, to the rights of women as well—but a clear attack to democracy. (Personal communication, CiU party officer, November 22, 2011)

Nontoleration was also justified in liberal and civic terms during the controversy arising from the negation to register undocumented immigrants. The mayor of Vic declared that through the ban, the intention was to say that despite Vic being "a welcoming city," they had to make sure that "newcomers respect the law" (City council of Vic, 2009, December 29). The councillor of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), who supported the ban, argued that the ban was "a moment of demand in relation with the newcomer" who "cannot be treated as a minor, as a disabled" socially and politically, which means that having right and access to social services implies an obligation on the behalf of immigrants to respect administrative rules on immigration (City council of Vic, 2010, January 13).

These discourses present a vision of society in which social cohesion is weakened, in particular, by aspects of multiculturalism and can be revitalized through policies heightening individual responsibility (Dobbernack, 2010). Migrants are required to be "civic-minded" according to the standards of the local society. But civility is not only seen as a desirable condition, but also a requirement imposed on immigrants—and immigrants only. Illiberal practices and values of immigrants or cultural and religious groups are opposed to the local society, pictured as liberal and civic (Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013). Through this opposition between a liberal "us" and an illiberal "them," local norms become nonnegotiable and immigrants have no other option than to assimilate them (Laegaard, 2006).

Civicism has different meanings in the public discourses examined above. While the Catalan administration, left-wing parties, and Convergence for Catalonia leaders on immigration issues emphasize that civicism means a two-fold process of building a common public culture, in the controversies of Lleida and Vic civility has been mainly a requirement imposed on immigrants.

In the case of Badalona, the demand for civility has been accompanied by a discourse on "cultural clash" to justify immigrants' exclusion. Religion and cultural distance allow immigration to be framed as a problem and to establish a link between immigrants' culture of origin and their (in)ability to integrate in the local society.

Emergent Expressions of Cultural Racism

Some discourses on the need to safeguard social cohesion go beyond liberal-democratic arguments and connect cultural, identity, and moral dimensions

to arguments of security. Resident immigrants are rendered responsible for urban insecurity, delinquency, and incivilities, which disturb the peaceful coexistence of inhabitants. Such arguments frequently refer to the radical otherness of certain origins and cultures—in particular the ones of the Romanian Romas, North Africans, and Muslims.

The political campaign of Xavier Garcia Albiol, the candidate for the People's Party in the 2011 local elections in Badalona was representative of such discourse linking cultural difference, insecurity, and incivility. He targeted the Romanian Roma community in several public declarations and in a pre-electoral flyer. In the latter, Roma immigrants—the flyer contained a picture with the sentence, "We do not want Romanians" written on a banner—were associated with the words "dirtiness," "insecurity," "delinquency," and "incivility." Public statements of the candidate were that Romanians Roma were a "plague" and "a curse on the city" (García, 2011), "settle in this city to commit crimes and steal," and "generate a lot of problems in the most densely populated neighbourhoods of the city" (García Albiol defiende sus folletos, 2010, October 24). Here again, he referred to an ideal, cohesive society threatened by the venue of immigrants. In his words "a determined immigration is affecting the way we live together (convivencia) fundamentally" (Sostres, 2010). As a consequence, the "others" have to be absorbed in the local society (if possible) or excluded in order for cohesion to be maintained.

Even if the threat posed by migration has been mainly defined along civic lines, concern over the dilution of the Catalan identity in a multicultural society has grown in public discourses. Movements of population from other parts of Spain during the 1950s to 1970s had already generated debates about the dissolution of Catalan identity. The settlement of non-European nationals had renewed these concerns, around other identity features than language this time. These concerns have been especially present in the discourse uttered by Christian-conservative politicians. In 2011, during general election campaigns, the leader of CiU candidature, the Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC) president M. Duran i Lleida, expressed his concern over the demographic trends in parts of Catalonia, which witness "more birth of Mohameds than Jordis." He added:

> I do not mind those who share a common culture and values with Catalonia or Spain. I do not mind the Argentine, the Chilean, and even the Mohamed who integrates. But I am concerned by the fact that many Mohamed do not integrate and do not respect the values of this country. (Duran Lleida, 2011, November 16)

This argumentation is mainly based on a perception of Islam as opposed to the local Christian identity.

