

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICIES IN CATALONIA (1993-2017): POLITICAL FRAMES

POLÍTICAS DE INTEGRACIÓN DE LA INMIGRACIÓN EN CATALUÑA (1993-2017): MARCOS POLÍTICOS

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the political frames of Catalan integration policies that were developed from 1993 to 2017. It explores the way some of the major political issues and concepts surrounding immigration have been constructed in a minority nation. Based on qualitative analysis of the main political documents approved by the Generalitat de Catalunya, we suggest that Catalonia has developed a coherent and inclusive political discourse, based on the recognition of immigration as a constitutive part of its population. However, we detect a utilitarian view on immigration with some elements of its philosophy of integration being unclear.*

Key words: *integration; policy frames; immigration; multilevel governance; Catalonia.*

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Resumen: Este artículo analiza los marcos políticos de las políticas de integración que se desarrollaron de 1993 a 2017 en Cataluña. Se explora la forma en que se han construido algunas de las principales temáticas y conceptos políticos que rodean la inmigración en una nación minoritaria. El artículo se basa en el análisis cualitativo de los principales documentos políticos aprobados por la Generalitat de Catalunya. Se sugiere que Cataluña ha desarrollado un discurso político coherente e inclusivo, basado en el reconocimiento de la inmigración como parte consubstancial de su población. Sin embargo, se detecta una visión utilitaria sobre la inmigración, así como algunos elementos de su filosofía de integración por definir.

Palabras clave: integración; marcos políticos; inmigración; gobernanza multinivel; Cataluña.

INTRODUCTION

This article analyses how the official documents on integration have defined political frames in Catalonia. Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world, and in politics they shape social policies (Lakoff, 2004). Even the notion of integration is ambiguous and there is controversy over questions such as how to define integration, immigrants and other concepts (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2008), we will use it and explain how it works in the Catalan case. There is a consensus in the literature regarding the reluctance to use the concept of integration, because of the polysemy and multiple interpretations linked to this notion. Sometimes, these different meanings are contradictory (Wieviorka, 2014; Robinson, 1998). These different meanings can also change within countries, over time, and depend on the values, perspective and interests of the different actors involved (Castles et al., 2014). However, as Vertovec (2020, p.17) points out “because it works in so many different ways, the concept of ‘integration’ cannot be done away entirely within public discourse”. Different scholars have tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to identify alternative concepts to overcome some of the limitations of integration. These include a wide range of other terms (Heckmann, 2006): absorption, accommodation,

acculturation, adaptation, assimilation, segmented assimilation, incorporation, inclusion, settlement, insertion, etc. Therefore, the concept of integration is used widely in policies and politics language, in part because of the lack of more satisfying alternatives (Spencer, 2011). Despite its limitations, it also continues to be used by some scholars who believe it is a useful concept.

Immigration is a crucial issue in the political agenda in most European countries, and the anti-immigrant discourse from right-wing parties has progressively increased their power, bringing greater electoral support to some of them. Within the great majority of discourses, we can discern the perpetuation of discrimination towards minorities, official accusations of a hypothetical lack of willingness to integrate, the increasing representation of Islam and Muslims as a threat, the link between immigration and insecurity, and so forth. The current situation shows the incapacity of host societies to cope with the challenges of cultural diversity and migration. The outcomes of racism are deeply rooted in our societies, particularly in those societies where the legacy of colonialism, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance survive.

In the recent years, other perspectives raised, specially from the perspective of the local authorities. The notion of integration has been progressively swapped for another concept to refer to the heterogeneity of their societies: diversity (Schiller, 2017). The starting point of these policies is the acceptance of diversity as a fact, as a positive element for society and potentially profitable in all its dimensions: not only cultural, but also gender, sexual orientation, consciousness and religion, age, functionality, etc. Moreover, there is a local turn in policymaking, with municipalities developing a “municipal activism” not only towards regular migration, but also to irregular (Spencer & Delvino, 2019)

The aim of this paper is to analyze how migration has been framed in Catalan integration policy. We will focus on different dimensions in the political documents such as the notion of immigration and migrant, how integration is defined and the main actors involved in achieving integration, as well as determining the main principles and values that guide policies. It contributes to the research on integration policies with an in-depth study case of a minority nation, as well as on the analysis of the importance of institutional actors in the creation of a positive frame for a controversial issue, as is migration. Even though some research has analyzed integration

policies in minority nations, our study is based on a systemic analysis of institutional policies developed by different governments over an extended period of time—25 years—a period with different dynamics and migratory flows. Moreover, it also contributes to the current debate on the shift from integration to diversity policies (Schiller, 2016). First, we introduce the notion of integration, then the minority nations questions, then the political frames and after it we explain the methodology we are going to use. Then, we offer the results of the analysis and finally the conclusions.

