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Articles

Autochthony boundaries. Internal and international migrants in Barcelona (Spain)

En las fronteras de la autoctonía. Migrantes internos e internacionales en Barcelona (España)

Diana Mata-Codesal[a]* https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1438-7133
Mikel Aramburu Otazu[a] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5605-5295

[a] Universidad de Barcelona, Departamento de Antropología Social, Barcelona, Spain, e-mail: dianamata@ub.edu, mikel.aramburu@ub.edu

Abstract

This article explores the heuristic possibilities of jointly addressing internal and international migrations, an aspect often neglected by migration studies which have tended to analyze them separately. Focused on the case of Barcelona between 1960 and 2020, the study combines the analysis of secondary sources and ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the authors in two neighborhoods of the city. It shows how both types of mobility have been "migrantized", that is, subjected to a distinctive social condition that refers to the processes of subalternization to which these groups have been subjected in their societies of residence. While the scope of generalization of the results to other cases requires further research, solid evidence is provided of the contingent nature of the immigrant category and the analytical possibilities of exploring the processes of boundary-making —construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of boundaries— related to human mobility.

Keywords: migrantize, boundary-making, internal migration, international migration.

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* Corresponding author:
Diana Mata-Codesal. E-mail:
dianamata@ub.edu

Resumen

Este artículo explora las posibilidades heurísticas de tratar conjuntamente las migraciones internas e internacionales, algo descuidado por los estudios migratorios que han tendido a analizarlas por separado. Centrado en el caso de Barcelona desde 1960 hasta 2020, el estudio conjuga el análisis de fuentes secundarias y los trabajos de campo etnográfico realizados por los autores en dos barrios de la ciudad. Se muestra cómo ambos tipos de movilidades han sido "migrantizadas", es decir, sujetas a una condición social distintiva que remite a los procesos de subalterización a los que estos grupos han sido sometidos en las sociedades de residencia. Si bien la generalización de los resultados a

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otros casos requiere mayor investigación, se aportan evidencias sólidas del carácter contingente de la categoría inmigrante y las posibilidades analíticas de explorar los procesos de fronterización —construcción, deconstrucción y reconstrucción de fronteras (*boundaries*)— que se generan en torno a la movilidad de poblaciones.

Palabras clave: migrantizar, fronterizar, migración interna, migración internacional.

Introduction

In 2010, King and Skeldon highlighted a gap in migration studies between those concerned with internal and international migration. A decade later, Nestorowicz and Anacka's (2019) bibliometric analysis quantitatively showed such a gap in the literature published in English. Their results revealed a remarkable increase in international migration research—especially since 1980—much higher than what occurred for internal migration research (Nestorowicz & Anacka, 2019, p. 290). In Europe, migration studies originally have a predominant interest in internal migration,[1] which was replaced in the second half of the 20th century by international migration and an absence of joint research (Scholten et al., 2022).[2]

This change can be observed almost paradigmatically in the case of Catalonia in Spain and its capital, Barcelona. Internal migration to Catalonia from the rest of Spain was a topic of political and academic importance until the 1980s, with a significant number of works addressing labor, urban and identity issues of this intra-State migration (Barrera, 1985; Candel, 1964; Capel Saez, 1967; Comas d'Argemir & Pujadas Muñoz, 1991; DiGiacomo, 1985; Esteva Fabregat, 1973; Martín Díaz, 1990; Solé, 1982).

Nevertheless, during the 1990s, there was a radical change in the type of migration that deserved social, political and academic attention, and all the focus shifted to international migrants to Spain, many of whom headed for Catalonia and Barcelona. In contrast, the study of internal migration was practically abandoned.[3]

As discussed in this study, the division and separate study of both types of migration, within and between countries is not so much a reflection of a social reality with different time horizons but rather the result of the methodological nationalism that still prevails in migration studies (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2003). The uncritical use of political categories (often in their administrative translation) is especially problematic when studying human mobility, as it ignores forms of mobility that may be socially relevant in certain contexts, even if they do not cross State borders.

That would be the case of internal migration to Catalonia during the middle of the twentieth century. At that time internal migrants were the other par excellence

[1] For instance, Ravenstein, considered one of the fathers of migration studies, initially formulated his migration laws based on census data on internal migration in the United Kingdom (Ravenstein, 1885).

[2] Unlike in Europe, in the case of Mexico there is a coexistence and even a certain dialogue between both types of studies (Rivera, 2017). It is not by chance that the aforementioned text by King and Skeldon (2010) takes the Mexican case to illustrate the links and continuities between internal and international migrations.

[3] In the 1990s, there were strong institutional incentives in Spain to research international migration. As an example, in 1992 and 1993 three out of four projects funded by the National Plan for Social, Economic and Cultural Studies dealt with international migration (Chovancova, 2017, p. 2196).

in the region. Later, at the end of the century, such internal migration lost social significance as people from other countries arrived, especially from the former colonial space, who came to be considered the only "immigrants".[4]

Many of these international migrants settled in the same residential areas in which the internal migrants had previously settled. In these cohabitation spaces, the relationship between neighbors with origins in national and international migratory contingents came to be considered and studied as a relationship between natives and immigrants and the migratory past of the former overlooked.

Although the term "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007) was intended to address the changing and diverse nature of international migration, this paper aims to extend its scope by incorporating internal migration into the understanding of diversity in urban settings. The article aims to highlight the advantages of studying both types of migration together, thanksto the fact that in Barcelona, as in other southern European cities, early internal migrants and their descendants share physical and social spaces with more recently arrived international migrants.

Based on the Catalan case, this text first analyzes the historical changes produced in the processes of "migrantization", that is, the labeling and unlabeling as "immigrants", as opposed to the "native" condition of certain social groups. Subsequently, two ethnographic works from different periods are used to show the complex processes of boundary-making between internal and international migrants in Barcelona. Ultimately, the objective is, on the one hand, to question the academic reification of the categories of immigration and nativeness by critically analyzing their historically incidental nature and, on the other hand, to show the interpretative potentialities that open up when analyzing internal and international migration together.

