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Knowledge for INtegration Governance

Local Integration Policies in Barcelona

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KING - Knowledge for INtegration Governance

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The KING project's objective is to elaborate a report on the **state of play** of migrant integration in Europe through an interdisciplinary approach and to provide decision- and policy-makers with **evidence-based recommendations** on the design of migrant integration-related policies and on the way they should be articulated between different policy-making levels of governance.

Migrant integration is a truly multi-faceted process. The contribution of the insights offered by different disciplines is thus essential in order better to grasp the various aspects of the presence of migrants in European societies. This is why **multidisciplinarity** is at the core of the KING research project, whose Advisory Board comprises experts of seven different disciplines:

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The present paper belongs to the series of contributions produced by the researchers of the “Social Science” team directed by Rinus Penninx.

The project is coordinated by the **ISMU Foundation**.

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Local Integration Policies in Barcelona¹

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE CITY

1.1 Some general structural data on the city

Barcelona, a city in the northeast of Spain and capital of the Autonomous Region of Catalonia, is the country's second-largest in terms of both population and economic importance. The city proper has 1.6 million inhabitants, a number which extends to 4.5 million in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. Its main industries are in the textile, chemistry, pharmaceutical, automobile, electronics and, more recently, medical sectors. As in many other Western cities, the industrial sector has been hit by a substantial process of relocation to countries with cheaper workforces and salaries. Meanwhile, the service sector has been expanding, especially in the logistical (partly related with the port), publishing and computer areas. As has happened elsewhere in Spain, the construction industry (although now suffering the effects of the crisis) and the tourist sector have become two of the city's economic driving forces. Statistics show that Barcelona is the world's tenth most-visited city and, after London and Paris, the third in Europe, with several million visitors every year.

1.2. A brief history of recent migration and composition of migrant population

The origins of Barcelona go back to Roman times, and the city reached the height of its splendour in the Middle Ages, the legacy of which remains in the narrow streets and historic buildings in what is now known as the Gothic Quarter. The years from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth saw a process of economic expansion as a result of the industrial development occurring throughout Catalonia. This was the period in which the L'Eixample neighbourhood was constructed, as were the modernist houses of the rising Catalan bourgeoisie. Neither the economic growth nor the spread of the city would have been possible without the arrival of a great number of emigrants from both rural Catalonia and elsewhere in Spain. By 1930, 18 percent of the population had been born outside of Catalonia (Gómez Olivé 1992). After the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and a long post-war period of recovery, the economic development of the 1950s and 1960s was once again founded on the arrival of immigrants from the rest of Spain. By 1970, 37.7 per cent of the residents in Catalonia had been born elsewhere (Riquer and Culla 1989).

¹ This report is based on: 1) secondary literature, media, policy documents and position papers of the main stakeholders; and 2) a set of individual interviews with (mostly) local policymakers: Ramon Sanahuja (Director of Immigration and Interculturality in the Barcelona City Council) twice; Xavier Bosch (General Director of Immigration in the Generalitat de Catalunya); Alexia Ballabriga (from the Immigration Council); Lupe Pulido (Director of the City Council Office for Non-Discrimination); Cristina Monteys (Director of the Office for Religious Affairs); Jaume Prat (from the Barcelona Education Consortium); and Tania Adams and Ariadna Casas (from Espai Avinyó). I would like to thank each of them for their time and trust. I am also thankful to Dirk Gebhardt (Marie Curie Fellow at GRITIM-UPF) with whom I have done most of the interviews and exchanged data and sources for our respective research projects. I would also like to thank him for their useful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

The economic boom, which began in the mid-1990s and came to a peak in the early 2000s, brought another major influx of immigrants. However, this time it was different in several ways. First, most of today's immigrants come from other countries. Second, more than 30 per cent are from European countries and North America, which means that this is not a purely economic phenomenon. In 2000, the foreign population in Barcelona stood at 3.5 per cent, but by 2003 it was 10.7 percent, by 2006, 15.9 per cent and, by 2009, 18.1 per cent. After 2010, the number of foreign residents in Barcelona dropped slightly as a result of the present economic crisis (see Table 1).

As for the newcomers' origins, figures from January 2014 show that 32.2 per cent of the total of foreign residents in Barcelona came from Latin America, 29.8 per cent from the European Union, 22 per cent from Asia, 5.8 per cent from non-EU countries, 5.7 per cent from the Maghreb, and 1.4 percent from Sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of nationality, the most numerous groups are from Italy (9.3 per cent of the total of foreign residents), Pakistan (7.5), China (6.1), France (4.9), Morocco (4.8), Bolivia (4.3), Ecuador (4.1), Peru (3.8), Colombia (3.4) and the Philippines (3.2). The evolution of these populations, however, has varied. A comparison of the numbers of foreigners resident in Barcelona in 2005 and 2014 shows that the population from Latin America has considerably decreased, those from Africa and North America have remained relatively stable, while those from Europe and Asia have significantly increased. If considered in terms of nationality, the foreign population shows a decline in the numbers of people from Ecuador, Argentina, Peru and Colombia, and an increase in the numbers of those coming from France, Italy, United Kingdom and Romania in Europe, and China and Pakistan in Asia (see Table 2).

Table 1 - Evolution of foreign population in Barcelona, 2000-2014

Year	Absolute number	% total number of foreign residents
2000	53,428	3.5
2002	113,809	7.6
2004	202,489	12.8
2006	260,058	15.9
2008	280,817	17.3
2010	284,632	17.6
2012	282,178	17.4
2014	267,578	16.7

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona (Barcelona City Council), 2008, 2014

Table 2 - Evolution of main nationalities in Barcelona, 2005-2014

Nationality	2005	2010	2014
European Union	42.698	75.404	79.741
France	7.706	13.238	13.062
Italy	11.678	22.946	25.015
UK	4.056	6.125	6.658
Romania	4.049	6.490	7.118
Rest of Europe	10,137	13,689	15,633
Asia	36.810	54.541	60.367
Pakistan	11.997	18.150	20.052
China	9.524	14.398	16.435
Philippines	6.470	7.752	8.684
North Africa	16.827	16.141	15.188
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.001	4.923	3.453
North America	3.268	3.581	4.052
Latin America	116,929	115,993	87,575
Argentina	12.439	8.855	6.137
Bolivia	8.314	15.541	11.607
Ecuador	31.828	20.459	10.849
Peru	15.037	14.717	10.258
Colombia	13.935	12.962	9.215

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona (Barcelona City Council), 2008, 2014: 13

1.3. National immigration and integration policies

Migration policies

The Spanish Constitution gives the state exclusive jurisdiction over “nationality, immigration, emigration, status of aliens and right of asylum”. In other words, regulation of the entry and stay of foreign citizens is wholly under state control. Nevertheless, the Foreigners Law 4/2004 and, subsequently, the Regulations of 2004 introduced a series of provisions that directly affected city and town councils, thus reinforcing the involvement of local government in migration management (Llorens 2006: 36; and, for a detailed analysis, see Garcés-Masareñas 2011). First of all, registration of residency in a town or city became the mechanism giving access to such basic rights as health and education and, after 2004, the indispensable condition for regularisation. Second, after 2004, the councils took over reports on social inclusion and housing, the former being essential for regularisation via *arraigo social* (literally: social rootedness) and the latter for family reunification. Although the Autonomous Communities have been formally responsible for these reports since 2011, in practice the councils are in charge of producing them.

Although both the municipal census (*padrón*) and reports on social inclusion and housing are regarded as purely administrative procedures, which means that a town or city council would be merely an “administrator” or “manager”, in practice the stipulated requirements are not always clearly defined by the law and its regulations. In this regard, the administrative practices of local councils (frequently with a significant discretionary component) take on a decisive role with vital implications in terms of access to social services, legal status, and the rights of foreign citizens in Spain. Councils with more inclusive practices pave the way for registration in the municipal census of irregular immigrants (for example, even in cases where the person has no fixed address) and, by this means, provide access to health services and education as well as favouring their chances of obtaining legal status in future. More open administrative practices with regard to the reports on social inclusion and housing lead to higher levels of success in the processes of legalisation and family reunification. In contrast, councils with practices that are more excluding and, in some cases, breaking the law (for example by requiring a residence permit for registration in the municipal census) effectively restrict access to public services and reduce the possibilities of legalisation and family reunification.

It should be mentioned that the Royal Decree-Law 16/2012, which in 2012 introduced “urgent measures for guaranteeing the sustainability of the National Health System and improving the quality and security of its services”, has brought about a change in the health system model whereby it has gone from being universal, which is to say for any person registered in any Spanish municipality, to excluding immigrants in an irregular situation and foreigners who are not contributing to Social Security. Since jurisdiction in the health services lies with the Autonomous Communities, their governments have undertaken a series of measures which, in some cases, seek to apply the state Decree to the letter and, in others, attempt to compensate for its excluding effects. This means that the territories no longer offer equal treatment with regard to the right to health. In the case of Catalonia, the Generalitat (Catalan Government) set up a special programme in order to guarantee access to health services for those groups excluded by the Decree-Law. Nevertheless, according to the NGO Médicos del Mundo (Doctors of the World), the system created by the Catalan Ministry of Health “is characterised by increased bureaucracy and a lack of criteria for determining access to specialist health care” (2014: 49).

Integration policies

Until 2006 national policy was almost exclusively focused on border control and regulation of immigration. Analysis of parliamentary debates, the different immigration laws (1985, two in 2000, 2003, 2009) and even the first programmes for immigrant integration (PISI 1994; GRECO 2000) shows that, up to this point, the main concern was “regulating entry” in order to cover the growing demand for foreign workers. As a result, immigration was treated as a matter of national security (and hence the influence of the Ministry for the Interior) and strictly linked to labour needs (and hence the increasing influence of the Ministry of Labour). This explains why the state was basically concerned with promulgating several Foreigners Laws in an attempt (not very successful) to channel the arrival of foreign workers and give legal status to all those (the majority) excluded by the law owing to long and complicated administrative procedures, both at the time of arrival and when residence permits had to be renewed (for a detailed analysis of these policies, see Garcés-Mascreñas 2012).