1. MINORITY NATIONS AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Minority nations and immigration had received limited attention until recent years, and were not studied as a whole in the literature (Zapata, 2007). Actually, most immigration and integration research has considered migration flows only as movements across nation states, and only considering the consequences for these states, which has been described by Wimmer and Schiller (2003) as methodological nationalism. However, recently, some scholars have shifted this tendency and this field of study has experienced considerable growth in two different directions (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2017). For one side, the policy analysis in multilevel state, so the coordination or the lack of it between different institutions, and for the other side, the minority nations.

If we take into consideration the relationship between stateless nations and immigration, we must first consider that although they may have institutions of self-government, these institutions may be not competent on issues of nationality and on granting legal permission to live and work in the country.

It is often said that the relationship between immigration and a minority nation is conflictive (Zapata & Hepburn, 2014). The arrival of immigrants in minority nations can cause different types of reactions, ranging from acceptance to reservations (Franco-Guillén, 2015). There is no consensus on whether minority nations are prone to be more sensitive to migration than states and, hence, adopt an inclusive approach towards immigrants or in the other way, being more restrictive (Jeram, 2014; Arrighi de Casanova, 2012; Barker, 2010; Fontaine, 1995). For instance, Scotland, Quebec and Catalonia

are often described as fostering immigrant integration (Franco-Guillén & Zapata, 2014; Zapata, 2008; Keating, 2001), while other regions such as Flanders and South Tyrol have a more restrictive approach, frequently under the premise that a large presence of cultural diversity could contribute to diluting national identity. From the perspective of the minority nation there can be fears that the immigrants might become 'political agents' of the central government (Banting & Stuart 2012), or newcomers are more likely to express greater loyalty to the central government than to the regional (Bilodeau et al., 2010). Cultural insecurity plays a key role in negative attitudes towards immigration (Turgeon & Bilodeau, 2014).

In this perspective, all of it can limit the process of national construction (Jeram 2016), especially in areas such as language, because immigrants usually tend to use the majority language of the state (Kymlicka, 2001). In Catalonia, Catalan language is a very important item of the Catalan identity, so as we will see it plays a central role in the frame of political integration (Pujolar, 2010).

Yet, others claim that immigration can help overcome certain difficulties, including low birth rates and labour market vacancies (Hepburn, 2009). In this sense, the debate about immigration in the minority nations is not always defined by centre-peripheria debate. As the example of South-Tyrol shows, the debate can be typically left-right, and the positions of the parties are not defined by their national alignments (German-Italian) (Zuber, 2014) but for their situation in the left-right axis.

2. FRAMING OF INTEGRATION POLICIES

The concept of political frames or framing is well known in public policy, and it has appeared among policies and policy intentions. Many disciplines have adopted it for their analyses based on the seminal work of Bateson, Goffman, and Schön & Rein (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). Goffman describes frames as a tool for defining a situation, which is not consciously created and is the result of social interaction among different actors. The way some subjects are framed (for instance, immigration and integration policies) is extremely decisive in terms of how policy will be shaped. Frames

provide a 'way of selecting, organizing, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading and acting' (Schön & Rein 1994, p. 23). In the policy process, framing can define the substance of policy issues, identities and relationships between actors and the policy process itself (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). In the case of immigrant policy frames, it is important to pay attention to the political narratives, as well as the way in which the main issues relating to integration are defined, the main actors involved, etc. For instance, Scholten and Van Nispen (2008) analysed the Dutch policies as an intractable policy controversy, highlighting the importance of frame reflection, as they showed that all stakeholders had different policy frames, and that this was the main reason for the failure of the policies.

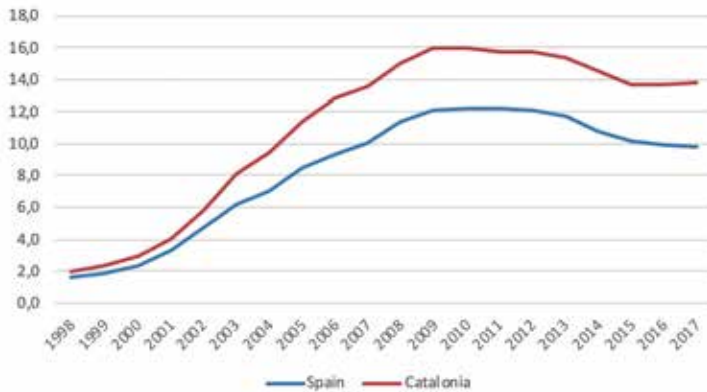
It is also crucial to take into account the relevance of the discursive framework. Many scholars have demonstrated the impact of political discourses in the configuration of opinions and social attitudes on different issues of our social reality. Further, in relation to a highly sensitive issue, as is immigration in Western societies, the way in which politicians and policymakers define and represent immigration and diversity can affect society (Goffman, 1974). As Rubio-Carbonero and Van Dijk (2015) suggest, political discourse on immigration is a policy itself; as many researchers have demonstrated, the way we describe and define immigration is crucial, as the role of politicians can have a significant impact on the way our society perceives the phenomena. For instance, the use of language is very important, and particularly the use of metaphors (about natural disasters) and their influence in political communication and persuasion (Charteris-Black, 2006; Scott Mio, 1997).