The article is structured into six sections. The first establishes the theoretical framework based on the construction of the meaningful difference related to processes of migrantization and boundary-making associated with mobility. This is followed by methodological information on the two ethnographic works that serve as the basis for this reflection. The following section shows cases of denigration of the figure of the internal migrant, for the Spanish case and Europeans. This is a subject that has received anecdotal attention.

Regarding the case of Barcelona, the article presents the historically contingent nature of the category "immigrant" based on the evolution of the social significance of migration from southern Spain to Barcelona from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Subsequently, based on two ethnographic examples of different periods, but located in two neighborhoods of Barcelona, the text shows how the previous "migrantization" affects the perception of other migrant groups, as well as the change that has occurred in the meaningful variables upon which boundary-making between both groups is built. The last section closes with some conclusions on using previous migratory experience in the relationship between groups marked as non-native in a context of territorial and social stigma.

[4] This demographic change is easily noticeable in the case of Barcelona, where those born in other parts of Spain have gone from 27% to 15% of the city's residents, while those born abroad have gone from 5% of the city's population in 2000 to 28% in 2020 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2024).

Migrantization and boundary-making

Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick-Schiller (2003), with the concept of methodological nationalism, formulated a critique of the epistemological assumption in the social sciences of implicitly taking the borders of the nation-state as the privileged framework for the analysis of social action. In migration studies, methodological nationalism translated into reducing the relevance of human mobility to the crossing of State borders by rather unreflectively assuming the role of State borders as central mechanisms of social classification in the context of mobility-related diversity.

In this way, academic studies on migration have contributed to reifying the classification categories and mechanisms created by nation-states (Bialas et al., 2024). This has led academics to take social boundaries as given, a consequence of the classifications based on the crossing of territorial borders. This reduction from boundary to border has limited the academic capacity to investigate the processes of social boundary-making by making it difficult to identify the markers used to create symbolic limits and relevant social classifications that were not directly related to the State border.

The mobility paradigm broadened the range of movements susceptible to being considered academically relevant and thereby incentivized an existing critique within the field of migration studies that advocated, among other things, overcoming methodological nationalism (Anderson, 2019).

Nonetheless, the paradigm continued to rely on a "recurring reference to national borders and an emphasis on States as points of departure and arrival […] the omnipresence of the State with its interests and categories" (Kalir, 2013, p. 312), which explains why international migration continues to be analyzed in isolation from other types of mobility. Therefore, the State border continues to be taken as the predominant mechanism for the creation and ordering of social categories of difference (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002, p. 125) without contextually attending to the processes that "migrantize" certain forms of mobility, but not others (Wyss & Dahinden, 2022).

The term *migrantization* has been used, albeit sparingly, from two theoretical positions. The migration autonomy approach posits that migrantization implies approaching "migration or refugee movements as separate and discrete fields of inquiry rather than considering human mobility as a constitutive force within the global restructuring of capitalism" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 257).

Nonetheless, the most important works in this line are situated in the critique of methodological nationalism within the field of migration studies, starting with Janine Dahinden's (2016) pioneering work on the need to de-migrantize migration research, later developed by Bridget Anderson (2019) in her call to migrantize the citizen—and more recently by Raghuram et al. (2024) in the context of student migration. All those arise from a critique within migration studies, which is partly fed by developments in the mobility paradigm but above all by reflections on the forms of knowledge production in this field of studies taking place from the 2010s onwards in the European context.

In the Spanish-speaking context, the work of Delgado Ruiz (2003), later developed by Mata Codesal (2016), makes an early allusion to these labeling processes by showing that the experience of mobility not always translates into a differentiated condition

in the social order of the place of residence. This was named by Delgado as the perceived "degree of immigrancy" of certain groups. In this paper, migrantization refers to the process by which some forms of mobility are seen as migrations and others are not. Being perceived as an immigrant implies a whole series of social meanings that can change over time but that mark the boundary/demarcation between an internal subject (nativeness) and an external subject (migrant) at a specific historical moment (Dahinden, 2016; Mata Codesal, 2016).

The reflection presented here on the migrantization of particular internal mobilities to Barcelona—as well as its subsequent de-migrantization and re-migrantization—makes it possible to attend to the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction processes of the symbolic demarcations related to mobility. It is argued here that migrantization is central to processes of on-going boundary-making that operate within the State territory (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019) and particularly in the creation of what some authors call *internal borders* in cities and metropolitan areas (Fauser, 2024).

The boundaries of otherness as a form of interior border needs to be constantly recreated in processes of boundary-making for which the labeling of certain groups as migrants, that is, as non-natives, is essential. The ways in which certain groups are migrantized makes to attend to everyday boundary-making and its effects by revealing the changing conceptions not only of otherness but also of nativeness, insofar as the latter is defined through the former (Izaola & Zubero, 2015; Simmel, 2012).

Constructing an *us* as a relatively homogeneous imagined community (Anderson, 2006) is only possible by emphasizing the differences with an *other*, constructed or chosen for that purpose. The groups labeled as non-native and, therefore, not belonging to the *us*, change over time, as do their supposedly differential characteristics. As the influential Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth shows, the desire to differentiate oneself is more relevant than the existence of differential traits *per se* (Barth, 1969).

The demarcation of the boundary between a native *us* and a migrant or "migrantized" *other* is an important identification/othering process that operates in contexts marked by social diversity and that should therefore be considered in studies on coexistence in diverse and super-diverse urban contexts (Vertovec, 2007). Qualitative studies on super-diverse cities where people from multiple backgrounds with varied migration statuses live together have shown the existence of everyday practices of coexistence and discrimination between different groups (Albeda et al., 2017; Wessendorf, 2019; Wise & Velayutham, 2014).

These studies interested in coexistence in difference make it possible to analyze the processes and strategies of symbolic differentiation implemented by different groups. This approach makes it possible to understand, within a dynamic framework, processes of change and shift of social boundaries (Wimmer, 2008). In southern European cities, the coexistence in certain urban areas, such as low-income neighborhoods, of migrants from internal and international migration, is a socially relevant reality that has not received enough academic attention.