In the conservative People's Party, cultural distance from Spanish culture is also perceived as an obstacle to integration. Latin-American migration is accepted because

> we share the same values: first, the mother tongue, second, religion, family, the concept of the country—for us Catalonia is Spain—the concept of Constitution—all Latin American countries have a Constitution— which is respected and above everything else. (Personal communication, PP party officer, December 2, 2011)

Conversely, African immigrants are conceived as problematic in terms of social integration for cultural reasons. Practices and systems of values attached to distant cultures are considered incompatible and migrants are required to adopt the local community's values at the expense of their own. This anti-immigration framing builds on an ethnopluralist conception of the nation, which, contrary to traditional racism, does not present ethnicities and cultures in a hierarchical way. Ethnopluralism, which has been labeled as cultural racism (Balibar, 2007) or differentialist racism (Taguieff, 1988), presents cultures as strictly delimited entities, geographically situated and incompatible among them. In this view, Muslims threaten natives' culture as they are thought to be reluctant to assimilation. In this regard, cultural homogeneity has to be reached in order to maintain social cohesion. Despite a powerful conception of Catalanity as a vector of integration and citizenship, and despite the emphasis on building a common public culture encompassed by the National Agreement on Immigration, framing in terms of identity and culture and especially concerning the incompatibility of certain cultural values and practices with the local ones has been part of the public debate in the years 2010 and 2011.

Interestingly, in spite of being a major cleavage in Catalan politics, nationalism (either Catalan or Spanish) is not explicitly used as a resource to articulate anti-immigration stances. The identification of parties with conservatism and Catholicism is much more likely to produce intolerant discourses toward immigration. Even the far-right party Platform for Catalonia maintains an ambiguous discourse, as it claims to speak on behalf of the "locals" against elites of all levels of government, while never associating clearly the local culture to the Catalan or Spanish identity. The absence of explicit relation between nationalism and the exclusion of immigrants is singular. However, the cleavage between the local level and other levels of government, especially when it comes to emphasizing the socioeconomic exclusion of immigrants, is acting as a substitute for nationalism.

The "Crisis" and the Discourses on Migrants' Competition

Finally, one of the ways to justify nontoleration has been to stress the existence of a competition between natives and immigrants, at the expense of

the firsts. This is the fundamental rhetoric of the "new" radical-right, which gained ground in the 1980s, and essentially the "anti-immigrants" parties (Fennema, 1997). These parties advocate for the closure of borders as well as the closure of social rights and benefits to foreigners. "Welfare chauvinism" (Kitschelt, 1997) puts forward the idea that national citizens should have priority over nonnationals. Kitschelt shows that this anti-immigration discourse is not based on the same assumption of cultural racism or ethnic essentialism and does not target the same migrants. In the case of welfare chauvinism, every newcomer, even those who are not perceived as culturally different, can be blamed for competing with locals. According to Kitschelt, while framing in terms of cultural essentialism and incompatibility is generally attached to elite perceptions, welfare chauvinism is in general shared by direct competitors, especially lower-class natives (p. 261). However, even if this discourse directly appeals to low-class and low-qualified workers and has been as such analyzed as a new form of populism (Meny & Surel, 2002), the electoral support of radical-right parties in Europe is much more diverse and more present among the self-employed petite bourgeoisie (Norris, 2005). A distinctive example of such reasoning is the discourse of PxC in Catalonia. Directly inspired by Vlaams Block's successful discourse in Belgium, it has been identified as belonging to the national-populist family of parties in the sense that it explicitly appeals to the support of native/"ethnic" citizens by opposing their interests to the ones of immigrants (Casals, 2009). This is best exemplified by its main slogan "Locals come first" (Primer els de casa). PxC propaganda revolves around such arguments as testified by statements on the prejudices against natives and the alleged social priority given by the political elites to migrants at the expense of the "locals."