3. CATALAN CASE

Catalonia will allow us to study how it confluences an integration policy in a multilevel state context and in a minority nation. Catalonia is one of the Spanish and European regions that has received a large number of foreign immigrants from the 1990s to the present. This growth has occurred at the same time throughout the whole of the European Union (EU), as well as within the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which

have experienced a considerable increase in the arrival of immigrants and refugees. Specifically, between 1996 and 2015, the number of foreigners registered in Catalonia grew from 97,789 to 1,023,398, an amount representing 13.6 percent of the total population. This shift has been particularly important throughout the Mediterranean countries, which had traditionally been sending countries, and not receivers of international immigration (Doomerik & Bruquetas, 2016).

FIGURE 1
EVOLUTION OF PERCENTAGE OF THE FOREIGN
POPULATION. SPAIN AND CATALONIA



Source: National Institute of Statistics.

This institutional structure in Spain implies frequent tension between the central, regional and local governments during the democratic period. As some scholars have pointed out, immigration and integration policies in the Catalan case are typically examples of multilevel, but also bilateral governance (Franco-Guillén, 2018). The importance of the multilevel governance has greatly increased with the growing role of the European institutions among the nation states (Spencer, 2018; Scholten & Pennix, 2016).

As an historical nationality within the Spanish state, Catalonia has political autonomy in certain matters—with some of these having great importance in terms of integration—such as education,

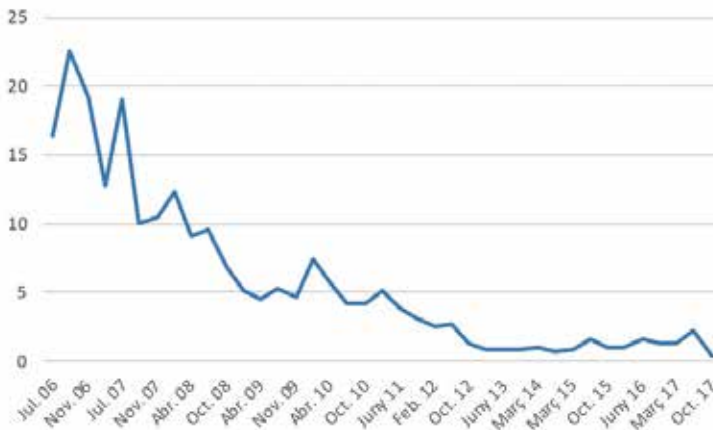
health and social services. The central government has exclusive competences in nationality and foreign policies, as well as regulation of the legal status of foreign nationals, the conditions for entering, staying in and leaving Spain, and the system of sanctions. However, the Statute of Catalonia of 2006 (the fundamental organic law of Catalonia, which is under the Spanish Constitution) claims that the Catalan Government must develop immigrant integration policies and regulate and promote measures for social and economic integration, and that that the Catalan government must generate a framework to promote immigrant reception and integration policies. Finally, local authorities also have competences on issues that have a great impact on integration, such as social services, urbanism, housing, primary education, sports and leisure, etc., but their delimitation is unclear, and often become an object of political conflict between institutional levels (Alonso, 2018, 2016; Bueno & Domingo, 2016).

In accordance with this legislation and these competences, the Catalan government has developed their own policies. These policies have been implemented in comprehensive programs and projects focused on the different dimensions of integration, especially the structural, social, cultural, civic and political dimensions, as well as in relation to identity (Ager & Strang, 2008).

From 1993 to date, according to its competences Catalonia has developed and implemented six plans to promote the integration of migrants. The Catalan government promoted the National Agreement on Immigration (NAI) in 2009 and the Catalan Parliament approved Act 10/2010, on reception for immigrants and returnees to Catalonia. Both plans and National agreement represents an institutional political response to a reality that is often politically framed and perceived by the population as a problem (Lakoff & Ferguson, 2006). In fact, as shown in Figure 2, some opinion polls highlighted that, particularly during the years of the most intensive arrival of immigrants, immigration was perceived as one of the main concerns of the Catalan population, though since 2008 this indicator has dropped significantly. In this regard, some scholars demonstrated that in Catalonia there were sour debates regarding immigration during different political campaigns in 2010, highlighting 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” (Burchianti &

Zapata-Barrero, 2014, p.413). In the Catalan Parliament there were no far-right parties during the period. But in the 2010 Catalan Elections *Plataforma per Catalunya* [Platform for Catalonia], an antiimmigrant party was close to obtain a seat in the Parliament with 2,4% of the vote. At the local level, in 2011 it obtained representation in some municipalities, but in none of them won the elections. (Arango, 2013; Pardos-Prado, 2012; Hernández-Carr, 2011).