The case of Barcelona in this text shows the need to make the idea of diversity more complex, considering not only groups marked by their international migration but also incorporating that which derives from internal migration, that is, those groups socially marked by their mobility, regardless of whether it involves crossing a State border.

There is scarce literature on the existence of relationships between internal and international migrants, as well as relationships between minority groups themselves. Very little is known about the dynamics of boundary and bridge building between the two groups. It is known, however, that in recent decades Europe has witnessed a "general shift from social to cultural factors in both popular and academic discourse about minority issues and immigration" (Eriksen, 2007, p. 1067). In hers analysis of the explanatory models of migration, Martín Díaz detects a clear substitution of social class by the ethnic variable as an explanatory element in the interaction between natives and immigrants (Martín Díaz, 2023, p. 45).

Since 1990, cultural difference has replaced class as the mechanism of identification and explanatory variable of significant differences in political, social and academic discourses. There has been a shift in the European context from explanatory dimensions that gave preference to the social such as class position to those given to cultural components like ethnic identification. Authors such as Domingo et al. (2023, p. 3) state that this shift has taken place because of the extension of the discourse of diversity and diversity management and in parallel to the invisibilization of the economic functionality of migrants for the countries of the global north (Martín Díaz, 2023, p. 49).

Methodology

Catalonia and its capital, Barcelona, are particularly appropriate to analyze the historically contingent nature of the definition of who is an "immigrant" or "native", as well as for exploring processes of boundary-making—construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of boundaries—among the migrantized groups themselves. This is so because internal and international migration has taken place seamlessly. Moreover, people from both migratory processes coexist in Barcelona, which facilitates the exploration of the heuristic possibilities of dealing with both types of migration together.

To illustrate the incidental nature of the definitions of migration and nativeness, a historical analysis (based on bibliographic sources) of the changes in the social significance of internal migration (that which comes from within the State itself) to Catalonia over the last few decades is carried out.

In the third quarter of the twentieth century this category embodied otherness and subalternity in relation with the native Catalans. By the end of the century there was a process of nativization of this group within the emergence of foreign immigration as a pressing "problem". Subsequently the former re-emerged as a distinctive category, but now highly politicized, in the context of the Catalan independence process in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The historical semantics and pragmatics of the definitions of migration and nativeness make it possible to see how these meanings differ according to different historical and political circumstances.

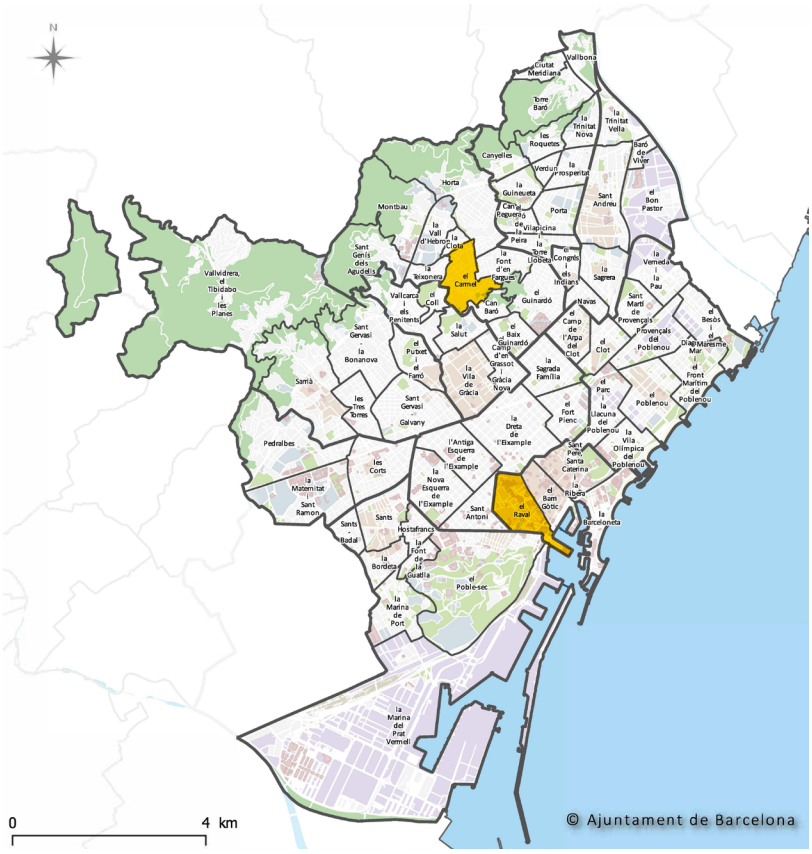
To demonstrate the heuristic possibilities of joint studies of internal and international migration, this article uses two examples from two independent ethnographic studies carried out by the authors at two different times in different neighborhoods of Barcelona. They were carried out in the neighborhood of El Raval in 2000 and in El

Carmel in 2015, both characterized as low-income areas, high population density, and low housing quality, as well as by a predominant presence of a population originating from internal and international migration.

Both ethnographic studies, based on participant observation and in-depth interviews with residents from different backgrounds and social statuses, were guided by a theoretical problematization based on the confluence of studies on coexistence, super-diversity and symbolic boundary-making (social boundaries).

Barcelona is administratively divided into 73 neighborhoods (see Figure 1) with a non-homogeneous distribution of their residents' place of birth and income level. The distribution of the population born outside Barcelona in different neighborhoods is not random. Some neighborhoods that were initially recipients of internal immigration became due to their more affordable rental prices in later decades, the place of residence for migrants coming from international immigration. Some of these spaces, such as El Carmel, were literallybuilt by those first internal migrants. El Raval, which had been a neighborhood of arrival for people coming from internal migration in the 20th century, was the first neighborhood in Barcelona to host a significant proportion of international immigrants, which in 2023 made up more than half of its inhabitants.