Another factor that also explains the absence of integration policies at the national level is the fact that a considerable part of jurisdiction in health, education, employment and housing was in the hands of the administration of the Autonomous Communities. While “immigration management” was considered to be the exclusive prerogative of the state, “integration of immigrants” was seen as a matter to be resolved at regional and local levels (Pajares 2006). Even after 2006, with the approval of the first national integration policy which sought to go beyond a mere declaration of intentions (the so-called “Programme for

Citizenship and Integration”, PEI), regional and local governments continued to define the goals and specific measures they wished to introduce. Hence, the PEI should be understood as a national framework in which to fit *a posteriori* (partly through budgetary allocation with a total of about 200 million euros a year) the policies that were already in operation at regional and local levels. The aims of the programme were to promote, on the one hand, equality of immigrants by guaranteeing “their civil, social, cultural and political rights” and access to public services and, on the other, their integration on the basis of constructing a new society (described as “just, inclusive and cohesive”) based on agreement over shared values.

In this context, characterised first by a non-policy and then by the formulation of an ex-post shared framework, Catalonia was one of the first Autonomous Communities to introduce programmes and specific measures for responding to the needs of its growing immigrant population. So far it has produced five plans to this end: the Interdepartmental Plan for Immigration (1993-2000); the second Interdepartmental Plan for Immigration (2001-2004); the Citizenship and Immigration Plan (2005-2008); the second Citizenship and Immigration Plan (2009-2012); and the last Citizenship and Migrations Plan (2014-2016). Furthermore, the *Llei d’Acollida* (Law on Reception of Immigrants and Returnees to Catalonia) was passed in 2010 with the chief aim of defining a joint framework of (instruction and information) action “to promote the social mobility of new arrivals and reduce their dependence on public systems and thereby to increase their contribution to society”. While this law was presented as a great success by both the Catalan Government and most of the political parties that participated in the process (except for the right-wing party Partido Popular, PP), the absence of the corresponding Regulations (not approved at the time of writing in mid-2014) and cuts to the Generalitat’s budget mean that it is a law on paper with no real practical application for the moment.

Analysis of the different plans shows that Catalan integration policies have focused on two main objectives. The first is to encourage equality of rights and opportunities, including measures to combat social, economic and political exclusion and to stimulate immigrant participation in Catalan society and prevent discrimination. It is important to note that after the third plan (2005-2008) the concept of *resident citizenship* was introduced, this defining as a citizen any person residing in Catalonia independently of legal status. This suggests that the target of the integration policies and, accordingly, those whose equality of rights and opportunities must be guaranteed, is comprised not only by people who are recognised as legal residents by the state but also those who reside in Catalonia, which is to say people who are registered in the municipal census (*el padrón*). As analysis of local policies in Barcelona will reveal, this is not exempt of contradictions: for example inclusion of immigrants without legal status in employment opportunity courses is difficult to reconcile with the fact that they do not have a work permit and therefore cannot work legally.

The emphasis on equality of rights and opportunities has given rise to policies which would particularly fit under the heading of “normalisation” or mainstreaming or, in other words, they are not aimed exclusively at immigrants but at the population as a whole. This emphasis is based on the assumption that guaranteeing equality of rights and access to public services, together with the proper instruments for combating discrimination, is a sufficient condition for assuring equal opportunities. In practice, however, these universalist-style measures have been complemented by programmes and specific measures developed by social organisations and NGOs. In some cases, these initiatives respond to the need to answer particular demands from the immigrant population in a context marked by the absence of specific policies. In other cases, these same initiatives have been directly encouraged and/or financed from the public administration. This has allowed the administration to give an indirect response without having to provide explicit services and thus shield itself from the accusation of including people who, legally speaking, should be excluded (for example, immigrants in an irregular situation), or of giving preferential treatment to the immigrant population to the detriment of the rest (Gil Araujo 2010; Bruquetas Callejo 2015).

The second main aim of Catalan integration policies has been to promote Catalan language learning as the condition for achieving equality of opportunities and as a guarantee of social cohesion and maintaining Catalonia's cultural singularity. For example, the Pacte Nacional per a la Immigració (National Immigration Agreement), signed in 2008 by the Catalan Government, most political parties (except PP) and the leading social and economic agents, indicated the need to "boost the cohesion dimension offered by the public use of Catalonia's own language" (p. 71). Similarly, the most recent Plan (2014-2016) presents Catalan as a "language of opportunities which should foster interrelationship among all the people who live in Catalonia" (p. 45). If the centrality of the Catalan language as a factor of integration and social cohesion has been constant throughout all the different plans and integration policies, the way in which it is promoted has been gradually changing. From being a *right* of the immigrant and a condition for equality of opportunity, it has come to be a *duty* of the immigrant and a requirement for legal status. In particular, the 2010 Law on Reception of Immigrants and Returnees to Catalonia conditions the *arraigo* (social inclusion) reports (required in order to regularise) and also those on integration (for renovation of permits) on the "successful completion of cultural, linguistic and work-related courses" (Jeram 2013: 11).

2. THE CITY'S APPROACH TO MIGRATION, INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

2.1 Local integration policies

Barcelona has approved four plans with a view to responding to issues related with immigration and cultural diversity: the Municipal Plan for Interculturality (1997), the Municipal Immigration Plan (2002), the Immigration Work Plan (2008-2011), and the second Immigration Work Plan (2012-2015). While the first plan was designed by the City Council itself with the aim of ensuring the consistency and comprehensiveness of its actions and coordination with other branches of the administration, the next three were unanimously agreed upon by all the political groups represented in the Council with the aim of determining by consensus the main lines of work and priority actions of the municipal government during the subsequent years of its mandate. More specific plans have been derived from these four, including the Barcelona Reception Plan (2007), which seeks to specify activities concerned with the reception of newcomers, and the Barcelona Interculturality Plan (2010), which defines the City Council's intercultural policy and the principal lines of work and policies for action in the field.

The four plans share the common feature of promoting rights and equal opportunities for all residents in the city. Although these principles had already appeared as central to the plans of 1997 and 2002, it was after the 2008-2011 Plan that championing equity became the first principle of what was defined as intercultural policy. It is not surprising, then, that the Barcelona Interculturality Plan should emphasise the need "to advance towards true equality of rights and duties (...)". The text of the Plan goes on to say, "a person should not only have rights in the formal sense but should be able to exercise them, which means that it is necessary to guarantee both formal equality of rights and duties, and equality of opportunity in having access to them". This entails, among other factors, "combating discrimination", "promoting upwards social mobility [and...] minimising the impact of external contextual factors", and also "an educational system that creates opportunities for each and every person" (Plan 2010: 103-109). Likewise, the 2012-2015 Plan specifies that, in order to foster equity, it is necessary "to improve possibilities for learning the language, assist access and continuity in the education of second generations, favour access to

employment, support entrepreneurial activity, and promote activity in civil associations and the participation of all men and women who are citizens [of Barcelona]" (Plan 2012-15: 27).

Another shared feature of Barcelona's immigration plans is recognition of cultural diversity as something intrinsic to and positive for the city. Although this was still a secondary theme in the 1997 Plan (recall that the foreign population then barely constituted 2%), promoting cultural diversity became a central concern after the 2002 Plan. The 2012-2015 Plan, for example, starts out from the premise that "diversity is now an inherent feature of all the world's big cities and Barcelona is no exception. Barcelona's strength as a community of citizens, both men and women, depends on the ability to make of this diversity a new foundation for development, creativity, innovation as well as social cohesion, equity and peaceful coexistence" (Plan 2012-15: 8). This promotion of cultural diversity is not understood as being without limits. At several points there are reminders that cultural diversity should be upheld "as long as it does not infringe upon the exercise of individual rights" (Plan 2002: 25), and provided that it fits into a framework of "rule of law constructed on the principle of equality before the law for every person and founded on basic democratic values" (Plan 2008-11: 24). Moreover, after the 2008-2011 Plan, cultural diversity has been tailored to conform with the intercultural approach (for a discussion of interculturalism and intercultural policies, see Zapata-Barrero 2013). To cite the Plan, this means "recognition of cultural diversity but emphasising what we have in common and fostering ties and positive interaction among citizens on the basis of the cultural heritage of the host society, starting from the principle of interculturality" (Plan 2008-11: 24).

According to Ramon Sanahuja, Director of Immigration and Interculturality in the Barcelona City Council, the concept of interculturality and its three basic principles (equality, diversity and interaction) is inspired by the work of Carlos Giménez, Professor of Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Madrid, who defines the policy of interculturality as "the systematic gradual promotion, by the state and from civil society, of spaces and processes of positive interaction that will be able to open up and generalise relations of trust, mutual recognition, effective communication, dialogue and debate, learning and exchanges, peaceful regulation of conflict, cooperation and harmonious coexistence" (Giménez 2010: 24-25). In brief, this entails recognising diversity within the unit, a unit that is voluntarily accepted and constructed by all parties on the basis of interaction. As Giménez pointed out some years earlier (2003), unlike multiculturalism, the issue here is not to extol the virtues of each culture but rather its relationships, the coexistence of people from different cultures, and what is convergent and shared among them all. The 2012-2015 Plan sums it up by stating that this is a matter of being "a diverse city without denying the fact of being a community of men and women citizens" or, putting it slightly differently, "there should not be several cities but one, diverse, intercultural city" (Plan 2012-15: 8).