FIGURE 2
IMMIGRATION AS THE MAIN PROBLEM IN CATALONIA
(PERCENTAGE)



Source: Opinion Studies Centre (CEO), Generalitat de Catalunya.

This fecund political production, sustained during these 25 years by different governments (4 of the 5 political parties in the Parliament have been part of the government), has also been accompanied by declarations by political authorities in Catalonia. Among them, Dolors Bassa, the former minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Families, claimed that, “we are a welcoming land with our own model which is worthy of being studied and explained—a model that could become a relevant contribution in a world that, in many places, encounters serious difficulties to live within diversity” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016).

4. METHOD

As we stated earlier, this paper focuses on the study of the policies rather than the integration processes. However, we accept the fact that sometimes the policies written in a document do not coincide with their development and that there is often a gap between public discourse and policy on paper (Boswell & Geddes, 2010). We analyzed the concept of integration as an analytical tool and as a policy concept, so we will distinguish between political frames and political measures. “The study of policies is fundamentally different from the study of integration processes. The essence of policies is the intention to guide and steer processes in society, in our case, integration processes of immigrants. Explicit integration policies are part of a normative political process in which the issue of integration is formulated as a problem, the problem is given a normative framing, and concrete policy measures are designed and implemented to achieve a desired outcome” (Garcés & Pennix, 2016, p.19).

The materials we use for the analysis came from Generalitat de Catalunya: the Parliament, the government and some accords between the most important political and social actors in Catalonia:

- Two laws: Statute of Catalonia in 2006, the main organic law of Catalonia, which includes several articles regarding competences in certain key areas, such as policies on welcoming newcomers and integration; and the law 10/2010 on reception for immigrants and returnees to Catalonia. This law was the first law on immigration to be approved in the Catalan Parliament, and it regulates the rights and obligations of immigrants to receive reception services and knowledge on Catalan society from municipalities. The law deploys a wide range of services and resources to help newcomers become more involved in society, especially concerning the functioning of public services, cultural issues, and knowledge of the Catalan language as a useful tool for integration, particularly in terms of access to the labor market and expanding social networks.
- Six integration plans, from 1993 to the most recent in 2017: Interdepartmental Immigration Plan (1993-2000); Interdepartmental Immigration Plan (2001-2004); Citizenship and Integration Plan (2005-2008); Citizenship and Integration

Plan (2009-2012); Citizenship and Migration Plan: horizon 2016; and Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020. The plans have a complete government view as well as actions from each department. We consider this kind of source extremely important, as they define the main position of the institution regarding any issue, identifying the main political priorities and their attempt to spread this position to all public and private institutions.

- One political and social agreement about immigration in Catalonia: The National agreement on immigration was subscribed by political parties representing more than 70% of the Catalan Parliament, trade unions, immigrant associations, and many political and social actors in Catalonia. The main aim was to “give an answer to the demands of the Catalan society in relation to the demographic transformation resulting from immigration and its consequences” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009, p. 3).
- Two reports on integration and Report on the integration of immigrants in Catalonia. These two documents are the result of the commitment of the different integration plans to evaluate policy implementation.

Based on these documents, we organize our analysis according to various notions from Garcés and Pennix’s (2016) framework, such as how the problem is defined, what should be done and for whom are integration policies meant. To address this, we add some dimensions of analysis such as the self-definition of Catalan society and the actors involved. All this information was inserted in an analysis table and subsequently studied and interpreted. The aim of this analysis is not to compare all these political instruments in its chronological or sectorial dimension but to compare them as a whole to identify the main political frames that guided the perspective.

5. HOW IS CATALAN SOCIETY SELF-DEFINED? CATALONIA, LAND OF WELCOME

Nation states develop narratives to build a collective identity, in the same way as minority nations do, and they often perceive immigration policy as a redefinition of their own society (Favell,

1998). In the political documents we analyzed, Catalan society is described as plural and open, accepting and recognizing its diversity, which includes immigration as an integral part and sign of identity. It also highlights the democratic nature and great respect for human rights. The value of equality is defended in different plans and is based on the recognition of difference. At the same time, though, this includes the aim of building a common project: to be a member of society with freedom and equality of opportunities. In addition, other values are highlighted, such as pluralism and civility.

In this process of self-definition, it is important to emphasize the national reality of Catalonia, a minority nation within Spain, with its own political institutions and identity elements, including language, which may often perceive immigration as a threat to its survival (Zapata, 2008). Moreover, ideas about how to integrate immigrants are linked to the way in which the nation of reception is perceived as a community, and this is particularly interesting in minority nations.