Figure 1. Neighborhoods of Barcelona with the location of the study neighborhoods, El Raval and El Carmel



Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2024

The first ethnographic study carried out in 2000 took place in the neighborhood of El Raval and to a lesser extent in the neighborhoods of Santa Caterina and Gótico Sur, all of them belonging to the district of Ciutat Vella, a geographically central area of the city that is subject to acute urban degradation. The second study took place in 2015 in the neighborhood of El Carmel. El Carmel has a history of self-built and precarious construction to provide housing for people coming mostly from the south of Spain in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

The time difference of almost two decades between the two studies revealed changes in the social significance of internal and international migrations and in the variables used in the processes of othering/identification between the first and the second groups. In addition to ethnographic fieldwork, both studies included semi-structured interviews with residents of these neighborhoods who came—either themselves or their parents—from other parts of Spain and other countries.

Autochthony boundaries: the internal migrant as a denigrated other

The figure of the migrant is crucial to establishing the boundary that defines the limits of nativeness and belonging to the *we*. In Catalonia, people coming from other parts of Spain, mainly from the south, who arrived in significant numbers after 1940 at the end of the Spanish Civil War, were migrantized, labeled as the other to establish the limits of nativeness. This can be seen in the widespread use of the disparaging term *xarnego* used by the local population to refer to the immigrants from other regions of Spain who arrived in Catalonia during the third quarter of the twentieth century (Clua i Fainé, 2011). The term had obvious classist connotations, as it was applied mainly to lower-skilled workers (Barrera, 1985; Candel, 1964).

In a clear parallel to *xarnego* in Catalonia, in the Basque context the term *maketo* referred disparagingly to the working-class Spanish-speaking immigrants who had arrived in the region as laborers during the first and second periods of industrialization.

Miguel de Unamuno noted the importance for Sabino Arana, father of Basque nationalism, of anti-*maketism*, understood as the rejection of immigrants who arrived in the Basque Country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during the first industrialization and who, according to Arana's nationalist theses, constituted a threat to the purity of the Basque nation (Fernández Soldevilla & López Romo, 2010, p. 194).

Between 1950 and 1970, there was a second large arrival of people from other parts of Spain, adding at this time to the epithet of *maketo* those of *cacereño*, *coreano* and *manchurriano* (Guerra Garrido, 1969; Ruiz Balzola, 2016). The emergence and survival of such terms undoubtedly indicate the social relevance of internal migration in the Basque context and its changing intensity among certain social groups at different historical moments (Fernández Soldevilla & López Romo, 2010; Ruiz Balzola, 2016).

The Catalan and Basque cases have the particular characteristic that the nationalist political context has been able to reinforce the social significance of migration within the State (although, as will be seen in the Catalan case, this relevance has been variable and complex). Nevertheless, in other contexts not so marked by the sub-State national question, paying attention to internal migration (perhaps subsumed in class distinctions) can also help apprehend the complexity of the meanings of diverse forms of human mobility.

For example, in the case of Madrid, Adoración Martínez describes the attempts to "other" the population of the peripheral neighborhoods of the capital who came from other parts of Spain in the decades after the end of the Spanish Civil War and how these attempts were part of a strategy of rejection and exclusion toward the suburbs that also included political considerations due to the supposed affinity of these migrants from the south and center of the Iberian peninsula with republican and leftist positions (Martínez Aranda, 2020, p. 172).

Similar cases of negative labeling of internal migrants can be found in the European context. For the Italian case, framed in the so-called *questione meridionale*, the Italians coming from the south who migrated in significant numbers to the city of Turin in the 1950s and 1960s attracted by industrial work were socially labeled as "indigent, violent and uncivilized" according to Enrica Capussotti (2010, p. 121) and disparagingly called *terrones*.

In Romania, in the district of Timiș, in the west of the country and one of the most economically developed and ethnically diverse areas, people coming from the east of the country are disparagingly referred to as *vinitura* ("newcomers") and are subject to negative stereotyping processes (O'Brien et al., 2023). The label *ossie*, with which West Germans disparagingly referred to East Germans whose "laziness" was presented as problematic in the newly unified Germany, has similar connotations (Fishman, 1996).[5]

Xarnego, maketo, meridionali, terrone, vinitura or *ossie* are all derogatory terms for people coming from internal migration, although not from all origins since they only applied to those migrants coming from areas perceived by the local population as "backward, poor, uncivilized"; from the south, in the case of Spain and Italy, and from the east in the case of Romania and Germany. These south-north, east-west lines reproduce lines of internal orientalism (Bakić-Hayden, 1995) with a northwestern center that acts as a space of reference and that, as argued here, explains the non-problematization of internal migration from other origins, such as the significant presence of Basques in Catalonia (Medina, 2002) or the early arrival of people in Turin from the Veneto region (Capussotti, 2010, p. 125).

This study will show how labeling processes may disappear when the variables on which the distinction operated lose social relevance, but also how they can reappear and mutate in the face of broader social changes.

From the internal to the international immigrant

In Spain, in the 1950s many people from rural areas settled in certain metropolitan areas, mainly Madrid and Barcelona, but also the Basque Country and Valencia (Ofer, 2017, p. 481). The repression of internal migration during the first two decades of Francoism was, according to historians such as Martí Marín Corbera (2015), instrumental to the Franco regime's goal after the Spanish Civil War of establishing an allied territorial government structure.

[5] Although this analysis is limited to the European context, in the Latin American context there are similar processes of stigmatization and exclusion of internal migration to large cities, be they *easterners* in Havana (Miró & Potter, 1986), *northeasterners* in São Paulo (Fontes, 2008) or *indigenous people* in Mexican cities (Castellanos Guerrero, 2003).

Unregulated internal mobility, especially in the decades after the end of the Civil War, was a threat to the highly regulated society that Francoism sought to create, which was in stark contrast to the subsequent positive attitude of the Francoist authorities toward international emigration from the 1960s onward (Ofer, 2017, p. 483).

The development of the policy of mass repatriations for immigrants that took place in cities such as Barcelona, Madrid and Seville during the first decades of Franco's regime is beginning to be documented (Díaz Sánchez, 2020, p. 346). In Barcelona, a detention center was created for those who arrived in the city unable to prove they had a work contract, rental contract and other required connections (Boj Labiós & Vallès Aroca, 2005). It is estimated that between 1952 and 1957 alone, some 15 000 people were deported to their places of origin (Martínez Aranda, 2020, p. 268).

