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# Migration Rescaling in Catalonia

## Cause or Consequence?

by Luis Garzón

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### 1. Introduction

This paper analyzes settlement patterns of migrants in Catalonia through the perspective of rescaling. The definition of rescaling we use in this paper departs from a perspective combining the works of Light [2002; 2005; 2009] and Glick Schiller [2003; 2007]. Following the introduction to this issue as written by Barberis and Pavolini [2015], we define rescaling as a process of territorial repositioning and restructuring of urban areas also linked to relocation of migrants at national, regional and city scale.

Catalonia, a wealthy region located in northeastern Spain. Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, and an increasingly connected metropolis. In recent years, migrants, who traditionally settled in the inner city, have come to live in neighboring towns. In this paper we analyze the reasons for this specific case of rescaling and the consequences of rescaling regarding the relationships between migrants and locals.

We will examine the link between rescaling in Catalonia and the context of the current economic crisis. Our thesis is that in the case of Catalonia, migration rescaling is happening mostly due to the pull effect of local labor markets. Therefore, migrants who are settling in smaller towns are going there in order to work in jobs that are substantially different from the jobs that can be found in big cities like Barcelona.

There are several perspectives on migration rescaling. According to the interpretation of Barberis and Pavolini [*ibidem*] in the introduction to this special issue,

the findings made by Light [2009] on migrant mobility could be interpreted through the lens of urban rescaling processes. Light [*ibidem*] defines rescaling as a process resulting from the saturation of the housing market in big cities. Whenever housing in big cities reaches a point of saturation, migrants will move to smaller towns, moving away from the big city. In this perspective, migration rescaling is defined as an effect of the deflection of migration from cities due to rising rents [*ibidem*]. On the other hand, other scholars maintain that certain local factors drive specific types of migration toward certain cities, creating different scales of migration [Glick Schiller 2009]. Our case study, focused on the Catalan town of Manresa, will be contrasted with these two interpretations of rescaling, examining to what extent we follow more closely Light's interpretation on rescaling or Glick Schiller's. Barberis & Pavolini [2015] point to the importance of regional variations of rescaling.

The structure of the paper is as follows:

a) A brief theoretical introduction on the concept of rescaling, presenting the different theoretical strands on migration and urban rescaling, including those attributing rescaling either to push factors (related to the flight from central cities), or to pull factors (related to the local economies and urban dynamics of the receiving towns);

b) A section on migration in Catalonia, considering factors related to the local labor market;

c) A section on the geographical distribution of migrants in the Catalan territory;

d) A case study focused on the town of Manresa, located near the geographical center of Catalonia, and the ongoing migration rescaling in the town;

e) An analysis of the link between migration rescaling processes and rise of xenophobia in Catalonia;

f) Concluding remarks on the effects of rescaling in Catalonia.

## **2. Socio-Spatial Configurations and Rescaling Processes.**

Foreign migrants traditionally settled in the migrant neighborhoods of big capital cities all around the world. This is how the “dual cities” [Sassen 1991] were created: through an influx of migrant workers that arrived to the city, incorporated into the vast urban labor market and found jobs, contributing to the development of the urban fabric as well as the urban economy.

In the last third of the Twentieth century, suburbanization processes meant migrants started to flee congested main cities towards smaller towns. In the United

States, these were the suburbs surrounding the cities. Middle class areas where successful migrants could forget the congested and crime-ridden inner city [Jones 1995] became the new haven for those professionals. In Europe the process has been different. Urban configurations in Europe tend to display the opposite pattern than in the U.S., meaning that the city center becomes gentrified and houses upwardly mobile professionals, while the working classes live in the so-called dormitory towns, where locals and migrants alike share and compete for crowded urban space.

Urban configurations in European cities may have an impact either in driving migrants away from the inner city or attracting them to the city center. In this respect, Kesteloot [2005] points out the difference between dramatic and topologic cities. Urban configurations and the place of migrants in them are grounded in changes in economic cycles. Kesteloot argues that in contemporary cities we witness an increase in social exclusion due to the decline in opportunities of stable integration in the labor market, difficulties of state redistribution and the decline of traditional social ties due to processes of individualization.

Gentrification processes in central cities are driving away working classes and poor immigrants, who are increasingly compelled to move to peripheral neighborhoods and neighboring towns. Kesteloot defines a socio-spatial configuration as the material environment in which a given social group is reproduced. The opposing forces of suburbanization and gentrification are examined as causing changes in socio-spatial configurations of cities and the location of immigrant within them [*ibidem*].