To return to Ramon Sanahuja's account, a gradual refinement of the discourse and policy of the Barcelona City Council was made possible by the work of Carlos Giménez, who had previously been an adviser to the Madrid City Council. "What we have done is to copy and adapt the work of Carlos Giménez to the discourse of Barcelona and all the history that has come before us. There was a history that led us in this direction but we lacked what we might call a more forceful conceptual, theoretical discourse, and this is what Carlos Giménez contributed, he really did (...). The first Plan [1997] talked about interculturality but the idea was rather ethereal or did not define very clearly what it was trying to say. The second Plan [2002] talked about intercultural mediation and the concept of interculturality came out of this" (interview done by Dirk Gebhardt in Barcelona, 02/04/2014). In fact, it was not until the 2008-2011 Plan that the concept of interculturality became one of the mainstays of the Council's policies. This also explains the fact that the 2008-2011 Plan suggests the initiative of defining a specific plan on interculturality: the Barcelona Interculturality Plan (2010). In keeping with the methodology of the administration's earlier plans, this one was jointly designed by different departments of the Barcelona City Council and the main social and civic

organisations, sector-based and territorial councils, citizen networks and platforms, district organisations and experts in the field (Álvarez Enríquez 2013: 8).

The concept of interculturality has made it possible, first, to find a framework for the principles of equality and diversity which had already appeared in the first plans. Second, the emphasis on a joint framework of reference has allowed the combination of a policy favouring diversity with another which, at the same time, has gradually been upholding the centrality of Catalan language and culture. While the earlier plans only raised the need to promote “oral” learning “of the languages used in Catalonia” (1997: 20) or “of the official languages” (2002: 31), after 2008 direct reference has been made to the “cultural heritage of the host society and its language”² as the “necessary basis and point of departure for working on interculturality” (2008-11: 34). The 2012-15 Plan is even more explicit: “Barcelona ought to be an aggregate of people who interact with one another against a backdrop of diverse languages, cultures, beliefs and ideologies, but within a common frame of reference based on Catalonia’s tradition (developed over time by embracing new contributions) and in which Catalan, as a lingua franca, must aid cohesion” (Plan 2012-15: 9).

Along with the principles of equality, cultural diversity and interaction based on a shared framework, namely the “Catalan tradition and language”, the concept of normalisation or mainstreaming is also essential for understanding both the discourse and immigration policies of the Barcelona City Council. As Aparicio and Tornos (2003) point out and, as mentioned in the previous section, “normalisation” is one of the most frequently used terms in Spain’s integration policies, independently of region, political hue or administrative level. The Barcelona City Council had already stipulated in its 1997 Plan that the immigrant population should be attended to “by means of services, projects and programmes aimed at the population as a whole, sectors of the population (children, young people, women, senior citizens, et cetera) or the appropriate area” (1997: 15). The 2002 Plan reiterated the need to attend to people “within the framework of existing services without creating parallel structures” but also specified that this “normality must be applied with particular attention to the diverse needs and differing situations of those people who wish to become an integral part of Barcelona society” (2002: 25). More explicitly, and always adhering to the principle of normalisation, the 2008-2011 Plan coincided with the earlier ones by identifying the need for “quantitative and qualitative adaptation of municipal services in responding to the socio-demographic reality” (2008: 24).

In this context, the only policies specifically concerned with the immigrant population have been those of admission or reception of “new arrivals”, which the Council defines as “the set of actions that give new arrivals access to information and basic resources with a view to favouring their integration in the host society” (Report on Reception 2011: 33). The policy is shaped by three main pillars: 1) access to basic official procedures by means of legal advice in such matters as obtaining legal status, renovation of residence permit or family reunification; 2) access to basic resources such as education, housing and employment; and 3) knowledge of the language and new surroundings. While covering a wide range of services including accommodation on arrival, social assistance, business assistance, encouragement of activity in associations and psychological support, most projects are limited in practice to legal advice, employment and language learning. Indeed, these three areas represent the core not only of reception policy but, it could very well be said, of Barcelona’s immigrant policy in general.

However, reception policy is presently being revised. In 2010, the Parliament of Catalonia approved the Law on Reception of Immigrants and Returnees to Catalonia, the aim of which was to define a joint framework of activities providing information and guidance for new arrivals. This has meant institutionalising policies that were already being carried out at the local level, reinforcing and increasing activities in this domain, and making formal reception a condition for certain legal procedures such as regularisation via *arraigo*

² Note the change from plural to singular or, from the reference to Spanish and Catalan with equal emphasis on both to focus exclusively on Catalan.

social. However, the regulations for enforcing the law have not yet been approved. Meanwhile, according to a critical analysis of the Barcelona Reception Plan carried out by several agents involved in it, although the number of new arrivals has dropped since the onset of the economic crisis, the number of users of reception programmes has risen spectacularly: the figure for 2007 was 85,251 people while, in 2010, it had soared to 221,675. According to the authors of the document, this suggests that the type of user has changed. They are not only new arrivals but, in particular, they are immigrants who, as a result of the economic crisis, are looking for alternatives by means of these services. Finally, the 2012-2015 Plan announces a change of policy, “from reception policies to policies of harmonious coexistence and support for the incorporation of diversity in Barcelona” (2012-2015 Plan: 26). There is hardly any explanation of what this change entails, although it is stipulated later that it is necessary “to stop viewing immigrants as recipients and receivers of public services and to see them more as social agents participating in the city’s life and projects.” Time will tell how these apparently contradictory trends – on the one hand, implementation of the Reception Act and rising numbers of users in certain services and, on the other, this change in policy, at least on the discursive level – will fit together.

2.2 Administrative and financial organisation

In 1988, the Barcelona City Council established the Municipal Social Welfare Council within which the Working Group on Refugees and Aliens was set up a year later. This also included such social organisations as the Catalan Association for Solidarity and Assistance of Refugees (ACSAR), the Information Centre for Foreign Workers (CITE) of the trade union Comisiones Obreras and the Red Cross. Following a proposal made by this group, the Service Centre for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER) was established. Once again, this initiative is fruit of a joint endeavour of the public administration and a number of social agents whose main aim has been to offer a single space providing the necessary services for the reception of new arrivals (SAIER 2011). In the early 1990s, a dual structure was created inside the City Council with one pillar in the Department of Social Welfare and the other in the Department of Civil Rights. After several changes in the administrative structure, the Technical Department for Immigration (now called the Immigration Department) was established within the Department of Citizen Participation, Solidarity and Cooperation. The Office for Religious Affairs and the Office for Non-Discrimination, however, have remained under the auspices of the Department of Civil Rights.

Since the 2002 Plan, transversality has been one of the guiding principles of the design and implementation of local policies in this area. It is striking that transversality is defined as a form of coordination, not only between the different areas of the City Council but also extending out to the other sectors involved in this sphere. The 2012-2015 Plan explicitly refers to the need to broaden this transversality to local administration in the city’s different districts and neighbourhoods, to political parties and groups, and the leading social agents, as well as to several territorial levels, both within the metropolitan area and in the rest of Catalonia. Nevertheless, it would seem that practising transversality has not always been easy. Ramon Sanahuja offered a couple of examples in an interview (Barcelona, 28/05/2014). First, he mentioned how difficult it is for urban planning initiatives and, in particular, those concerned with designing public space, to continue adhering to the basic principles of the interculturality policy. Second, referring to the fact that, according to a report by the NGO SOS Racisme, the Guardia Urbana (municipal police) appears as the offending party in 40% of formal complaints of discrimination, he identified the additional difficulty of carrying out an internal policy of consciousness raising (by means of courses) among its members.

Another characteristic feature of the integration policies in Barcelona is the inclusion of social and immigrant organisations. This is especially evident in the reception policy, which combines the services of SAIER – which, as noted above, is the result of collaboration between the public administration and several

social organisations – the work of 114 social and immigrant organisations funded via projects by the Barcelona City Council, and other endeavours directly initiated by the Immigration Department or proposals coming from districts or neighbourhoods. Hence, the immigrant and social organisations have most contact with the immigrant population and also play an important role in the Reception Plan. Indeed, this should be understood in a broader context wherein a considerable part of social services has been the result of work done by social organisations (initially religious) and financed by the public institutions. In comparison with other European countries, this means that immigrant associations have been funded within this pre-existing structure (basically, through outsourcing public services) rather than through specific, exclusive financing channels.

3. THE CITY'S PRACTICE OF POLICIES

3.1. The legal-political domain

The municipal census

The national Local Government Regulatory Law (Ley 7/1985) stipulates that “every person living in Spain is obliged to register in the municipal census of the municipality of residence” (Art. 15). Subsequently, the Aliens Law (Ley 4/2000) made access for every person to basic rights such as health, housing and free legal aid conditional on being registered in the municipal census (*padrón*). Since registration is not dependent on having a residence permit, this means opening up access to certain rights and basic social services to immigrants without legal status. Although the following Aliens Law (Ley 8/2000) limited some of these rights, access to education and health services continued to be conditional on registration in the municipal census. In addition, different local regulations also linked access to certain municipal services (like use of public libraries, sports centres or schools and crèches) or obtaining some social benefits (such as grants funding food in public schools) to registration in the municipal census.

As Ramón Sanahuja puts it in an interview, “The *padrón* is key. The *padrón* itself is nothing. It’s only a register. (...) The requirements are very simple. The thing is that many laws afterwards, when they say who is entitled to access a particular right, they refer to the *padrón*. Having papers or not is not a condition. If you are in the *padrón*, you have rights” (Barcelona, 28/05/2014). This means that the municipal census – the basic instrument by means of which local councils can know the real population of the municipality and thus plan public policy in areas such as public transport or social services – has ended up becoming a basic mechanism for including or excluding foreigners. According to the 2008-2011 Plan, the following “legal consequences” derive from registration in the municipal census: “It can be a form of proof accrediting *de facto* permanence when seeking a residence permit [via *arraigo social*]; it allows foreigners to enjoy the rights of local residents as stipulated in local regulations; it endows foreigners without legal status with certain rights such as health or housing services, provided that such attention is required in a situation of social emergency; it also provides easier access for foreigners without legal status to non-obligatory educational services in adult education centres” (2008-2011 Plan). Moreover, registration in the municipal census can also accredit the existence of a fixed address in Spain which, in practice, can help to prevent decisions that might lead to immigrants being interned in an immigration detention centre in cases where deportation procedures are underway (Colectiu Ronda 2011: 30).