The Madrid authorities later copied this policy of repatriating internal migrants in the city's Social Emergency Plan approved in 1957 (Martínez Aranda, 2020, p. 409). In both Barcelona and Madrid, internal migration was mainly associated with the housing problem in the urban peripheries, with the presence of significant shantytown areas (Tatjer & Larrea, 2010) and slum areas (Martínez Aranda, 2020) in both cities.[6]

This process of State criminalization go hand-in-hand with intense social stigmatization of the rural exodus to the cities. The following quote from the PhD thesis by the American anthropologist Susan DiGiacomo is eloquent enough about the social division between natives and immigrants that still structured Catalan society in the 1980s:

> The most salient—and the most politically troublesome—aspect of contemporary Catalan society is its division into two main groups: the largely Catalan middle class and the largely non-Catalan, Castilian-speaking working class, which defines itself as 'Spanish' and is defined by ethnic Catalans as 'immigrant'. (DiGiacomo, 1985, p. X/9)

A decade later, the panorama changed radically. From the 1990s onwards, the generalized negative labeling to which working-class internal migrants in Catalonia had been subjected, exemplified in the use of the term *xarnego*, fell into disuse in parallel with the emergence of international migration. With the turn of the millennium, Spain became a destination for many people from neighboring countries and the former colonial space, many of whom established their residence in Barcelona.

The advent of foreign migration shifted the boundary of otherness concerning internal migrants. At that moment, the (supposed) problem of integration shifted from internal migrants to international migrants due to the positioning of this second group farther away from the *native-us* in the cartography of otherness.

The very term immigrant, which in the 1980s still designated those from other parts of Spain, from the 1990s onwards was only applied to non-European immigrants. The invisibilization and loss of social significance of the first group occurred largely

[6] The literature also reports internal migration control processes in the case of China, where due to the *hukou* system of assigning rights implemented by the Chinese authorities in which *de facto* an individual's residence and access to social rights are assigned according to the place of birth within the country, a significant number of internal migrants in Chinese cities lack access to basic services given the rural nature of their residence (Johnson, 2017; Mackenzie, 2002). In Cuba there are also controls and penalties for changing residence within the country (Miró & Potter, 1986).
It is not accidental that all these examples come from non-democratic contexts since, under the liberal conception of the State, free mobility within the territory is considered an essential individual freedom (Mavroudi & Nagel, 2016, p. 230).

as a consequence of the hyper-visibilization of non-European immigrants, mostly from the former colonies, in a context where the problems of coexistence associated with inequality and economic precariousness were presented as problems of a cultural nature (Aramburu Otazu, 2002).

Thus, in many studies concerning integration and coexistence, "the natives" living in the neighborhoods where the new international migrants arrived were the same people who ten years earlier had been categorized, without a shadow of a doubt, as "immigrants". In this context, the *boundary-shifting* process contributes to the *boundary blurring* (Alba & Nee, 2003) of the old *xarnego/*Catalan boundary. The lack of discrimination, which, according to Alba and Nee (2003), constitutes the last stage of assimilation, would thus be completed, something that, as will be seen later, is far from being true.

The process described above illustrates how the boundary shifts from internal to international migration and highlights the changes in the diacritical elements of boundary-making over the last few decades, as the othering of internal and international migration appeals to different elements of differentiation.

If the international immigrant from the postcolonial space tends to be considered from the end of the 20th century onwards as a culturally different other, the internal immigrant had previously been perceived as an other without culture. If the former is a strongly culturalized subject, insofar as their ethnically distinctive cultural difference usually explains everything about them, the latter was a subject that was largely *deculturalized*.

The reflections of Jordi Pujol (1976)—president of the Catalan autonomous government between 1981 and 2003—on the Andalusian immigrant reveal this conception. Pujol saw Southern immigrants as culturally "raw" subjects, yet to be made, which made them a danger that could "destroy Catalonia" by "introducing their anarchic and very poor mentality, that is, their lack of mentality". But it was precisely his "lack of coherence" that made him easy to assimilate: "That is precisely why the great mission of Catalonia is to shape them, to make them be part, for the first time, of a community. It is to root those who are uprooted, to unite those who are pure disorder" (Pujol, 1976, p. 68).

In contrast to this supposed backwardness and lack of culture, the presence of international migrants was not politically postulated as a quantitative cultural difference (less culture) but a qualitative one (different culture). The first Barcelona Municipal Immigration Plan of 2002 states in its introduction that in Barcelona, it is perceived that:

> [The] wave of immigration is very different from those of the 20th century because it brings us cultures that are very distant from all points of view: linguistic, religious, eating habits or hygiene; in other words, cultures that are manifestly different, distant. (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2002, p. 71)

This emphasis on cultural differences and the need to manage them for the social cohesion in the city (Mata Codesal, 2018) will impact the processes of boundary-making between Barcelona residents coming from internal migration and those coming from international migration.

Resignifications of internal migration

Social boundaries are dynamic. Once established, they can be questioned, moved, reinforced, and so on. A defined boundary can become blurred and the other way around (Albeda et al., 2017, p. 472). If, as noted, around the end of the twentieth century the new international migration made internal migration invisible to the point of making it irrelevant, the independence process that intensified in Catalonia from 2012 onwards created a substantially new scenario that shows how the evolution of classification boundaries does not always follow linear trajectories.

With the independence process, internal immigration, which had been eliminated as an issue worthy of interest in previous decades, took on unusual political importance, as this sector of the population became the main obstacle to the independence option. The pro-independence process meant a return of public recognition of this population as a distinctive social sector.

For example, in 2013, the association Súmate was created to attract the vote of Spanish-speaking workers of immigrant origin to independence. Until the emergence of Súmate, proponents of independence of immigrant origin were *boundary-crossers* (Wimmer, 2008) who tried to minimize their foreign origins. On the contrary, the leaders of Súmate exhibited their migratory origin, speaking publicly in Spanish and not in Catalan and appealing to the need for economic improvements for a sector of the population hard hit by the economic crisis and the austerity policies of the previous years.