Different socio-spatial configurations have emerged in European cities. In the city of Milan, Italy, the upper classes have remained in the inner city while migrants settled in the working class suburbs of the metropolitan belt. On the other hand, Belgian cities have the migrants living in the impoverished inner city while the suburbs are the home for the middle classes [*ibidem*]. According to Kesteloot, the typical urban configuration of Fordism was the “dramatic city,” where the rich would go to live on the suburbs and the poor in the inner city, whereas in Europe we find topologic cities, where the rich live near the center and the poor live in working class suburbs.

However, in order to understand differences in rescaling processes between American and European cities, it is essential to understand that research on rescaling first appeared in the United States. In the U.S. context, as Light [2005] points out, migrants are forced to choose between either settling in the deteriorating inner city or leave the city altogether. Contrastingly, in Europe, migrants have the possibility to settle in the surrounding working class suburbs, remaining in the metropolitan area.

Today in Southern European cities, four types of populations share the urban space. First, we find the inhabitants who have lived in the city for years but are

dwindling due to suburbanization processes. Second, there are commuters, who only work in the city but live on the edges of it. Third, the tourists, and fourth are the city users, who arrive to the city to use private and public places [Martinotti, 2005]. Competition over limited urban space causes displacement of the poorer groups, among them immigrants, and creates new urban configurations [Kesteloot, 2005]. Kesteloot considers that the competition over urban space can develop either into a repressive city or a negotiated city. The urban configuration known as the repressive city generates fear and insecurity among the poorest sectors of the population.

In the case of Catalonia, however, change in socio-spatial configurations and the relocation of urban populations is made even more complex by geography itself, which limits the dwelling choices of both locals and immigrants alike and may constitute an important factor in urban rescaling. As a city surrounded entirely by mountains and the sea, the suburbs of Barcelona are not exactly part of the city, even if public transport connections are fine. As near as 30 km away from Barcelona (the example of Sabadell); we are already outside the metropolitan area of Barcelona.

The debate on socio-spatial configurations is relevant to rescaling. Two main strands of rescaling theory connect migration and rescaling: the works by Ivan Light and those by Nina Glick Schiller.

Ivan Light [2002; 2004; 2008] analyzes changes in settlement patterns of migrants. Drawing from the U.S. experience, Light covers internal flows of foreign migrants from big cities (New York and Los Angeles) to inland areas. He focuses mainly on Mexican and Asian communities and concludes that both communities have moved to other locations looking for cheaper housing and wanting to be set free from congested cities. However, Light finds Mexicans moving to cheaper and less desirable locations than Asians. Mexicans are compelled to move to smaller towns more frequently than Asians because they are considered to “saturate” faster the urban environment.

“Our empirical results support the hypothesis that a high-volume, network-driven long-term migration of low-income people saturates absorption capacity in prime network destinations, thus precipitating migratory dispersal.” [Light 2008, 13-14].

Light apparently treats as a given the notion of saturation, as if it were a mechanical consequence where agency was not involved. Light arrives at the conclusion that migrants leaving big cities are moved more by push than by pull factors. The downside of the argument is that it does not acknowledge changes in migration and labor legislation and the labor market.

On the other hand, Nina Glick-Schiller and Ayse Çağlar [2009] focus on local labor markets, which generate ethnic market niches for migrants. Their emphasis on

local economies provides a reason for migrants to settle in certain locations: because there are jobs waiting for them. This is the case for example, of Northern Italy, where small-scale industry has been gradually abandoned by local youth, opening vacancies that have been filled by young, undocumented migrants that accept lower wages than locals. Disinvestment or changes in investment in cities prompts changes in spatial relationship.

“In migration studies, cities, if approached comparatively and within a global perspective, can serve as important units of analysis in exploring the interface between migrants’ pathways of incorporation and the materialization of broader neoliberal processes.” [Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009: 179].

Glick Schiller & Çağlar criticize sociological perspectives isolating local migration processes from global trends. Municipalities are embedded in hierarchical scales and dynamics prevalent in “gateway cities,” in their view, should not be considered universal. Smaller towns will have lower scales of migration.

Globalization has prompted concentration of economic activities in certain locations, making it more feasible to restructure production and assign specific human resources to work in specialized towns. Specialization of municipalities is part of urban rescaling processes, always connected with migration. Local authorities reshape their towns to attract certain types of investment [*ibidem*].