In all documents immigration is presented as a variable that has historically been part of Catalan society and, therefore, becomes a permanent element, instead of temporary. For instance, the first plan claims that “throughout its history, Catalonia has been a country of immigration” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1994, p. 65), and it is also central in the Law 10/2010 on reception for immigrants and returnees to Catalonia. Political discourse is particularly focused on the impact of migratory flows that affected Catalonia throughout the twentieth century. These migration flows, which were internal and substantial, especially between 1940 and 1975 with a net migration of about 1.5 million internal Spanish migrants, are constantly used in all the policy documents as an example to define Catalan society as diverse and welcoming. “Catalonia has witnessed three major demographic changes over the past 100 years, transformations marked by migratory phenomena that have made Catalonia a country of immigration” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017, p. 7). In this sense, the plans reflect a popular expression in the discourses on immigration in Catalonia defining it as a “land of welcome” (Franco-Guillén & Zapata, 2014). It does not mean that during the twentieth century all Catalans agreed with immigration and had a positive perception of its influence on their society. Some of them established links between immigration and insecurity, as well as the negative effects on the nature of the Catalan population and the risk to the survival of cultural elements, particularly the language (Domingo,

2014). But this view has always been a minority compared to the authors who view Catalonia as a “land of welcome”.

This expression—land of welcome—stems from contributions from politicians and writers, especially during late and post-Francoism (Domingo, 2014), and has endured to refer to international migration. It was particularly during the Franco regime that a discourse emerged encouraging a positive perception of immigration, through discourses from figures including Jordi Pujol (1976), who would become the president of Catalonia between 1980 and 2003, and Paco Candel (1965), an immigrant and writer from Valencia, a region bordering Catalonia to the south, who was known for his descriptions of the living conditions of immigrants in Barcelona’s suburbs during Francoism, and for calling this internal immigrants as “*els altres catalans*” [the other Catalans].

The definition of a “land of welcome” has a majority support in Catalonia but it is controversial among Spanish speakers, that consider it inaccurate. However, the fact is that this self-definition is also included in the preamble of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia (Parlament de Catalunya, 2006, p. 19), approved by the majority of Parliament.

6. HOW ARE MIGRATION AND IMMIGRANTS DEFINED?

All the political documents recognize immigration as an essential part and a constitutive element of Catalan society. Thus, migration is described generically as a dynamic, complex and multidimensional process, in relation to globalization, North-South inequalities, ageing of European societies, labor market needs, wars, climate change, etc. The Catalan case also highlights several specific pull factors, such as its geographical location and characteristics of the economic sector and labor market, which have traditionally been highly attractive to immigrants. It also recognizes the importance of family reunification because immigration is not perceived as temporary; it is acknowledged as a permanent condition, as well as immigrants’ willingness to remain in Catalonia. “That we have a long tradition of welcoming and immigration from other countries is, as we have said, an established reality (...). They come to stay, become citizens sharing a space, enjoying and assuming the rights

and obligations that belong to us all” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006, p. 34).

The historical background of (internal) immigrant reception also means valuing the experience of previous flows as an opportunity for addressing current immigration, although characteristics, dynamics and processes are quite different from previous ones. Notwithstanding, it is possible to identify a number of parallels that can be useful regarding international migration (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1994, 2001). This experience is presented in favorable terms. It also promotes the development of a public discourse sensitive to migration, which seeks to empathize with the people of the host society. This reflects the diverse and plural nature of Catalan society, enhances sensitivity and improves attitudes towards current migration. “Not only does Catalonia discover a new multiculturalism in extra-community immigration, but it also forces it to define the patterns of relations with other dimensions of pre-existing cultural diversity” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006, p. 38).

The integration plans recognize the influence of immigration on multiple dimensions of Catalan society, particularly in terms of population. Catalonia was characterized, at least in the twentieth century, as having one of the lowest fertility rates in Europe, and immigration has been perceived as a factor that can help to ensure the population replacement rate. In demographic terms, the historical contribution of immigration is not restricted to the increase of population, but to other demographic variables as well, such as birth rates and fertility, rejuvenation of the population, etc. In fact, immigration is an essential part of what Cabré (1999) calls the *Catalan system of reproduction*, where the traditionally low Catalan fertility rates have been offset throughout history by the constant arrival of migration. Cabré demonstrates that immigration is a structural element in Catalan society that has become essential to increase the population.