The migratory origin was made explicit in the political message, even drawing parallels between the independence process and the migratory processes of parents and grandparents (Aramburu, 2020, p. 2399). The independence movement, paradoxically, put back on the table the recognition in the public sphere of the Spanish-speaking worker of foreign origin after the hegemonic consensus of the last 30 years had decreed political indifference to this category.

Another indicator of the new visibility acquired by internal immigration in the context of the pro-independence mobilizations is the emergence of the term "colonist" in the language of a minority sector of the pro-independence movement, especially as its limitations in achieving hegemony became evident. "Colonists" (also called "anti-Catalans" or "non-integrated") would be the Spanish immigrants and their descendants opposed to the independence of Catalonia who are thus equated to occupiers at the service of the oppressive Spanish State.

A final element that shows the dynamic nature of migration-related identifications and self-identifications are the attempts to reclaim the *xarnega* experience. In particular, the work of writer and researcher Brigitte Vasallo (2018, 2021) has been instrumental in creating a public debate, including the organization of the *I Festival de Cultura Txarnega* in Barcelona in April 2019. The change of spelling from *xarnego* to *txarnego* is part of the very process of appropriation and resignification of the label, as Vasallo herself explained in the presentation of the event:

> "Xarnego" has always been an insult. Following strategies of reappropriation of the insult that we have learned from other communities, we wanted to resignify the word, make it ours, claim it, and say out loud: yes, we are *charnegas* and we like to be, and we have things to tell about how it is and how it has been our experience. (López, 2019, original in Catalan)

Despite the modesty of the event, a symposium where attendees and speakers shared their reflections on the condition of being a *xarnega*, the meeting triggered a great controversy. Most of the contributions, both from the audience and the speakers, narrated the process of becoming aware of a specific social position, highlighting the discoveries, contradictions and renunciations experienced in this transit as a kind of public confession of a social condition relegated to the private sphere, which had obvious resonances with the experience of "coming out of the closet", something that Vasallo herself already pointed out at the opening of the festival. Vasallo had an impact on the definition of the *xarnego* as an intersection of class and origin, highlighting the negation of the hegemonic identity binarism and explicitly claiming the idea of "inhabiting the border" of Anzaldúa (1986/2016) where the *queer* served as an explicit model for her proposal.

The historical resignifications of internal immigration in Catalonia show the incidental nature of the "immigrant" category. From structuring the main social division through a strong differentiation during the third quarter of the twentieth century, a dissolution of the identity boundaries took place toward the end of the century that re-emerged taking different forms in the context of the demands for independence. These resignifications have not proceeded linearly—from initial social significance to final lack of discrimination—but rather in the form of ups and downs depending on historical circumstances.

The substitution of class by cultural difference as the significant boundary

In subfields of migration studies such as coexistence and interaction in cohabitation spaces, prejudice and racism or attitudes toward and representations of foreign immigration, there is a relational dichotomy between the native and the immigrant subject. Although academic analyses that treat these subjects as if they were homogeneous entities continue to be produced, research has paid attention to how the conception of and relationship with the "immigrant" changes according to various properties of the latter (their legal status, their class status or their cultural attributes), as well as highlighting the heterogeneity of the native status (especially regarding their class position).

It is necessary to draw attention to a less addressed aspect of the native condition that calls into question the very category of nativeness. Often, in these cohabitation spaces, "the natives" have previously been migrants, and although they may no longer be considered as such, this migratory past influences, albeit in a complex and even contradictory manner, the attitudes of this group toward international immigration.

Although the migration experience of these subjects is a variable considered in some surveys on racism and perceptions of immigration (Cea d'Ancona, 2002), it does not usually give significant results; in any case, it is less significant than educational level or income. This low significance may be due to the ambivalent effects (which may eventually cancel themselves out in evaluative questions) that previous migration experience has on opinions about foreign immigration. On the other hand, in ethnographic approaches, this migratory condition of many natives seems quite significant.

Nevertheless, this significance is deeply ambivalent, as it functions both to establish boundaries of differentiation and to build bridges of identification, as the following ethnographic examples show.

People who also are immigrant, like me

The ethnographic work on Ciutat Vella conducted in the early 2000s by Aramburu Otazu (2002) will illustrate how the migratory experience functions as a bridge of identification between internal and international migrants by alluding to their shared experience of stigmatization and their similar class position. This author found quite widespread the idea that there was a native community ("la gente de aquí/people from here") made up of native elements of Catalan descent and immigrants from other parts of Spain, as opposed to "la gente de fuera/people from outside" made up of foreign immigration.

Once this author began to investigate the heterogeneity of this native community, other forms of identification and differentiation that crossed the frontiers between natives and foreigners soon followed. For example, an immigrant woman from Andalusia, who, although at first identifying herself as native ("de aquí") as opposed to foreigners, altered her position when recalling the first moments of her life in Barcelona. She vividly recalls that when she was working in the morgue of a hospital, a Catalan supervisor reproached her for her attitude—"if you don't have the guts, don't come from your village to work here"—which generated in her a strong indignation that still lingers:

> And Andalusians! It takes balls to clean a house from top to bottom. What harm are we doing? We're all so busy here, they're so mad at Andalusian women that you can't even imagine! And Andalusians have two pairs of pants to clean. And the Moroccans the same, they are not afraid to clean, to whiten, like Andalusia, to whiten, to wash, to sew, to fry an egg, to make a potato tortilla. "Make yourself a soup, a stew... Here, you do it!" "Me? I don't know how to fry an egg. I make a tortilla, and it burns..." [...] I get angry with all this abuse of Andalusian women, so I'm angry even now. (Aramburu Otazu, 2002, p. 107)

To counteract the rejection suffered, she contrasts a dignified identity as an "Andalusian worker" with "the Catalan" who does not even know how to fry an egg. In the latter opposition, "the Moroccan women" are associated with the Andalusian women as "workers". Similarly, another immigrant from Andalusia married to a Salvadorean woman replies in this way when asked if Andalusian immigrants in Catalonia have been discriminated against:

> The Andalusians? Yes. And who has built Catalonia? The Andalusians. And not only the Andalusians but also others. Which Catalan was there who got on the railway to work? That's what I say. Which Catalan was there who knew how to work? To order around only. Even in the factory, Catalans, only giving orders around. (Aramburu Otazu, 2002, p. 107)

As a social category, "the Catalans" do not form part of the symbolic community of unskilled but dignified and necessary work carried out by immigrants from other parts of Spain or other countries (Aramburu Otazu, 2002, p. 108). A dividing line placed "the Catalans" in the better-paid professional and managerial positions. Most of the Spanish immigrants interviewed supported their views of "the Catalans" based on their interactions with Catalans in roles of authority as if only Catalans occupied positions of power and without considering that many of their neighbors living in precarious economic conditions were also Catalans.