Scale does not necessarily equate size, as cities with a smaller population may be more important than others by virtue of housing international institutions. That would be the case of Brussels in Belgium and of Geneva in Switzerland. Urban scale is connected with the relevance of cities and towns for the global economy:

- a) Top Scale: Global cities like New York or London.
- b) Up-Scale: Cities that have undergone urban reform recently.
- c) Low Scale: Towns with little relevance for the global economy.
- d) Down-scale: Declining towns where economic activities are being abandoned.

In the following sections of the paper we will be focusing mostly on low-scale towns in Catalonia. Low scale towns are characterized by receiving migration flows but not being able to build a cosmopolitan ambiance. Hence, a strong housing segregation and also concentration of migrant populations in very specific labor niches is produced. The main employment niche for migrants in low-scale towns lies in small businesses, which were previously owned and tended by locals and today owned and tended by members of certain migrant communities. Shops owned by migrants end up catering not only to them, but also to impoverished locals. The possible range of pathways of incorporation for migrants is narrower in these towns than in upscale

cities, prompting further competition between migrants and locals. My stance is that pull factors are more important than push factors in explaining why migrants settle in certain locations. I would agree with Glick Schiller and Çağlar that rescaling is dependent on contexts, where location changes have both local and global implications regarding the incorporation of migrants. It is local industries and the local labor market that entices foreign migrants to settle in a certain place. Housing plays a role in rescaling, of course, but only secondarily and deriving from local labor markets, which are the main driving forces behind the demand for migrants and hence the main factor in determining settlement of migrants in specific locations.

### **3. Rescaling in Catalonia**

The following sections of the paper are devoted to the analysis of the specific situation of Catalonia. We will begin by describing the territorial organization of Catalonia, a northeastern region of Spain. Following the description of Catalonia, we will address briefly the issue of migrant distribution in this territory. We would like to point out that the analysis hereby is focused on the specific situation in Catalonia with no intention to offer a general theory of migrant rescaling for other countries and regions. In other countries, where different socio-spatial configurations exist, we would find different outcomes.

#### **3.1. *The Territorial Organization of Catalonia***

Catalonia is an Autonomous Community (region) located in northeast Spain, divided into 4 provinces: Barcelona, Tarragona, Girona and Lleida. There is another geographic division, “comarca” (county). Some “comarcas” have a greater share of foreign population than Barcelona, even if absolute figures are minor. Due to its location, Catalonia has been a stopover location on north-south routes between northern Europe and the Maghreb. These routes are still visible today, as Catalonia receives both European migration (mostly upper-middle class northern Europeans looking for warmer weather) and migration from Africa (low-skilled workers).

The capital city of Barcelona could be defined as an upscale city, as it is well connected with international networks and receives both skilled and unskilled migration. In contrast, other Catalan towns are suffering population loss (of locals) that can only be replaced by migrants willing to work for lower wages in declining activities.

Catalonia has received more foreign migrants in the last ten years than in all the Twentieth century. According to Bayona & Gil [2010], 70% of population growth

in Spain since 1996 has been a direct result of migration. Catalan municipalities do have small-scale economies (based on Small and Medium Enterprises) that allow for a substantial demand of migrant inflows. There is substantial evidence that Catalan towns have allowed, at least prior the crisis, for foreign migrants to find jobs in shops and factories [Valls Molina & Brunet Vega 2001; Bayona & Gil 2010].

Local economies influence migration rescaling through job creation. Jobs in economic sectors, which thirty years ago were occupied by local workers (retail, industry, agriculture), are now still there thanks to the arrival of foreign migration. Low-skilled service jobs experienced labor shortages in the first years of the Twenty-first century while demand for personal services has been increasing due to the incorporation of local women into professional positions [Parella 2005]. Therefore, a niche for migrant women available to work as maids, caregivers and cleaners was created. While migrant women found jobs mainly as maids, their male counterparts encountered what at that point seemed to be a goldmine: the construction industry.

Construction has always been a thriving sector in Spain. Spain is one the countries of the European Union with a higher share of home ownership [Martinez Veiga 1999], as an effect of long-term policies. The apex of that policy orientation was the proclamation, in 2002 and under the government of the PP (Popular Party), of the so-called “Law of Soil” (Law 345/2002), which allowed local authorities to redraw criteria for building permits. This was thought of mainly as an opportunity to boost local revenues for municipalities. The law provided strong development in the building sector and jobs for locals and immigrants alike.