Although this is not mentioned in the Plan, the municipal census is also the gateway to reception services and hence to the beginning of a process of integration promoted by the local government. In fact, this is not exclusive to the Barcelona City Council. As stated in the guide *Món local, immigració i ciutadania. Recomanacions per a la gestió del fet migratori des dels ens locals* (Local World, Immigration and Citizenship: Recommendations for Managing Migration from Local Entities), which was published in 2010 by the Department of Immigration of the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia with the aims of “establishing guidelines for action” and “avoiding dispersion and inconsistency in municipal activities”, the municipal census should act as the “front door” or “procedure through which the foreigner establishes the first contact with the administration”. Accordingly, the guide suggests that the reception services “should be activated from the moment of registration in the municipal census” (2010: 35). This means that any person thus registered, independently of his or her legal status, can have access to services including legal advice, sessions offering information and knowledge about local surroundings, and courses providing training for employment or linguistic skills.

What is a characteristic feature of the administrative practice of the Barcelona City Council is the fact that people with no fixed address (but not necessarily without legal status) can register in the municipal census. In 2010, more than 16,000 people with no fixed address were registered in Barcelona, and 2,000 of these were Spanish citizens, 720 were from other countries of the European Union, and 13,400 were from non-EU countries (BTV, 27/01/2010). When a person has no fixed address, registration tends to be done through the City Council’s Social Services Department. While this practice aims to include any person living in Barcelona, irrespective of his or her socio-economic circumstances, other councils apply the law more stringently, requiring not only all the documents stipulated by law (for example proof of having a fixed address) but even additional documents (such as residence permit or certificate of occupancy in a property complying with health and safety requirements). These varying practices make it clear that while, in principle, town or city councils are pure “administrators” or “managers” of legal procedures defined at state level, in fact they play a decisive role with crucial implications for the legal status of foreign citizens and their access to rights and social services.

City reports for legalisation and family reunification

The town or city councils are not only administrators of the municipal register or *padrón* but, since the Regulations for the 2004 Alien Law have been in force, they also produce the social inclusion reports necessary for attaining legal status through *arraigo social* (social rootedness) as well as housing reports for family reunification. Theoretically, these reports have been the responsibility of the Autonomous Communities since 2011 but, in practice, the councils are still in charge of them. As in the case of the *padrón*, the administrative procedures vary considerably from one council to another, which means that council policy (in this case, implementation) crucially affects foreigners’ access to legal status and the right to family reunification.

In the case of the social inclusion reports for regularisation via *arraigo social* (social rootedness), the Aliens Regulations specify that the certificate issued by the council “must indicate the time of residence of the applicant at the home address, source of income, level of knowledge of languages used, engagement with social networks in the locality, programmes run by public or private institutions for inclusion in the social and employment spheres in which the applicant has participated, and the extent to which this might be used to determine his or her level of rootedness” (Art. 46.2). Although the only legal requirements that can be demanded are uninterrupted residence in the country for a period of three years, integration in social networks (for example, the library) and command of the official languages (according to the lawyer Sergi Santacana, *La Vanguardia* 27 January 2010), some councils insist on additional conditions such as a minimum period of registration in the municipal census or participation in certain social entities. After the 2010 Reception Law, participation in reception programmes, including a Catalan language course consisting

of a minimum of 45 hours, has also become an indispensable factor if a positive report is to be issued. However, in this area, too, the councils present relatively disparate practices.

In terms of its practice in this regard, the Barcelona City Council once again appears as the most inclusive. Of the 4,400 “rootedness” reports issued in 2013, 571 were temporarily turned down (meaning that, when applicants failed to comply with the basic conditions, the Council asked them to return when they had obtained all the necessary documentation) while 136 were negative, these representing a mere 3 per cent of the total number of reports. According to Ramon Sanahuja, there were basically three reasons for rejection on the basis of these reports: not having the minimal required knowledge of the official languages, having been fined on four or more occasions for antisocial conduct (fines for not observing the municipal by-laws on public spiritedness and harmonious coexistence), or presenting falsified documents. According to data made available by the Director-General for Immigration of the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia (interview in Barcelona, 19/05/2014), a total of 42,529 “rootedness” reports were issued in Catalonia from 2011 until April 2014 and, of these, 37,635 were favourable, 153 were temporarily turned down and 3,184 were unfavourable. Although the overall number of adverse reports is not high either, in proportional terms the total for Catalonia (8.4 per cent) is almost three times that for Barcelona. Furthermore, when the reasons for rejection are considered, insufficient knowledge of the language would seem to be much more relevant in Catalonia as a whole than in Barcelona. In fact, although this requirement is stipulated in the Reception Law, the Barcelona City Council appears to take a particularly pragmatic stance in this regard. According to Ramon Sanahuja, when the applicant does not speak either Catalan or Spanish, the file is left open and the applicant is advised to return in a couple of months after taking a language course: “Do the study. It’s 45 hours, and you will get it” (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014).

As for the housing reports with a view to family reunification, according to the 2004 Regulations, the town and city councils have to evaluate (on the basis of visual inspection) the applicant’s housing, bearing in mind living conditions, number of rooms, the use of each space and how many people are living at the address. However, according to a local government employee interviewed by the author in 2010, “Nobody ever told us exactly what we have to assess” (Barcelona, 02/12/2010). While some councils require a certificate of habitability or a document proving ownership or rent of housing, others, such as that of Barcelona, are much more lenient. This inconsistent practice once again leads to noticeable variation in the official decisions. For example, in 2010 the proportion of rejected applications was 27 per cent in L’Hospitalet del Llobregat (a municipality near Barcelona) while in Barcelona it was only 6 per cent (Garcés-Mascareñas 2011). This has certain effects with regard to the possibilities of family reunification which, according to the Constitution, is a basic right of any person residing in the country.

This prerogative in producing the housing reports not only places the councils at the centre of the inner workings of some of the most decisive procedures relating to foreigners but also gives them access to detailed information concerning the living conditions of the immigrant population and about the processes of family reunification. In the case of the Barcelona City Council, the information is used in two ways. First, when irregularities are found at an immigrant’s address (overcrowding, substandard conditions, or clandestine economic activities) the Immigration Department informs the Housing Department, the neighbourhood institutions, the Municipal Police and other municipal agents so that they can take the necessary administrative, legal and social measures to deal with such situations (Plan 2008-11: 33). Second, contact is made with applicants, who can then be included in the appropriate family reunification programme. This type of programme, developed and financed exclusively by the municipality, offers “guidance and individualised social support for families throughout the process; legal advice with regard to the necessary paperwork; orientation and guidance for minors and young people in order to give them access to the education system and leisure facilities in Barcelona; group guidance in activities programmed for newly incorporated family members; and group guidance in order to ensure a positive family reunion

and to ease the process of incorporation into the city” (Programa Municipal Noves Famílies a Barcelona. Acompanyament al Reagrupament Familiar: 2).

Legal advice

Legal advice is one the mainstays of reception policies for the newly arrived population. In accordance with the model described above, this service is offered by a set of social entities (55 in 2011) and funded by the Barcelona City Council through projects. At the end of 2007 the Council’s Department for the Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue Programme launched the Xarxa d’Entitats Socials d’Assessorament Jurídic per Estrangers (XESAJE – Legal Advice for Foreigners Social Entities Network) with the aim of fostering shared knowledge among people providing legal advice in the city. The publication and circulation of information concerning changes in laws and regulations affecting foreigners is encouraged by this network, and periodical meetings are held with the institutions working in the field to obtain up-to-date information on the most pressing issues for both administration and users.

The free legal advice offered to immigrants by the social entities is principally concerned with the procedures for obtaining legal status (via *arraigo* or “rootedness”), renewal of the residence permit, family reunification, deportation, information regarding marriage with Spanish nationals, help with housing and other services. Since the promulgation of Royal Decree-Law 16/2012, which denies health care to irregular immigrants and to foreigners who are not contributing to Social Security, there has been a rise in the number of petitions concerned with how to achieve a health care card via the procedure established by the Generalitat of Catalonia (much more bureaucratic and with uncertain results). A report on the Reception Plan produced by the social entities involved identifies a series of factors that make legal advice not only necessary but also an increasingly laborious process.

These entities point out that, since attaining legal status and renovation of the temporary residence permit depends on having a work permit, this paperwork becomes extremely difficult in times of severe economic crisis. In practical terms, it means that irregular immigrants who have been waiting for three years in their attempts to achieve legal status can find that the whole process is suspended because they do not have a job offer for a minimum of one year. For those people who have a temporary residence permit, not being registered with Social Security (working or receiving unemployment benefits) might mean “losing papers” (the residence permit) and, as a result, going back to irregularity. In these circumstances, the social entities are obliged not only to provide information about the legal procedures but also to accompany immigrants and help them manage situations which cause great anxiety (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2011: 69).

While this matter is related with the content of the Aliens Law, which has always linked legal recognition with formal inclusion in the workforce, the social entities also indicate other factors connected with the bureaucratic culture and the absence of transparency or accountability in immigrant-related procedures. To be more specific, they pinpoint three issues. First, they refer to the difficulties raised by the constant changes in the procedures and the documentation required in each case. Second, they report increasing difficulty of communication with the administration. To give one example of this, the text says, “there are details of cases of excessively long procedures, files that are not opened, confusion in the administrative processing, and difficult or impossible access to the public administration” (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2011: 69). Third, the document also criticises the increasing number of rejections owing to greater stringency in the evaluation of the documents required, for example by demanding further proof of permanent residence in the country, or taking into account not only criminal records but also police records.

Taking all these factors into account, one might conclude that the legal advice provided by the City Council through the social entities responds to a need not only to inform immigrants but also to mediate for them

with an opaque and often inaccessible administration which, in times of crisis, applies stiffer rules by means of the content of the law as well as in its administrative practice.