Migration, however, has also influenced other dimensions of society, including economics, politics, law, culture, identity and public services (especially those related to the welfare state, such as the educational system, health and social services, etc.). In this regard, we perceive a utilitarian way of describing immigration, in that it is useful for Catalan society, especially to meet the needs of the labor market, pensions and to mitigate the effects of progressive aging of the population. For instance, the second plan describes

immigration as *necessary* for the labour market or useful to prevent the *demographic catastrophe* (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2001, p. 16-23). Even though some plans referred to the necessity to host immigrants from countries suffering from war, political persecution, and human rights violations, most of the policies mainly offer this utilitarian view, meaning: we are especially open to immigration because it is useful to compensate certain weaknesses of our society. However, we do not know what the opinion would be, were immigrants not required to satisfy these needs. Would immigrants be accepted in the absence of this need for Catalonia?

Thus, these two discourses are formulated in a complementary way: on the one hand, one accepts and appreciates immigration, while the other warns about challenges for the survival of Catalan identity. Indeed, these are the main foundations on which integration policies are based.

Alongside the positive contributions of immigrants to our country, not only from an economic standpoint, but also from the cultural and social spheres, a contradictory state that is not a phenomenon like immigration—precisely because of its complexity—can lead to social conflicts caused by misunderstanding, fear, ignorance, and in the background, economic inequality (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2001, p. 117)

In this regard, one of the common attributes used to refer to immigration is *challenge*: immigration as a challenge to the host society, which should be able to cope with the opportunities that arise, but that also has the obligation to supply political answers to it. Immigration does not lead to conflicts that affect the coexistence and social cohesion of Catalan society. Immigration results in new needs that must be met, particularly in the field of public services, which have to be sized to accommodate the new population that has settled in Catalonia. Public services, especially those related to the welfare state, are essential for the task of integration (Bommes & Geddes, 2000). They must promote equal access for the entire population as a guarantee to create a cohesive society with equal opportunities. However, various plans warn that this will be difficult if public services are not resized, especially because the indigenous population may interpret the arrival of immigrants as the cause that explains a worsening state of public services, or a reduction in the coverage of social protection, since the arrival of immigrants

can mean increasing competition for public resources that are progressively overworked and underfunded.

At the same time, political documents present different definitions of immigrant. This is also a controversial question, and the documents show the difficulties in agreeing upon an accepted definition. The most accepted one is that immigrants “are those people who are living in Catalonia and have a foreign nationality” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016). However, this definition presents certain problems. For example, it does not say anything about the end of this condition (does an immigrant stop being a migrant, or is him or her considered as immigrant forever?); it does not take into account the differences in social perception of certain immigrants depending on their place of birth, nationality or social class; and its non-nuanced use can lead to discrimination and stigmatization.

Regarding the definition of migrant, the third plan introduced the notion of *ciudadania resident* (*resident citizenship*). It recognizes that foreign immigrants, depending on their legal status, do not have the same rights as those with the Spanish nationality. However, the plan aims to guarantee to all of them “basic human rights and equal opportunities” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006, p. 33). This notion of citizenship questions the traditional links with legal status and nationality and focus on practices of engagement with the community (Soysal, 1994). Moreover, the last plans emphasizes the new age of migration in Catalonia, at least from two perspectives: on the one hand, because after 25 years of international immigration, many children are born in Catalonia, and they are not immigrants; and secondly, because especially in the midst of 2010, emigration was a new reality in Catalonia, which broaden the scope of migration flows.

7. WHAT IS THE NOTION OF INTEGRATION?

The first element to consider is that the six approved plans are not defined in their titles as integration policies. They address three specific situations: immigration; citizenship and immigration; and citizenship and migration. This absence does not mean, however, that integration does not occupy a central role in Catalan policies, because indirectly, albeit with different names, they all refer to it. We

do not find references to integration in the other main documents we analyzed: the NAI and the Act 10/2010, on reception for immigrants and returnees to Catalonia. However, as we stated previously, there are two specific reports on integration that evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the policies based on a definition of integration. The first report does not contain a concrete definition of integration, but analysis is focused on seven dimensions, which can be considered as most crucial for its achievement: labour market, economy, family, polity, culture and leisure, the media and education. This is quite similar to the main dimensions of integration that some scholars have summarized as structural, social, cultural, civic and political participation and identity (Spencer & Charsley, 2016). One of the conclusions of this first report claims that Catalonia hosts immigrants, but has some limitations on integration, based on the comparison of some socioeconomic statistics between foreigners and autochthonous (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2013). However, in the second report the focus on diversity emerges as one of the main challenges of European societies. The analysis of the integration is structured on 5 dimensions (institutional, policies, labour market, education and social and cultural, and follows indexes such as the Intercultural Cities Index. It affirms that it is quite difficult to find a consensus on this, and suggests analysing indicators on integration based on the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016).