Since the beginning of the economic crisis the rhetoric based on a supposed competition between natives and immigrants for scarce resources has been retaken by representatives of mainstream political parties as well. People's Party representatives also use rhetoric about the limited resources of the country and, thus, the need to limit migration so as not to damage the interests of the natives. The sentence, "We do not all fit in here" has been used as a motto in 2008 by the leader of the party—and current Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy—and has been retaken by the leaders of PP in Catalonia. However this framing of immigrants as competitors and freeloaders is not as present as the intolerant framing toward noncivic immigrants in the political discourses. No other party leader from the center-right or the left wing has expressed concerns about the competition over social benefits. In the context of the crisis, the conflict over resources has taken place between Catalonia and the central government, the former claiming for fiscal autonomy and complaining about the inequity of the tax redistribution system.

The rhetoric of competition between natives and immigrants has been present in discourses at the local level, especially in deprived neighborhoods and rural areas. But it opposed more generally impoverished municipalities to the state.

When the city of Vic decided the exclusion of undocumented immigrants from the census, it divided representatives of mainstream parties, but this time the cleavage was situated between local and Catalan or state representatives. Except for PP and PxC, and part of the executive of CiU at the beginning of the debate, political parties executives positioned themselves against the exclusion of undocumented immigrants. But the attitudes of local elected representatives have been much more ambivalent. The motion was agreed on by the right- and left-wing parties composing the local government, and approved with the support of PxC. Only the leftist parties, ICV and Popular Unity Candidates (CUP), voted against it.

The ban was mainly justified by the need to enforce the law and make immigrants aware of their obligations and responsibilities. The argument about the need to "give a sense of responsibility" to newcomers (City of Vic, 2010, January 13) pictures undocumented immigrants as freeloaders who try to make the most of the society without contributing to it. But the ban did not only intend to exclude undocumented immigrants. It was justified pragmatically in the framework of a rivalry between powers situated at different levels. Local governments complained that they lacked the means to integrate newcomers, especially since the economic crisis had led to important cuts in the financial transfers between the state and the municipalities. The mayor of Vic asked repeatedly for more subventions in order to face the "major expenses that irregular immigrants cause in the city" (Clota, 2010).

The public debate in fact revolved around this question of the resources of municipalities to provide welfare assistance to immigrants. Discourses voiced by local governments ruled by Catalan nationalist parties do not target directly immigrants but the state, which is accused of having cut the funds for integration policy since 2008. Both cleavages between municipalities and the state and between the in-group and the out-group, form in great part the way local exclusion of immigrants is structured (Ambrosini, 2013). It is also a reason for the support received by PxC in rural or suburban areas in Catalonia.

The discourse of competition between natives and immigrants in what regards access to welfare has penetrated the political debate in Catalonia. Far from standing alone and replacing traditional discourses, it is often related with discourses on identities and cultural difference that in the case of more or less large immigrant groups is perceived as hampering their integration into the hosting society.

CONCLUSIONS

Through political discourses, especially during the years 2010–2011, the limits of intolerance have been stretched in Catalonia. Within this framework, the role of mainstream political parties in defining and narrowing the boundaries

of tolerance concerning migration allows us to understand the politicization of the issue and the ways in which it was publicly framed. The Catalan case highlights that framing in terms of intolerance is not necessarily conditioned by the existence of a powerful far-right political party or by people's demand for tough migration policy. Understanding how anti-immigrant and intolerant discourses move to the mainstream is of utter importance.

Several features of anti-immigrant discourse in the Catalan context have been exposed. Firstly, while the rejection of the "other" through explicit racism in the political life is still unusual, the rise of the Platform for Catalonia has led to a reconsideration of the place of the radical right in the country. The party is still perceived as an outsider, with which other parties would never associate. However, several representatives of mainstream political parties, especially from right-wing parties, have put forward publicly that intolerance toward immigrants is necessary to safeguard social cohesion. Cultural pluralism and diversity are increasingly perceived as challenging radically the "*convivencia*," the possibility to live together in society. In addition, ethnopluralist conceptions separating culturally similar immigrants (Latin American, Europeans) and culturally incompatible ones (African, Muslims, and Roma) seem to gain ground in some discourses of the right wing.