The speed of change in migration patterns singles out Southern Europe. Whereas Southern European countries have received mass foreign migration before being able to develop a comprehensive migration policy, countries in Central and Northern Europe had the time (in the 1950s and 1960s) to devise migration policies before the numbers of migrants began to increase at an exponential rate. This is the reason that has been given by some researchers to explain the absence of a model of migrant incorporation in Spain, which contrasts with the polar opposites of Multiculturalism in the UK and Anglo-speaking countries and Universalism in France and French-speaking countries, which generate contrasting models of incorporation for migrants [Moreno Fuentes 2005; 2012; King 2002; Peixoto *et al.* 2012; Todd 2002].

Technology and globalization have played an important part in speeding up migration. Half a century ago, when countries such as the UK, France or Belgium received numbers of foreign migrants, migration was still largely a permanent situation, as flying overseas was not cheap or frequent. Furthermore, contacts between migrants and their home countries were reduced to occasional letters, which took



months to arrive, if they did.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, migration flows were slower to arrive, slower to settle and also slower to move on to new locations when there were problems in the place of first settlement. This faster pace of migration has to be taken into account when analyzing migration rescaling in Southern Europe.

Migration rescaling in Catalonia has been the product of two factors that are specific to migration regimes in Southern European countries (Spain, Italy, Greece). The first is the high speed of migration processes. The second is the existence of labor market niches associated with low skilled jobs that locals are deserting. The combination of both factors tends to disperse migration.

The migrant rate in Catalonia at the beginning of the 1990s was around 2%, while today it is 17.5% with some neighborhoods in Barcelona being around 35%, and this is in spite of long-term migrants who obtained Spanish citizenship in the interim, ceasing to be registered as migrants, and people who returned to their countries of origin.

Barcelona has been the first and foremost point of entry for foreign migrants in Catalonia. Specifically in the “*Casc Antic*” (Old City) central neighborhood, migrants from Morocco first settled [Moreras 1999]. Furthermore, back in the 1970s Barcelona was the preferred entry point of Latin American exiles fleeing the dictatorships in their home countries [Jensen 2007]. The municipal governments of Barcelona have been aware of the changes brought by migration. Local government was in the hands of the PSC (Socialist Party) from 1980 until 2011 when the Catalan nationalist coalition CiU (Convergence and Union) took over. Notwithstanding welcoming policies at the municipal level, the interplay between city, regional and national levels has made migration policy-making more complex, as higher levels of administration pushed for migration control while welcoming policies were carried out at the city level. Migration flows peaked in 2008 and, after that year, the number of arrivals began to diminish, even if the overall percentage of migrants kept increasing. The immigration rate in Catalonia was 15.7% in January 2011 [cf. Idescat.cat]: that was the first year that migration rates dropped (– 1.1%) since the beginning of the 1990s.

Decrease in migration rates has been especially pronounced among men. The main reason lies in the employment opportunities available for migrants in the Catalan economy, most of them related to domestic work, in jobs related to cleaning and care, which are mostly feminized. Furthermore, unemployment has hit mostly migrants who worked in construction, meaning that in many migrant families the female has

<sup>1</sup> Some classical works of the sociology of migration hinged on letters that immigrants wrote to their homeland and were the only contact and means of communication between the migrant and the home country. The most well-known of these works is, of course, *The Polish Peasant in America* by V.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki [Thomas & Znaniecki 2004].

become the main breadwinner. Obviously, the drop in employment rates among migrants is connected to long-lasting effects of the economic crisis, which is prompting the return of migrants, especially those from Latin America, to their home countries.

### 3.2. *Migration and Population in Catalonia*

Catalan municipalities tend to be relative small. Approximately 80% of them have less than 5,000 inhabitants. The relative weight of small municipalities has been highlighted by Bayona & Gil [2010] as a defining trait of the Catalan territorial model. The small size and high dispersion of Catalan municipalities has important implications for migration rescaling. A territorial model based on small, disperse municipalities is matched by an economic structure driven by Small and Medium Enterprises. Migration demand would be expected to be more reliant in local economies and rescaling to be driven by municipalities themselves and not by the deflection of migration from Barcelona. In fact, quantitative data shows no evidence of a “suburbanization” of migration. There are 85 municipalities with more 10,000 inhabitants, representing a mere 9% of the total number of Catalan municipalities. Almost a half (33) of the bigger municipalities has a share of migrant population higher than 15% (see Table 1). This is the case in Manresa, Sabadell, Vic, Badalona and Mataró. Bayona & Gil point out that demographic loss has been limited by the arrival of foreign migration [*ibidem*]. Urban dispersion has meant that big cities and towns have been shrinking while in smaller towns population was increasing.