The native community "from here" is fractured along a class division that allows those who define themselves as working class to recognize themselves in the same condition of worker-immigrants together with later migrants. A field of recognition of a common social condition as workers who migrate to earn a living and take the hardest jobs.

Migrant status, resulting from the need to leave one's place of origin in search of livelihood opportunities, makes it easier for internal immigrants to find points of identification with foreign immigrants. This alternative identity, forged from shared experiences, creates a space where former immigrants can identify and feel solidarity with the newcomers. In this identification, the figure of the "immigrant" is not located on the other side of the boundary marked by national identity but is situated within the symbolic community implied by class status.

It is not being suggested that most of those who come from internal migration automatically identify with foreign immigrants in a common migratory experience. Nor that those who do so do not also develop discursive strategies and practices to the contrary. Rather, it is being pointed out that the migration experience creates an identity framework with the potential to transcend hegemonic divisions, a space in which foreign immigrants can be seen as people who, "just like me", have come here in search of employment and sustenance.

They have a totally different culture, so it's going to be very difficult for them to integrate

In her ethnographic study of the El Carmel neighborhood of Barcelona, Diana Mata-Codesal (2020a; 2020b) shows the frequency with which some older residents complain about how "immigrants" occupy the neighborhood's main square and spoil the coexistence with practices they consider uncivil. One can hear phrases such as "We have lived through bad times, but it [the square] has never been like this", which seems inconsistent to this author with what she perceives in the square and the neighborhood's history.

The neighborhood's beginnings had been marked by unplanned urban development and self-built housing by people arriving from other parts of Spain in the 1950s and 1960s. During the 1980s and 1990s, the neighborhood had become one of the neighborhoods with the worst reputation in the city, both a cause and a consequence of

the strong territorial stigma that the neighborhood and its inhabitants suffered from its shantytown origins, which encouraged its inhabitants not to mention their place of residence in their interactions outside the neighborhood.

In the mid-2010s, this neighborhood was experiencing a climate of neighborhood mobilization against so-called "uncivil activity" in its squares and streets. The behaviors labeled as such covered a wide range of activities such as playing ball, listening to music, drinking alcohol in groups or selling marijuana. The only thing these activities had in common was that they took place in the few squares and open spaces in the neighborhood and that their participants were perceived as immigrants from other countries.

In this context, a group of older residents from the internal migration of past decades claimed the right to define the appropriate ways to behave in those scarce public spaces of the neighborhood. These residents resorted to the argument of antisocial activity rather than native rights to defend their prerogative to determine the uses of the central plaza. This is where the specific complexities linked to the migrant origin of its inhabitants and the territorial stigma of the neighborhood come in.

The arguments appealing to nativeness, common in the formulation of claims, are problematic in this case. As the migrant origin of the neighborhood is undeniable, appealing to nativeness as a source of deserviness can easily be questioned. This was the case of a woman in the face of criticism launched by a man at a neighborhood meeting about the state of the square who decried the bad habits of those who came from other countries with "totally different cultures". When this woman—herself an immigrant from another region in Spain—recalled the non-native origin of the people of the neighborhood and their differences with the Catalan culture, the man insisted:

> They are not used to these things, and someone has to be there to tell them how to behave [...]. When they traveled to Germany [this is an allusion to the Spanish emigration in the central decades of the XX century to Europe], for example, when they misbehaved, they were put on the train and sent back home again. (Field Diary)

To differentiate between us (internal migrants) and them (international migrants), it is necessary to resort to a second layer of meaning that separates civic migrants and uncivic migrants. This symbolic boundary-making, which resorts to labeling related to attitudes and behaviors understood as a personal but group-influenced prerogative, has also been documented in neighborhoods in Rotterdam (Albeda et al., 2017) or London (Wessendorf, 2019). In these precarious and diverse urban contexts there is a boundary work between already settled international migrants and those coming from international immigration, but more recently arrived.

The case of Barcelona is interesting because this symbolic boundary work is set between groups coming from internal and international migration, who appeal to the so-called "ideology of civility" promoted by local authorities (Mata-Codesal, 2020a), which promotes the label of *uncivic* that has become a common word in the everyday language of the city and which the neighbors of the disputed square instrumentalize to substantiate labeling processes and differentiate between *us* and *them* without having to allude to issues of race or nativeness.

The efforts of former internal migrants to "collectively reposition themselves" (Wimmer, 2008, p. 1040) are hardly explicable without considering at the same time the lack of recognition, or rather, the negative recognition that is a corollary of migrantization, to which the neighborhood and its inhabitants have traditionally been subjected.

The literature on territorial stigma (with the racial, ethnic or class connotations that inevitably accompany it) shows how one of the most recurrent forms of resistance to stigma is to replicate stigmatization practices within the stigmatized area, assigning to others the negative and dangerous connotations that the territorial stigma had imposed on the neighborhood as a whole (Lapeyronnie, 2008; Wacquant, 2007).

In this way, the resorting of the first settlers to the ideology of civility, widely extended and accepted in Barcelona, allows them to divert the stigma toward the new immigrant inhabitants while allowing them to accumulate a symbolic capital that distances them from the stigma and brings them closer to the recognition of virtuous citizenship. In the end, however, this expresses the continuing fragility of these former *xarnegos* traditionally subject to a strong social and territorial stigma, a social boundary that they seek to displace by using cultural difference as a significant variable.