Political participation

For all the inclusive discourse concerning the immigrant population at both the level of Catalonia and that of the Barcelona City Council, the reality is that one of the great limits is representation of immigrants and their political rights. Ricard Gomà, representing the political party Iniciativa per Catalunya in the Council, remarks: “As for political rights, yes we have a problem, a great limitation, namely that even today in Spain as a whole, and for all the elections – municipal, Autonomous Regions, state and European – the criterion governing access to the political right to vote is not residence but nationality” (interview by Álvarez Enríquez, 2013: 14). Although European citizens and those from countries with reciprocity agreements with Spain can in fact vote in municipal elections, there are many more who are still excluded. For most local politicians this is a serious problem. Daniel de Torres, political head of Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue in the Barcelona City Council from 2007 to 2011, has the following to say: “I believe that this is a situation that stands in the way of inclusion and a sense of belonging in a place. If you are asking people to fit in, to feel at home here and then you tell them, ‘You don’t have a say in how we organise ourselves here’, then these people say, ‘Well, how am I supposed to feel at home here?’” (interview by Álvarez Enríquez, 2013: 14).

While access to the right to vote is especially restricted, entrée into other less formal spheres such as participation in the Council’s advisory boards, plebiscites and referendums is more open. In these cases, the condition for inclusion is registration in the municipal census rather than nationality or legal residence. Particularly interesting in this regard is the Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council, which was established in 1997 as a consequence of the participation of the Barcelona City Council in a project funded by the European Commission, *Local Integration/Partnership Action Programme* (LIA), through the Eurocities network. The way in which this participation was promoted, however, was inspired by the municipal councils that had been set up in Barcelona in the mid-1980s to deal with questions of urban policy (Fauser 2008: 139).

At present, the Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council consists of 58 entities, mostly immigrant organisations (Pla de Treball del Consell Municipal d’Immigració 2012-15). Recently, this Council has also opened up to social entities that are not immigrant organisations but that do belong to the Reception Network. Nevertheless, it has been established that their representation cannot exceed 25 per cent of the entities comprising the Council. Furthermore, the Immigration Council includes representatives of the political parties making up the City Council and municipal workers in the field (who may speak but do not have voting rights). If analysed in the Spanish context, the Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council stands out in giving special representation to immigrant organisations. For example, the Foro Nacional de Integración (National Integration Forum), which performs similar functions at the national level, only includes one third of the immigrant organisations while the rest is comprised of the public administration and social organisations, including trade unions. However, it should be noted that the Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council is not an “ethnic” forum seeking a composition in keeping with quotas based on national or ethnic/cultural groups. Any organisation comprised by immigrants and functioning within Barcelona can take part (Fauser, 2008: 140).

The Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council holds two plenary sessions per year. The members also elect a permanent commission (with ten entities) which meets every month and *de facto* decides what work is to be carried out by the different working parties. Notable among these is the recently created Commission for Urgent Opinion which can make known a shared position of the Council on current issues that are deemed

to be strategic. The Immigration Council basically serves a dual function. From the City Council's standpoint, it makes it possible to open up a space for direct communication with the main people concerned. For the immigrants' organisations, it functions as a space of information and for managing their needs as well as one for deliberation and evaluation of the policies directly affecting them (Álvarez Enríquez 2013: 13). According to Ramon Sanahuja, its work in scrutinising the administration's policies and practices is particularly important. For example, when the number of requests for "rootedness" reports rose steeply in 2009, the City Council's response was significantly delayed. The Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council then published a report which, as Ramon Sanahuja puts it, concludes, "This cannot be, city council. You are taking three months to respond and people are desperate." Sanahuja also says that this paved the way for putting internal pressure to open up a new attention point and speed up the paperwork (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014).

Another action illustrating the Immigration Council's willingness to intervene was one taken recently with regard to the question of irregular immigration. Since, as noted above, the present economic crisis is hampering people's possibilities for regularisation and renewal of the temporary residence permit which, in practice, means more people in an irregular situation, the Immigration Council – as an initiative of the entities – commissioned a legal study with the aim of identifying the "grey areas" of the law that would make it possible to reduce their numbers. Alexia Ballabriga, the coordinator of the Immigration Council for the municipality, stated in an interview that the idea was to "find the loopholes or limits in the regulations in order to ease the way to legal status and ensure that people don't return to an irregular situation, but without breaking the rules" (Barcelona, 12/06/2014). Similarly, Ramon Sanahuja specified, "We aren't going to suggest changes to the Foreigners Law, although we all agree that we'd like to change it, but we are going to make feasible proposals. We've brought together a group of ten lawyers from the entities and they're very good, first-rate. (...) Then we're going to make 50 proposals, and these will be the 50 proposals of Barcelona for avoiding irregular status" (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014). The target audience of the report consists of representatives of the Spanish Government in Catalonia (who manage a major part of the procedures in matters pertaining to the status of aliens), the Generalitat of Catalonia and even the City Council itself, for example with reference to supervision of the municipal census (*padrón*).

Although the Immigration Council is presented as an alternative for political participation by immigrants in Barcelona, the ultimate objective of the City Council is to integrate the immigrants' associations into the city's other councils for example, the Women's Council, or the Youth Council or Citizen's Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona. To return to the words of Ramon Sanahuja, the idea "is to create connections with associations that are not only for immigrants but for cultural or other issues". Nevertheless, this is a slow, difficult process. Although the ultimate aim is that the immigrants' entities will be able to participate on an equal basis in these councils, without needing a specific organisation for themselves, Ramon Sanahuja argues meanwhile that, as long as most foreigners do not enjoy the right to vote, they will need a separate council: "There are people who think we should do away with it. And I say, 'Hang on a moment. Excuse me, but when we're all equal and have the same rights, we'll think about doing away with the council and turning it into something else.' (...) But right now inequality is the case, so we can't let that happen" (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014).

Finally, the other form of political participation is in plebiscites or referendums. When the popular consultation on the independence of Catalonia took place in Barcelona in April 2011 as part of a set of civil society initiatives in different Catalan municipalities, all "residents" in Barcelona, which is to say, every person registered in the municipal census, was invited to take part. This, in fact, has been one of the crucial questions when the possibility of holding an official referendum on the independence of Catalonia was being considered. According to the law, which is now pending the decision of the Constitutional Court, all residents in Catalonia (after a particular period of time) could take part. Now that the referendum seems to be blocked and the Catalan government may call what has been called "plebiscite" (Generalitat of Catalonia)

elections on a single issue vote (whether Catalonia is to be independent or not) there can be no doubt that, in this case – as in any national or regional election – only Spanish nationals will be able to vote. This is no trivial matter for two reasons: the magnitude and repercussions of the matter being put to the vote, and the fact that foreigners represent 15 per cent of Catalonia’s population.

3.2. The socio-economic domain

Labour market

Together with legal advice and language learning, activities for training immigrants and helping them join the workforce are at the heart of reception policies in the city of Barcelona. Although reception programmes aim to guide new arrivals toward “being able to develop by themselves” and “thus to guarantee standardised use of basic guidance services” (2007: 7), in practice and especially in a situation of economic crisis such as that prevailing at present, these services have become not only a way of entering the job market for newcomers but also a (or the only) possibility for other immigrants who have been in the country for some time. In this regard, while these programmes are presented as a particular service for managing the demand by means of officially recognised channels, they presently function as a specific job-training and employability service for the immigrant population, whether they are new arrivals or not.

According to the Report on Reception and Equality of Opportunities (2011), which was produced by the social entities working in the reception programme, the profile of users of this programme’s employability services has greatly diversified in recent years. In addition to the anticipated user, namely the foreigner who has just arrived in the city, these entities also help other kinds of users: women who have come to the city as part of a family migratory project (especially Moroccans and Pakistanis) and who now need to find work because of the crisis; young people, many of them school dropouts who, pushed by the crisis, have decided to join the workforce; and people who have lost their jobs, especially men working in construction and subsidiary companies. These three groups have not needed the reception services until now, partly because they had their own channels for finding work. The report concludes, “These job-finding channels are not very effective and people have to widen their search using other devices such as entities working in the area of employability” (2011: 25).

The chief demands of these groups are work, training and language courses. The social entities making up the reception network in Barcelona offer training sessions providing information about the standard channels of access to the job market, legal help for obtaining recognition of professional qualifications, and short training courses. Referring to the latter, the Report identifies a twofold problem: first, in relation with the demand, the resources seem to be ever-scarcer with waiting lists of over a hundred people for a course and, second, the wide range of profiles among users also raises the need to diversify the existing offer. Hitherto, most courses have focused their efforts on sectors like construction or the hotel industry, but the crisis in these sectors and the very different kinds of people looking for work require a change of perspective in the social entities. The Report also points out that, given the situation of extreme need of large numbers of people being attended to by these services, many of the social entities have “social support resources”, which is to say measures they take to avoid eviction or to guarantee a family’s survival by means of particular kinds of support as starting points before beginning to engage in any kind of employability or job training programme.

Finally, the economic crisis has also had its effect on the demand for language courses. According to the social entities that organise the language-learning programme, one of the results of the crisis is that immigrants now have more time for learning languages, and they consider that having language skills could

boost their employment possibilities. Attending Catalan-language courses is also a necessary step in the procedures for regularising their situation (since, as noted above, completing a Catalan-language course is a basic requisite) via the so-called *arraigo social* (see above). But the Report specifies, “This conception of learning as an official procedure and not as a process has an indirect effect on continuity in course attendance since we often find people who, as soon as they achieve their aims, find work or achieve legal status, cease their training activities” (2011: 29). Another problem mentioned is that the heterogeneity of the students in terms of origins, gender and socioeconomic status is an obstacle to the learning process. This has led many of the social entities to adapt their methodologies and educational materials and to form groups tailored to the characteristics of different kinds of students.

Health care

Although health comes under the jurisdiction of the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia, the Barcelona City Council states that one of its general goals is to “promote the health and wellbeing of all people” (Plan 2012-15: 42) as a condition for attaining equality (one of the priority goals of immigration policy in Barcelona, as noted above). With the promulgation of the [Spanish] Royal-Decree Law 16/2012, which excludes from access to healthcare irregular immigrants and foreigners (including those from EU countries) who are contributing to Social Security, the Generalitat established a special programme so that these people would have access in practice. The programme, however, has increased its number of requisites by comparison with those necessary prior to 2012. For example, people in an irregular situation need to have an income that is lower than the *Renta Mínima de Inserción* (RMI – Minimum Integration Income) and to have been registered in the municipal census for more than three months in order to receive “first level” attention (primary and emergency care, and inclusion in programmes of healthcare interest, for example vaccinations), and a minimum of one year in order to receive specialist medical attention. Moreover, with these additional stipulations, the formal procedures have become more complicated as different institutions are involved and there is sometimes a certain degree of confusion and hence some leeway in each institution’s observance of the rules.