Most of the immigration plans describe integration generically, collecting some of the main conclusions from the literature on the concept. Despite recognizing its complexity and contradictory character, policies usually resort to this concept, though occasionally using others such as *adaptation*, *accommodation* or *incorporation*. Thus, integration is defined as a complex process that requires time and is bidirectional, meaning that it not only corresponds to immigrants, but also involves the whole of Catalan society, although with varying degrees of responsibility. This bidirectional perspective could also be useful to understand the introduction of “citizenship” in the title of the plans since 2005. According to it, the plans put a high emphasis on the importance of the host society regarding integration, not only focusing on the role of those who arrive but also on the whole society.

In accordance with this, the plans recognize the central role of public institutions (and its different tiers of administration) in

leading activities that facilitate the process of integration, but also recognize that unless there is support from other stakeholders the process is doomed to fail. As we will discuss later, this notion of integration will require the application of a series of principles and policies that must be extended to all stakeholders (municipalities, social movements, trade unions, etc.) in order to achieve the aim of integration.

One of the highlights of integration policies in Catalonia is the definition of the *Catalan way of integration*, which was first formulated in the *Interdepartmental Immigration Plan 2001-2004* (Solé & Parella, 2008). Although defined ambiguously, it derives from a supposed model inspired in the internal migration flows that occurred during the Franco regime and the political transition to democracy. “It is a model designed to achieve the maximum balance between respect for diversity and the feeling of belonging to a unique community. This model requires that immigrants take on the importance of respecting democratic coexistence and the Catalan language and culture [...] respecting and valuing, at the same time, their own origin and identity” (Generalitat de Catalunya 2001, p. 7). This plan criticizes the assimilationist model for “leading to the uprooting of people’s identity”, and multiculturalism (using the metaphor of the chessboard, with people living together, but with no interaction or common meeting places). However, the *Catalan way of integration* is based on respect for diversity and the development of a sense of belonging to a single community. Since 2005, all the plans will be based on the intercultural perspective, which is described as an attitude based on empathy and mutual comprehension (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006). In parallel, the last plan approved also includes the intersectionality approach to recognize diversity (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017, p. 8).

The most substantial change in integration policies in Catalonia emerges in 2009 with the *National Agreement on Immigration*, and the introduction of the concept *integration into the common public culture*. It approaches the notion of diversity in the broadest sense (Schiller, 2016) and recognizes the need to find a fit in the framework of a democratic and pluralistic society such as the Catalan. The process of ensuring the existence of a *common public culture* should occur simultaneously. This process is defined as “a shared space for communication, coexistence, participation and recognition of our diverse society, differentiated so that the Catalan nation remains the

reference point for all people who live and work here” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009, p. 63).

The bases of this common public culture are democratic values, linked to respect for human rights. Any form of diversity that respects democratic values should be recognized. To achieve this aim, the plan identifies five challenges: Participation in public life; Catalan as a common language; Coexistence in plurality of beliefs; Equal opportunities between men and women and the incorporation of a gender perspective; Strengthening of policies for the care of children, youth, seniors and families. This notion will be present in all the plans approved so far (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010a, 2014, 2017).

It is also important to analyze the conception of integration by consulting its principles. The principles are important because they attempt to influence policy frames and measures. In this sense, as we suggested earlier, the plans recognize strategic and operative principles. Most of these are inspired by the common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union (European Commission, 2004). These include a dynamic two-way process, respect for the basic values of the EU (freedom, democracy, rule of law, solidarity, equality and non-discrimination, etc.), access to public services, citizen interaction, respect and protection of cultural and religious diversity, among others. In addition, we find principles such as the recognition of rights and duties, collaboration and co-responsibility among stakeholders, prevention, coordination, etc.

8. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INTEGRATION? FOR WHOM ARE INTEGRATION POLICIES MEANT?

The two-way process perspective is not only manifested in the political discourse within the plans, it is also translated into concrete measures that aim to involve different actors to achieve integration. Not only are immigrants responsible for integration, but the entire hosting society must also be involved in order for this to be achieved. In this connection, all the political documents emphasize the importance of developing a political strategy focused on the whole society, and not only placing the responsibility for integration on immigrants. This is important in order to spread a

notion of integration that involves both public and private elements of society, and that tries to involve as many actors as possible in the so-called challenge. “The actions of this plan are aimed at everyone, as it addresses the process of reception and integration of newcomers while providing measures to strengthen social policies, coexistence and cohesion between the whole of the population” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010b, p. 6). As mentioned before, this idea also helps to understand the introduction of “citizenship” in the plans since 2005, as a way to include a holistic perspective in the integration policies.