Conclusions

Two extreme right-wing parties run in the Catalan elections of May 2024. Although both were openly pro-native and anti-immigration, they placed the boundary between *us* and the *others* in different places. On one side was Vox, a Spanish ultranationalist party with its best polling numbers in the Barcelona metropolitan area among the population originating from internal immigration. On the other was Aliança Catalana, a rural-based Catalan pro-independence party hostile to all types of immigration (not only international) that denaturalize Catalan culture.

When asked during the political campaign about the differences between the two parties, Ignacio Garriga, the leader of Vox in Catalonia, pointed out that while Aliança Catalana sought to "erect borders between Catalans and Spaniards", Vox wanted to "defend the borders of our nation, which is Spain". Even when they share the same hard version of the border as a wall to be defended against outsiders, it is clear how the definition of who is on one side or the other of the wall is a highly malleable and incidental issue depending on different political projects.

Like many other regions of Southern Europe and the world, Catalonia is one example where different groups marked by their previous migration share daily life in a context of scarcity and struggles for scarce resources. Including groups from internal migration, even if socially relevant, in the inquiries on multicultural coexistence in everyday life (Wise & Velayutham, 2014) helps to advance in the study of the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of shared spaces and how and under what circumstances processes of construction of the *we* are substantivized.

From the two ethnographic cases presented, the intention is not to speculate on the degree of generalization of forms of identification or differentiation among different migrant groups but rather to suggest that the experience of internal migration

has a distinctive, if complex and often contradictory, imprint on attitudes toward international migration.

What can incidentally make groups of internal and international migrants share a common condition are the processes referred to as "migrantization", that is, processes of symbolic construction—but with significant economic consequences—through which certain forms of mobility are socially considered to be "migration". This refers not so much to their shared experience of mobility (the journey) but to the processes of othering and boundary-making to which they have been subjected to in the host societies.

The interaction between internal and international migrants in situations where they share physical spaces and, to some extent, socio-economic positions, is particularly illuminating of the creation, shifting and blurring of social boundaries (Lamont & Mizrachi, 2012). In addition to continuing to investigate the complex impacts that the class variable has on responses to the stigmatization of migrant groups, it is equally necessary to explore in more detail the interactions that the migrant experience has with other social variables, such as gender.

Ethnographic examples show how sharing migratory experience and social class is not enough to predict the direction of perception toward other migrant groups, as shown in the two ethnographic examples presented. It is necessary to incorporate such boundary-making processes into broader social dynamics. In this case, temporal and general contextual differences explain the different responses to stigmatization.

At the end of the millennium, Ciutat Vella found itself in a situation of very hard economic conditions but with a strong sense of improvement for those internal migrants, partly motivated by the very precarious socio-economic levels of departure of those who migrated in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The belief in the possibilities that hard work opens up for social improvement makes it possible to find oneself, if only discursively, in a common space with people who are also members of the same community that shares hard work and social stigmatization.

In the case of El Carmel, two decades later, where the shared class does not have as much positive influence among some groups of residents as regards their foreign neighbors, it seems to highlight the situation of perceived competition in a context of crisis between groups competing in a discursive framework and sense of scarcity (Mata Codesal, 2020b).

These groups feel that the economic improvements they have achieved are in jeopardy and become aware of the fragility of the social upward mobility they have experienced. To this end, the discursive framework created by successive diversity management policies and plans with an emphasis on cultural differences allows them to activate boundary-making processes toward people coming from international migration who, in contrast to the shared social class, wield cultural difference as a diacritical variable that differentiates them from their neighbors coming from international migration.

In recent decades, the academic and popular debate on majority-minority relations in the context of migration in Europe has experienced a shift from social to cultural factors as explanatory variables (Eriksen, 2007, p. 1067). The culturalization of migration, in parallel to the loss of importance of the class position in theoretical work on the phenomenon (Martín Díaz, 2023), signals the change from class to cultural difference as the significant boundary that delimits the limits of nativeness and modifies the boundaries of the *we*.

The case of Barcelona shows the effects of this change in the processes of boundary-making set in motion between internal and international migrants. Groups from internal migration previously migrantized resort to the cultural difference embodied in the figure of the good migrant, the civic migrant, instead of the shared class as in the past. This results from changes in academic and political discourses that emphasize the need to manage diversity and social cohesion (Domingo et al., 2023).

As shown in the arguments in favor of the joint study of internal and international mobility, this line can be highly fruitful. Specifically, the joint study of internal and international migration makes it possible to analyze processes of mobility significance that help to advance conceptual debates on mobility and migration by showing how and under what circumstances—sometimes independent of geographical distance—mobility acquires a certain type of social salience.

The mobilitites turn has brought new research possibilities to the already established field of migration studies (Sheller & Urry, 2006). The calls for the study of mobilities open the door to studies that, as advocated in this text, bring together forms of mobility that have not been analyzed together to date. Methodological nationalism has ensured that State borders are taken as the central, though not always explicit, criterion of analyses of social boundaries in diverse and precarious urban contexts, without being able to sufficiently incorporate the incidental and contested nature of both types of boundaries (the border and the boundary), as well as the relation between the two.

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Diana Mata-Codesal
Spanish. PhD in migration studies from the University of Sussex (UK). Currently she is a lecturer in social anthropology at the Universidad de Barcelona. Research lines: articulations between situations of mobility and immobility, remittances, sensoriality of migration and urban coexistence. Recent publication: Mata-Codesal, D. (2023). Feeling at home: migrant homemaking through the senses. In P. Boccagni (Ed.), *Handbook on home and migration* (pp. 228-238). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800882775.00029

Mikel Aramburu Otazu
Spanish. PhD in social anthropology from the Universidad de Barcelona (Spain). Currently associated professor of social anthropology at the Universidad de Barcelona. Research lines: urban studies, nationalism and migrations. Recent publication: Aramburu Otazu, M. & Bofill-Poch, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Crisis y sentidos de injusticia. Tensiones conceptuales y aproximaciones etnográficas*. Universitat de Barcelona Edicions. https://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/174280/1/9788491686699%20%28Creative%20Commons%29.pdf

Diana Mata-Codesal, Mikel Aramburu Otazu

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