The complexity and, often, uncertainty of the process is what has led the City Council to intervene, in particular by providing information about how to obtain a health card. The social entities in the reception network and also the Barcelona City Council’s Department of Immigration organise sessions for new arrivals to the city at which they are informed about how to obtain access to the health system. According to Ramon Sanahuja, “The great task of these sessions now is to provide information about the health card and especially the legal mess, so when we do the evaluation questionnaires and ask, ‘What is the most important thing we have explained in these sessions?’ everyone answers, ‘Ten out of ten for healthcare information’” (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014). The City Council also distributes leaflets on how to obtain the health card and intervenes in the cases of people who are unable to get a health card. As Ramon Sanahuja puts it, “The Generalitat gives a card to almost everyone but some are excluded, and especially people from the EU countries. The problem is EU people, Italians for example. Italians head the list of nationalities, and Italians with few resources are a very serious problem. (...) When there is a problem of the they-won’t-give-me-a-health-card type, then the answer is ‘Come on, I’ll give you some guidance’, and when we say ‘guidance’ it means that one of our people comes and asks, ‘So, whereabouts did it happen in this primary healthcare centre? What’s the problem?’ and then he goes there and tries to sort it out” (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014).

Education

Once again, education comes under the jurisdiction of the Catalan Government. In Barcelona, however, the public schools are managed by an organism called *Consorti d'Educació de Barcelona* (Barcelona Education Consortium), which is comprised by the Catalan Government (60%) and the Barcelona City Council (40%). This consortium is unique in both Catalonia and Spain. According to a *Consorti* representative, Jaume Prat, the wish of the City Council to be involved in education and the fact that it is title holder of more than a hundred educational centres (mainly preschools, for children from 0-3 years) is what led to the establishment of this mixed organism at the end of the 1990s (interview in Barcelona, 10/06/2014). In practice, the Consortium makes it possible for the Barcelona City Council to have a much greater influence than other town and city councils in running the city's educational centres.

At the same time, Barcelona presents another singular feature (shared with many other Spanish cities) which restricts the public administration's capacity for intervention. Of the 938 educational centres only 402 are public (*Consorti d'Educació de Barcelona* 2013: 8). The rest are private, whether they are partially funded with public money (which defines them as semi-private or charter schools) or not. This not only complicates the work of developing specific programmes in most of the city's educational centres, but it has also meant a very significant degree of segregation among the schools, in which children from low-income families are mainly concentrated in public schools. If one analyses the figures for students of foreign nationality, the segregation is faithfully reproduced. While foreign students account for 12% of all students aged between 3 and 16, they represent more than 22% of the students in public schools and only 5% in private schools. Hence 75% of the foreign students are concentrated in public schools while the figure for students as a whole is only 40% (*Consorti d'Educació de Barcelona* 2013: 20-21).

Since 2004-2005, the Catalan Government has responded to the needs of newly-arrived students in Catalonia by establishing Reception Classrooms, which constitute a complementary educational service aiming "to give quality attention to the basic needs of the newly-arrived student in the emotional aspects, curricular details and also for learning the language used at school" (*Generalitat de Catalunya* 2009: 3). If this is *the* policy for education and immigration in Barcelona's educational centres, the City Council has produced or funded a series of specific projects in the field. First, are those projects which derive from the guidance programme for family reunification and aim to promote incorporation into the educational system of students who have recently been reunited with their families. One example of this is the service called *A l'Estiu Barcelona t'Acull* (Barcelona Welcomes You in Summer, with a budget of 64,082 euros) by means of which the Department of Immigration organises a number of activities over the summer "in order to encourage relations among equals and acquisition of knowledge of Catalan, the local environment, the host society, and use of libraries as a space of closeness to the society, and of other spaces for interaction with other adolescents and young people" (internal document of the Barcelona City Council provided by Ramon Sanahuja).

Another key programme in this area is the service called *Prepara't* (Get Ready, with a budget of 38,000 euros), the aim of which is to identify adolescents aged between 18 and 20 who have been successful at school in their countries of origin, and to help them to continue studying. Ramon Sanahuja describes it as follows, "Now we have a great project called *Prepara't* with 16 teenagers who come here after they've finished their obligatory schooling and who can't sit for the school-leaver exams [because of problems of recognition of their qualifications] and yet they have brilliant academic records. What we do then is to get them ready to go directly into sitting for the university entrance exams. Over three months we give them special classes in small groups of 20-25 people. These are intensive classes to get them ready to do the exams. Well, we have good results. They end up passing and ... well, there aren't many of them, about thirty people... but at least we're doing something, aren't we?" (interview in Barcelona, 10/06/2014).

Second, also noteworthy are those projects which are not directly linked with family reunification but, rather, aim to foster the incorporation of immigrant children and their parents into the school milieu. These are usually initiatives of social entities or the schools themselves and are financed by the Department of Immigration through their educational programme. Some of these endeavours are for particular groups of immigrants, for example the project *Barcelona Xuéxiào* (Barcelona School, with a budget of 4,000 euros) which seeks to encourage the educational progress of Chinese youngsters in the city's schools. Others work with the immigrant population in general but focusing on specific aspects. One such project is *Tothom a l'AMPA* (Everyone in the Parents' Association, with a budget of 8,000 euros), which encourages the participation of parents from immigrant families in parents' associations and, more generally, in the life of educational centres. Other projects such as *Franja Nou Barris* (Nou Barris Neighbourhood, with a budget of 4,000 euros) are concerned with schools in a particular part of the city.

Finally, most of the projects (although not necessarily the larger ones) are financed through the participation and voluntary workers' programme or through the so-called intercultural initiatives. Once again, these are mostly run either by social entities or by the municipal districts in each neighbourhood. In this latter case, there are innumerable initiatives, ranging from training and employability programmes in some neighbourhoods, to projects promoting intercultural interaction through sport, to educational endeavours on cultural diversity, or projects aiming to foster knowledge of the languages of the immigrants' countries of origin. Among all these different ventures Ramon Sanahuja highlighted the *Projecte Rossinyol* (Nightingales Project, with a budget of 7,000 euros). With its origins in the Faculty of Education and Psychology at the University of Girona, this is a mentorship programme whereby university students periodically accompany a student from an immigrant family, showing him or her the city's cultural and leisure spaces in order to speed up the processes of incorporation. More than 100 students are involved in Girona and, in Barcelona, 36. According to Sanahuja, the recipients of the programme are students who "need a bit of a helping hand. (...) They are doing things with the university students for three months, going to have a coffee or to see a film... and there is a methodology for incentivising them to be more autonomous, to have more confidence and to make progress in their studies. The results are spectacular and things are changing! It's also very good for the university students (...) who are discovering a city they've never seen before" (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014).

In total, the Department of Immigration of the Barcelona City Council gives 100,000 euros per year to projects in the educational sphere. To return to Sanahuja's words, "They are small projects, eh, with some 30 or 40 students in a city of 1.2 million people. But since there are a lot of them, they end up like drizzle, as I say, and eventually you get wet" (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014).

Housing

Housing is one of the basic resources (together with education, employment, health and social services) to which every resident in Barcelona should have access. The Report on Reception and Equality of Opportunities (2011) makes explicit reference to housing as a right that is enshrined in the Spanish Constitution (1978), the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia (2006), and the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City (2000). The latter document states, "The municipal authorities endeavour to ensure an appropriate supply of homes and infrastructure for all their inhabitants, without exception, within the limits of their financial resources. They must include measures encompassing the homeless which will guarantee their safety and dignity, as well as safeguard structures for women who are victims of violence or who are attempting to escape from prostitution" (Article XVI). Nevertheless, owing to the present economic crisis, access to housing (and adequate housing) is one of the most serious social problems in Spain today, and it affects both foreigners and Spanish nationals.

The Report on Reception and Equality of Opportunities (2011) notes that the lack of decent housing among foreign residents is related, first, with sub-standard accommodation and overcrowding, usually for large families or single people sharing very small living spaces. Second, the report also concludes that, at the same time, there are increasing numbers of homeless people. Many of them are living in derelict buildings, in unhygienic conditions and without any guarantee of their minimum basic needs being met. In both cases, given the precariousness of their socioeconomic situation, these people have little chance of fulfilling the basic requirements necessary for obtaining social housing (rented or purchased). This means that the great majority are at the mercy of the private market and only a tiny part, namely those in the most extreme situations, end up living in shelter accommodation, halfway housing or other kinds of lodging managed by the social entities. The Report states that this group of people is mainly constituted by immigrant women with children, women victims of trafficking or domestic violence, families in need following harsh eviction procedures, people (mostly from Sub-Saharan countries) who are sleeping rough, former juvenile wards of the court (mainly Moroccan), and people with mental health problems (2011: 87).

Apart from its general social services, which are available to the whole population independently of origin, the Barcelona City Council has two ways of supervising and influencing the housing situation of the foreign population. First, the procedures for family reunification require a housing report produced by the Council detailing living conditions, number of rooms, use of each room and the number of people living at the address of the family reunification applicant. As noted above, this jurisdiction provides the Council with detailed information about the living conditions of the immigrant population. Hence, when the Department of Immigration detects anomalies such as overcrowding, sub-standard housing or unlawful economic activities, it contacts the Housing Department, the neighbourhood institutions, the Municipal Police and other municipal agents so that they can take the necessary administrative, legal and social measures to deal with such situations. If the housing report gives information about the housing conditions and hence makes it possible for action to be taken, at the same time housing anomalies can end up becoming a barrier to family reunification and, *de facto*, lead to denial of the right to live in a family.