Secondly, most of discourses drawing limits to tolerance regarding immigrants refer to the safeguarding of the civic culture. While the Catalan administration and left-wing parties refer to civicism in priority as a desirable condition, discourses of mainstream right-wing parties are closer to what is termed as "liberal intolerance," in terms of attributing illiberal and uncivic practices to certain ethnic or religious groups and migrant communities. These discourses tend to challenge the meaning of citizenship in the Catalan context, from a civic-inclusive definition to a cultural-exclusive one. This ends up acquiring the opposite connotation to the central political concept of "*convivencia*," which has been used in integration policies to stress the positive effect of the social plurality and of the coexistence of diverse cultures or religions.

Thirdly, the territorial dimension and center-periphery relations account for some intolerant discourses toward immigrants. In the cases studied, municipalities and local representatives are at the forefront of the controversies. Two territorial dimensions are stressed: the local against the regional or national governments and Catalonia against the state. The exclusion of immigrants is justified by the fact that local authorities are not given the means to provide welfare or fight insecurity. In that case, the in-group, associated to the imprecise term of "locals," has to be preserved from the undesirable effects of mass immigration. Conversely, nationalism does not appear as a resource or a reference in anti-immigrant discourses.

How can we explain that these discourses have appeared predominantly in Catalonia?

Catalonia has been leading integration and diversity-related—policy making in Spain since the 1990s. While the management of migration flows remains almost exclusively a competency of the state, autonomous communities are responsible for a large part of integration and immigrant policies and Catalonia-designed plans and policies years before the state (Zapata-Barrero, 2013). The reception of hundreds of thousands of emigrants from other parts of Spain between the 1950s and the 1970s has established the representation of Catalonia as a land of immigration. In the 1970s already important debates were raised in the public space about how to combine this immigration with the Catalan identity, and above all with the Catalan language. Dominant interpretation of Catalan identity relies on a civic definition of belonging (Guibernau, 2006), contained in the famous Jordi Pujol's (political leader and father of the modern moderate Catalan nationalism) definition of the Catalan citizen as whoever lives and works in Catalonia, which was frequently completed by "and speaks Catalan." This representation built for Spanish immigrants has been also applied to foreign immigration. It still serves as a guideline for immigration and integration policies (Kleiner-Liebau, 2009). Even if reactive discourses on migration have always been part of the political landscape in Spain and Catalonia—especially when debating migration policies (Zapata-Barrero, 2009)—in practice, diversity management and integration policies have continuously stressed the need to accommodate and include immigrants.

Do the discourses analyzed for the years 2010–2011 mark a durable inflection of these representations and policies? If we analyze the supply factors creating opportunities of success for far-right organizations, most of these factors apply to the Catalan context at the present. Unemployment is at the highest levels, with over 20% of the active population being unemployed since 2011. Foreign immigration also represents a large share of the population (17.7% in 2012 compared with only 6.3% in 2001). As for the political system, the relative convergence of center-left and center-right mainstream parties on the way to manage the immigration issue are opening an ideological space for the far-right (Kitschelt, 1995; Rydgren, 2005). An analysis of favorable or unfavorable factors for the far-right success in Catalonia shows that there are political opportunities for a new party such as the Platform for Catalonia to become a serious player in the party system. But the success of this party has been limited to some local constituencies. Instead, this led some mainstream party leaders to occupy the ideological space of the far-right. But this has been circumscribed to political discourses and has not translated into policies so far. In addition, the representation of Catalonia and Catalans as welcoming and open toward immigration is still a matrix for the redefinition of collective identities. But we found that it can also be an impediment to acknowledging xenophobia in elite discourses and lead frequently in publish speech to denials of racism.

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