Politicians and civil servants play an important role, as leaders of the society and members of the public sector, because they are charged with designing and implementing political measures. In reference to the public administration, the plans have evolved into a global perspective. In the first plans, the departments of education, health and social services were the most important ones, sometimes, the only ones. However, since 2010 all departments have responsibilities but different roles promoting the integration process, from security to cultural policies including urban planning or youth policies. Many efforts have developed in the direction of designing a global political strategy, including all departments of the public administration, because of the perceived necessity to foster a comprehensive perspective. In this regard, all the departments have to be able to formulate and answer this question: How can you contribute to the social integration of immigrants in accordance with your responsibilities? This normative approach is translated into practise, and we can observe many concrete actions from all departments of the Catalan government. Moreover, some plans (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014, p. 37) explicitly describes its policies as an example of multilevel governance, where different tiers of government share responsibilities. The role of the local authorities has been continuously highlighted, as the nearest tier of government to the people and with crucial responsibilities on key policies to integration (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2019, 2010c).

However, it is not only about politicians and civil servants. The political documents promote a notion of integration that is also a responsibility of the rest of social actors: economic and social agents, neighborhood communities, sports clubs, youth and religious organizations, volunteers, media and others. Everyone is involved in this challenge and the policies seek to achieve success. Thus, as we have stressed earlier, the role of the NAI is very important, because

it is a political instrument that shows the willingness of Catalan society, through their main political and social institutions, to become involved in the challenge to integrate migration. However, it is also true that this requires well-planned organization among the different actors. Many of the political documents analyzed describe an inclusive political strategy and define political aims whose objective is for most of the actors in Catalan society to feel responsible for this issue.

9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the policy frames in Catalan immigration policies between 1993 and 2017. Policy frames are important because they contribute to the creation of a philosophy of immigration, and because they show, through different political documents, how issues such as immigration and integration are defined. Political frames play a key role in the social perception of a phenomena among the population, even though “policies cannot just be identified with official programs” (Caponio & Donatiello, 2017, p. 3).

The Catalan case is interesting for different reasons, but the most relevant is that Catalonia is a minority nation that has received an extraordinary amount of immigrants in a short period of time, while at the same time developing a strong political production in relation to generating reflections on this influx.

The analysis of policy frames demonstrates that Catalonia has developed an extensive institutional production in parallel to the increasing numbers of immigrants arriving and settling in the country. This experience constitutes a political frame, as defines immigration as a central issue of its policies and governmental actions.

Our analysis shows that, even though approval of these plans has come from different political parties, we can find continuity in the content of policies and in the way in which political discourse on immigration and integration has developed. Three of the plans were approved by the center-right coalition, while the other two and the NAI and Act 10/2010 were approved by a coalition of leftist parties. This is due to a long tradition of seeking agreements with political and social actors, which has not been possible in other important

domains, such as education. This important achievement shows the narratives and political discourses on integration have been largely accepted by political parties, and that Catalonia has been able to achieve a certain consensus on a sensitive issue—in terms of elections and political battles—as immigration is prone to be (Alonso & Fonseca, 2012).

In this regard, one of the most important characteristics of immigrant policy frames is the notion of Catalonia as a “land of welcome”. This frame is used regarding international migration, but it emerges from the internal flows that took place during the XX century from other parts of Spain. This historical background is useful to show parallels among different flows. Despite the fact that, as we have mentioned, this is a controversial issue in Catalan society, policy documents as well as political agreements demonstrate a high degree of consensus on this definition, which is of great importance in the effort to create a positive approach by the rest of society to immigration. This definition is categorically opposed to ethnic definitions of who are Catalans, and recognizes and accepts that many people coming from different parts of the world are members of Catalan society.

It is also important to underline the effort to develop a particular definition of integration, which is translated into the notion of *common public culture*. This is an inclusive notion in which all individuals who arrive and settle in Catalonia are invited to engage, but without renouncing their own identity. It is especially based on absolute respect for human rights and the values of democracy, as well as being part of some of the main Catalan identity symbols, particularly the language.

However, there are some aspects that remain somewhat unclear, especially in the way that policies have explained and justified immigration. On one hand, policies recognize immigration as a natural part of the Catalan population but on the other hand, they usually highlight its usefulness for society, for instance, because it helps to balance the high proportion of ageing population, or because immigrants may be useful to pay pensions, or are able to work in certain kinds of jobs that natives are unwilling to accept. This utilitarian conception might be difficult to maintain, especially in periods of economic crisis, and could legitimize political discourses demanding preference for nationals, rather than a universalistic conception.

Finally, immigration policy frames have developed the idea that responsibility for integrating immigrants in Catalonia is not only a vital aim for political institutions, which have the main level of responsibility, but also stress the importance of constructing a strong network of agents —encompassing economic agents, trade unions, social movements and individuals, as well as immigrants— to be part of a comprehensive strategy to cope with one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary societies. This is an important agreement, not only from the policy perspective, but also because it demonstrates that the different political parties are concerned about this issue, and are not tempted to obtain political support by promoting political discourse and populist measures against immigrants. Rather than being conceived of as a political matter, integration is considered a responsibility for society as a whole.

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