Second, in recent years, the Barcelona City Council has engaged in a particular form of intervention in the case of settlement in, or occupation of derelict buildings, mostly by immigrants from Sub-Saharan countries. After a series of evictions in the spring of 2012, the City Council launched the Irregular Settlement Plan (October 2012) with the aim of “fostering the dignity and security of people; promoting civic, neighbourly and social coexistence; taking steps towards eradicating such settlements; working on possible solutions, case by case, for all people concerned; and involving all the relevant branches of administration”. In keeping with these goals, the Plan created the Irregular Settlement Plan Office (to coordinate all activities) and a working group of representatives from all the political parties. In implementing the Plan, following the model used for the reception of new arrivals, the City Council also called upon the services of the Red Cross and the Obra Social La Caixa foundation.

Two years later, the results of the Plan, described by Miquel Esteve – the Council’s Commissioner for Immigration – as the most complete in the area, would seem to be limited (*El Periódico*, 04/01/2014). First, according to the Xarxa de Suport als Assentaments (Settlements Support Network), the City Council has kept its word with regard to offering temporary accommodation to the evicted people. In the beginning of 2014, 134 people were living in municipal lodgings: homeless people’s shelters, pensions and flats supervised by third sector entities. Second, only a dozen of the almost 300 evicted people have managed to achieve legal status. The rest are either in the process of achieving this status or their applications have been turned down. Not having the required documents means no job. In other words, without documentation employability is out of the question. Miquel Esteve says, “Our responsibility [as the City Council] was to offer them social assistance, which we have done and are continuing to do. Now it is up to the [Spanish] Government Delegation to respond”. The people affected by this situation say that, until the problem of documentation is resolved, and this depends on the Spanish state, the basic problem will

persist. According to a representative of the Poble Nou Neighbourhood Association, “The only people who will find a solution are those whose documents are in order. The rest remain in the same or even worse circumstances. The municipal Plan has made some progress but only for a minority” (*El Periódico*, 04/01/2014).

Apart from the City Council’s programmes, the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH – Anti-Eviction Platform), a grassroots, assembly-based movement fighting for housing rights, has been particularly important for evicted people or those in the process of being evicted. The PAH, which was established in Barcelona in 2009, and presently with some 200 branches all over Spain, brings together people who are finding it difficult to pay their mortgages or who are now facing foreclosure proceedings and others who sympathise with them. It is defined as “a group of people who, unaffiliated with any political party, recognises that [...] the present legal framework is designed to ensure that the banks collect debts while at the same time the law gives no protection to people with mortgages who are unable to cover their payments due to unemployment or rising fees or interest” (PAH website). Among other services, the PAH offers legal advice and also a political space for discussion, learning and participation. In particular, the PAH has helped (especially at the onset of the crisis) immigrant families, either because of their difficult socioeconomic position or their much more limited support network. How the PAH has provided this support to the immigration, how the immigrant population has become involved, and how it participates in the PAH is yet to be studied in detail (one of the first inquiries into these themes has been carried out by Suárez 2014).

3.3. The cultural-religious domain

Cultural diversity

The Barcelona City Council defines its immigration and diversity policies as interculturalist. The Plan Barcelona Interculturalitat (Barcelona Interculturality Plan) states that the challenge of this policy is to strike a balance “between unity and diversity which would combine knowledge of and respect for differences while at the same time emphasising the shared bonds that unite us more than the things that separate us” (Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat 2010: 4-5). As mentioned in Section 2.1., this approach is organised under three main headings: 1) the principle of equality, with real equality of rights and duties, and social opportunities for all men and women citizens; 2) the principle of recognising diversity, with the explicit desire not only to value diversity but to benefit from the opportunities it offers; and 3) the principle of positive interaction, with special emphasis on the “common, shared aspects that unite us” starting from “contact, mutual knowledge and dialogue” (Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat 2010: 6).

This focus, while providing a framework for the City Council’s immigration policies in general, is particularly concerned with policies that are directly aimed at promoting cultural diversity. The definition cited above continues to specify that promoting cultural diversity from an intercultural perspective means “promoting and supporting projects that make visible and show the value of the city’s cultural diversity with the aim of fostering mutual knowledge, interaction and exchange”, for example through grants giving priority to those projects that emphasise shared knowledge and cultural exchanges, or which work for inclusion of the festivals of different immigrant groups in the city’s calendar of festivals. Moreover, in its project of promoting cultural diversity “on the basis of the city’s cultural heritage”, the City Council’s aim is to encourage knowledge of Barcelona’s own history and cultural heritage, by means of exhibitions or incorporating references to these subjects into the content of language courses or reception sessions for new arrivals, *inter alia* (Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat 2011: 35-6).

In Ramon Sanahuja's view, all the City Council's policies should be imbued with the intercultural perspective, from urban planning projects in public space to cultural policy in general as well as policies in the domain of education (interview in Barcelona, 28/05/2014). In practice, however, the Barcelona Interculturality Plan has taken the form of a series of programmes initiated and mainly carried out by the Department of Immigration. First, a series of projects promoting exchanges and relations from the standpoint of cultural diversity have been funded via the Plan. These include endeavours ranging from working with secondary school students to organise classes on antiracist cinema, to musical and sports projects fostering relations among young people of different origins, projects encouraging the use of libraries and others that stimulate reflection and debate on intercultural coexistence in the city. These projects are mainly the work of social entities and, more recently, of municipal neighbourhood institutions and a range of municipal facilities (for example libraries).

Second, the Espai Avinyó was established in 2011, this being defined as "a space of knowledge, exchange and intercultural reflection on the diversity of different forms of cultural expression in the city" (Espai Avinyó website). It should be pointed out that Espai Avinyó was created in collaboration with the Consorci per a la Normalització Lingüística (Consortium for Linguistic Standardisation), which aims to promote Catalan language learning. Both the Generalitat and the City Council are represented in the Consortium. In this regard, Espai Avinyó has a dual function in response to the twofold aim of the interculturality policies. The first is to make cultural diversity visible. This is done by means of organising cultural events open to the all members of the public with a view to "improving knowledge of the different types of cultural expression which now coexist in Barcelona" (interview in Barcelona with Adriana Casas, a representative from Espai Avinyó, 03/07/2014). These initiatives include, for example, sessions about foreign businesswomen in Barcelona, concerts by neighbourhood intercultural choirs, or screenings of documentaries on the reality of immigrant life in Barcelona. The second function is to promote knowledge of the Catalan language and of the local milieu. In order to achieve this, a series of cultural activities are organised for students who are attending the Consortium's Catalan language classes. The representative from Espai Avinyó cited above described these as being sessions concerned with four main areas: popular Catalan culture, cultural diversity in the city, history and cultural heritage, and anti-rumours or, in other words, activities that refute the typical stereotypes about immigration in Barcelona. Since these initiatives are geared for the Consortium's students, they are organised in Catalan.

Religious diversity

In 1992 Barcelona had to create an inter-religious centre (which was called Centro Abraham) to meet the needs of the different religious faiths represented at the Olympic Games that year. The Centre was subsequently dissolved but the experience led in 1998 to the founding of the Centre Interreligiós de Barcelona (Barcelona Inter-religious Centre) and this eventually became the Oficina d'Afers Religiosos (Office for Religious Affairs). While it always came under the auspices of the Regidoria de Drets Civils (Department of Civil Rights) of the Barcelona City Council, the management of the Centre was taken over by the Catalan UNESCO Interfaith Association in 2004 and the Bayt-al-Thaqafa Foundation in 2013. According to Griera (2012), Barcelona was the first Catalan (and Spanish) city council to promote a proactive approach to religious minorities.

In 2009 the Catalan Law on Centres of Religious Worship (16/2009), which had the threefold aim of making it easier to practise the right of freedom of worship, to support municipal councils in their guaranteeing of this right, and to ensure the proper conditions of security and hygiene in places of worship, gave local governments a leading role in the management of religious diversity. For example, the law made it obligatory for municipal councils to set aside urban land for uses of a religious nature, and also gave them

powers to issue municipal licences for opening and the use of centres of religious worship. This led many town and city councils to draft policy for managing religious diversity for the first time.

Griera classifies the main areas of activity of the Barcelona City Council's Office of Religious Affairs under four main headings. One of the Office's first goals was to create a regularly updated database with basic information concerning the main religious groups established in the city. Since 2005 it has also been publishing an electronic bulletin "to make known the range of religious traditions and practices present in Barcelona (...) and to publicise the activities of religious entities" (El Correu de l'OAR 2012: 5). The second aim is to defend the right to religious freedom. In this regard, "the bureau works as a 'defender' of religious minority rights in relation to the other departments of the city council by promoting a transversal policy [that is] more responsive to the needs and problems of religious minorities" (Griera 2012: 582). In practice, this essentially means advising them and guiding them in the process of creating centres of religious worship, for example by mediating between communities and urban planning specialists in the council concerned, or helping them to gain access to municipal facilities for support in festivities and special events. In an interview, the director of the Office, Cristina Monteys, drew attention to the resistance of staff in charge of municipal facilities to ceding their use for religious purposes: "The people in charge of local facilities often tell them that they can't let them use the space because this is a religious activity and the facility is for non-religious use. (...) Even when they know they can't say no, they try to dodge responsibility in the matter" (interview in Barcelona, 12/06/2014).

The Office also seeks to integrate religious minorities in the city's cultural and social life. Among other activities, it organises events to encourage net-working, to supply information about possible sources of funding, or to incentivise the participation of religious leaders in different city forums. Finally, Griera's fourth category of the work of the Office of Religious Affairs is favouring the role of inter-religious platforms, for example by empowering interfaith leaders to intervene in mediation of local conflicts such as residents' complaints about a centre of worship or, to give another example, in specific crises like the Danish cartoon affair. In an interview carried out for the purposes of the present report, the director of the Office made it clear that there is no inter-religious board and, in fact, representation and discussion with the different religions take place in a relatively informal manner: "The question of discussion is complicated. There is no inter-religious board. There are significant differences of criteria, in particular with regard to proportionality. Some people wanted to make representation proportional with the population but this would produce a very lopsided board (...)". In practice some entities present themselves as mouthpieces for a particular religious faith when they do not in fact represent the set of members of that faith (interview in Barcelona, 12/06/2014).

Anti-discrimination

The Barcelona City Council's anti-discrimination policy is structured around two main lines. First, the Oficina per la No-Discriminació (OND – Office for Non-Discrimination) was established in 1998 within the newly-created Department for Civil Rights. According to the director of the OND, Lupe Pulido, the Department had its beginnings in the 1990s as the initiative of a minority of local politicians who were inspired by the US model for the defence of civil rights after a trip to San Francisco (interview in Barcelona, 17/06/2014). The Office was constructed within the Department in order to deal with specific cases of discrimination. At present, its aims are: mediating in cases of complaints about discrimination, providing information, consciousness-raising and training people in all matters pertaining to equality of rights and the different areas of discrimination; offering legal advice for processing complaints about discrimination; and acting as an observatory of violations of human rights in Barcelona.

While complaints concerning discrimination because of origin represent a significant part of the total (41%), the OND works on all kinds of discrimination in matters of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, state of health, disability, age and economic and social situation (OND 2013: 8). According to Lupe Pulido, the working method always starts out from the specific conflict, “analysing and evaluating the facts, making proposals and seeking agreement with the parties concerned”. She defines it in the following terms: “our work is handcrafted. We make a dress for every situation.” Together with conflict mediation, training of the people involved is considered to be a basic element. In 2013, 751 people were trained, 45% of them in the domain of secondary schooling. Although more than 50% of the complaints were levelled against the administration, only 6% of professional staff in the administration received training (OND 2013: 5). This brings to light the difficulty of acting inside other areas and departments of the administration. As Lupe Pulido puts it, “We come up against a lot of resistance. It is very difficult to come to agreement and to ensure that we are not the ones who are going to be giving lessons. On the contrary, it’s about how to go about it so that all of us can do things” (interview in Barcelona, 17/06/2014).

The second line of action in the area of non-discrimination is the anti-rumours strategy carried out by the Department of Immigration as part of the Barcelona Interculturality Programme. This strategy starts out from the assumption that the origin of prejudice is ignorance and therefore the best way of “preventing and combating these stereotypes is by means of information and debate among the citizens” (Plan Barcelona Interculturalitat 2010: 42). Hence the aim of the programme is to counter rumours about “immigration” by circulating messages in the media, graphic material (for example comics) and advertising campaigns in the city. The 2012-14 Anti-Rumours Plan of Action identifies four main areas of work: training (in the administration, associations and in the business sphere), education (influencing educational plans and working directly with students), consciousness-raising (by creating spaces that act as meeting points) and action tailored to the media (promoting diversity and with training courses for media staff). In order to implement the strategy, the Red Barcelona Antirumores (Barcelona Anti-Rumours Network) was created in the summer of 2010 and is presently constituted by the Barcelona City Council and more than 400 entities, associations and individuals.

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the 1990s, when the foreign population in Barcelona barely reached 2%, the City Council began to work on its own immigration and diversity policy. This was a predecessor of legal frameworks subsequently developed at the national and Autonomous Region levels. Broadly speaking, this policy is notable for the emphasis it has given to promoting rights and equality of opportunity for all residents in the city (independently of their legal status) and its recognition of cultural diversity as something intrinsic to and positive for the city. After the 2008-2011 Plan, these two policy lines were embraced within the framework of the interculturalist approach, which was organised around the three principles of equality, recognition of diversity and positive interaction. At the same time, as pointed out earlier in the present report, the emphasis given by interculturalism to the “shared and common aspects that unite us” made it possible to combine both recognition of cultural differences and defence of the Catalan culture and language.

If the Barcelona City Council’s policies are considered in terms of practice, the main issues to be analysed are what policies have been implemented, or can be implemented at the local level, and what function the Barcelona City Council has performed *vis-à-vis* national and regional policies. The first conclusion to be drawn here is the fundamental role the City Council has played in implementing several administrative processes related with different aspects of immigration. Although the Spanish Constitution gives the state

exclusive competence over matters of “nationality, immigration, emigration, status of aliens, and right of asylum”, management of registration in the municipal census (*padrón*) and the writing of reports on social integration (“rootedness”) and housing give the municipal councils a leading role in immigration procedures related with arrival and reception, regularisation and family reunification. In managing these administrative processes, the Barcelona City Council has been particularly inclusive, for example by permitting registration in the municipal census of people with no fixed address, and showing flexibility in its interpretation of the requirement of knowledge of the Catalan language when immigrants need to obtain a positive social integration report. This has basic implications for the legal status of the foreign population, respect for their rights and their access to social services.

The Barcelona City Council also plays an essential role in informing and advising immigrants about different administrative processes, including regularisation of their legal status, renewal of the residence permit, family reunification and obtaining a health care card. Although the municipal councils do not “officially” participate in managing these processes, constant changes in procedure and stipulations concerning the documents that must be presented, increasing difficulty of communication with the administration, tougher criteria in evaluation of documents that need to be presented, and ever-greater obstacles to “getting papers” without a stable job contract, have influenced the Barcelona City Council to act not only as a party providing information but also as mediator with an opaque, inaccessible administration. However, it does not perform this latter function directly since the service is offered through social entities and financed by the Council via projects.

As for political participation, the right to vote in local elections is restricted to Spanish nationals, European citizens and citizens from countries with reciprocity agreements with Spain. As a Catalan politician recently remarked, this has created a major “problem” and is a “constraint” on any local policy in this domain. If the Barcelona Municipal Immigration Council aims to give a voice to people who do not have one, then it is also necessary to ask to what extent it manages to fulfil its dual function, first of opening up a direct space of communication with the immigrant population and, second, of providing a space of information and management of needs for the immigrant organisations. The interviews carried out as part of this project suggest that, in practice, the Council would seem to be particularly concerned about complying with the tasks of evaluating and monitoring administrative policies and practices. For example, when the Immigration Council was faced with a backlog in managing the social integration reports, or when the numbers of immigrants in an irregular situation have been rising due to increasing difficulties in obtaining legal status or renewing residence permits, the Council has issued a number of reports condemning the situation and suggesting possible responses by the different branches of administration involved.

The municipality has played a wide-ranging role with regard to policies in the socioeconomic domain. As noted above, with regard to health, its function has basically been that of informing immigrants and guiding them through administrative procedures (in order to obtain a health care card) which, since 2012, have become increasingly complex owing to more and more requirements, the involvement of different institutions, and a certain amount of leeway in policy implementation. In the educational sphere, the Council has introduced a set of small initiatives with the aim of complementing the educational policy of the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia with projects which, on the one hand, encourage and prompt people to think about cultural diversity and, on the other, ease the incorporation into Catalan society of newly arrived students and their families. Finally, the role of the City Council in the areas of housing and the job market would appear to be filling a gap that is not covered or weakly covered by national policies or those of the Autonomous Region of Catalonia.

The housing reports required for family reunification furnish municipal councils with direct information about the living conditions of the foreign population and hence the possibility of intervening in case of need. Although this is an important area of intervention, it is also true that housing is a matter which,

although it is recognised as a basic right, has been governed (almost) exclusively by the demands of the market. This is also true of the Barcelona City Council. In a recently published report, Caritas has denounced the fact that in Catalonia there are some 230,000 families in need of “rented housing at an accessible price” while, at the same time, it is estimated that there are some 450,000 empty homes: 100,000 of these are in the hands of financing entities, another 80,000 are new dwellings which have not yet been put on the market, and 270,000 are private homes (*La Vanguardia*, 14/10/2014). Another issue is that of settlement in, or occupation of derelict buildings which, since 2012, has placed the Barcelona City Council at the heart of a bigger question, that of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, most of whom have been moved by the Spanish state from detention centres at the border and who are now barely scraping by, sleeping rough and almost totally without any prospect of obtaining legal status. In this case, while the Council might offer lodgings and the chance of taking part in training or employability courses, the fact of their not having legal status (which depends on the Spanish state) is an insurmountable barrier.

Policies concerning training and employability reveal how the present economic crisis and, almost certainly, the malfunctioning of the official employment services have meant that municipal reception programmes for new arrivals have become an alternative for the immigrant population in general. Besides providing information about official channels of access to the job market, the Council offers legal advice concerning recognition of educational qualifications, short training courses lasting a few hours, and language classes (Catalan or Spanish) with a view to increasing immigrants’ chances of finding work or obtaining a favourable social integration report in order to regularise. Nearly all these services, from legal advice for obtaining a health care card through to programmes in the spheres of education, housing, training and employability, are offered by social entities and funded by the City Council by way of projects. In this regard, one might conclude that many local immigration policies are in fact implemented by social and immigrants’ organisations.

Finally, religious and cultural policies stand out for belonging mainly to the local milieu. Although promotion of cultural diversity is regarded as a transversal endeavour, involving all departments of the City Council, policy in this area is basically implemented by the Department of Immigration. On the one hand the Department funds projects (once again produced and carried out by social and immigrants’ organisations) which promote “interaction in diversity” and, on the other, it runs a series of cultural activities (mostly from *Espai Avinyó*) combining promotion of the city’s cultural diversity with knowledge of the (Catalan) language and Catalonia in general. As for management of religious diversity, attention was first given to religious minorities in the 1990s within the framework of the right to religious freedom upheld by the Civil Rights Department. The City Council’s work through the Office of Religious Affairs has mostly been concerned with defending the rights of religious minorities (for example establishing their own places of worship, or having access to municipal facilities for festivities or special events) when dealing with other departments of the Council. Furthermore, the Civil Rights Department established the Office for Non-Discrimination which, since the end of the 1990s, has been working on issues of discrimination (in all spheres). Its tasks include conflict mediation and training of the parties involved in a conflict. Much more recently, the Immigration Department has introduced a programme for combating rumours about “immigration”. In this case, the discourse is less concerned with civil rights than with promoting intercultural coexistence.

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