TAB. 1. *Catalan Municipalities by Size*

Population	Municipalities	%	% of foreigners	% of total population
Less than 1,000	479	50.6	9.6	2.5
1,001-5,000	259	27.3	11.3	7.9
5,001-10,000	88	9.3	12.0	8.2
10,001-15,000	36	3.8	14.5	5.9
15,001-20,000	22	2.3	15.4	5.1
More than 20,000	63	6.7	17.0	70.4
Total	947	100	15.7	100

Source: *La Immigració en Xifres*, 13, Gencat, 2011

A significant share of foreigners living in smaller municipalities is of European origin (France, Germany or the UK, mainly). Bayona & Gil [*ibidem*] point to the correlation between municipality size and the main migrant communities living in them:

in smaller municipalities we find less Latin American migrants but more Africans while the opposite is true for big cities, where there are more Latin Americans than Africans. This is linked to ethnic labor market niches.

Migration rates are higher in towns based on labor-intensive activities. Agriculture and construction generated labor demand in the last decade. While migrant men found jobs in these sectors, women worked mostly as household cleaners and maids. Therefore, in towns where low-skilled manufacturing or services are strong (e.g. in Guissona, Salt, Badalona and Vic), migrant rates are higher than in Barcelona. Migration has also increased in towns based in retail such as Sabadell or Manresa, with a succession process in retail that transformed some former neighborhood shops into kebabs, bazaars or call centers.

The following Table shows the ten Catalan Municipalities with a higher share of migrants. Most of them have less than 500,000 inhabitants. This fact may suggest rescaling lies more in local economies rather than in links to the big city.

TAB. 2. 10 *Catalan Municipalities with Higher Share of Foreign Population*

Municipality	Province	Population	Foreigners	% of foreigners
Castelló d'Empuries	Girona	11,885	5,941	50%
Guissona	Lleida	6,552	3,269	49.9%
Salt	Girona	30,389	12,930	42.5%
Lloret de Mar	Girona	40,282	16,175	41.6%
Ullà	Girona	1,075	423	39.3%
Sant Pere Pescador	Girona	2,108	813	38.6%
Pratdip	Tarragona	848	324	38.2%
El Perelló	Tarragona	3,336	1,241	37.2%
Salou	Tarragona	26,193	9,712	37.1%
La Jonquera	Girona	3,094	1,082	35%

Source: *La Població Estrangera als Municipis de Catalunya*, 2011

Even though several of the municipalities with a higher share of foreign population are along the coastline (Castelló d'Empuries, Lloret de Mar, Sant Pere Pescador and Salou), the presence of migrants in these places should not be attributed merely to European tourists having a second home, as these same towns generate a pool of low-skilled service jobs often occupied by foreigners. The distribution of towns with a high percentage of migrants is consistent with the typology of Catalan municipalities outlined by Bayona & Gil [*ibidem*], who distinguish four types of areas with a sizable foreign migration:

a) Alt Empordà and Baix Empordà: These areas correspond to the border with France and European migration is predominant.

b) Municipalities in the inner area of Tarragona province, with a high proportion of Africans;

c) Municipalities in the Pyrenees with a significant proportion of Americans and Europeans;

d) Countryside areas in inland Lleida province, with a sizeable population of African migrants working as seasonal workers in agriculture.

On the other hand, the following Table shows the most populated municipalities in Catalonia. The first three are Barcelona and the cities located immediately north and south of Barcelona. The capitals of the other three provinces (Tarragona, Lleida and Girona) have lower migration rates than Barcelona.

The most populated municipalities (Barcelona, Hospitalet de Llobregat and Badalona) form part of the metropolitan area, while Terrasa and Sabadell lie further inland but still in the Barcelona province. The following Figure is a map of Catalonia displaying the ten municipalities with a higher share of migration and the largest cities. Most cities with a higher share of migration are located in the province of Girona. In the province of Girona we find both the less populated capital of a province (Girona) and highest number of municipalities with a high share of migration, as five of them (Castelló d'Empuries, Salt, Lloret de Mar, Sant Pere Pescador and La Jonquera) are located in the province.

TAB. 3. *Most Populated Municipalities in Catalonia (2013)*

Municipality	Province	Population	% of foreigners
Barcelona	Barcelona	1,611,822	17.45%
Hospitalet de Llobregat	Barcelona	254,056	21.54%
Badalona	Barcelona	219,708	14.58%
Terrasa	Barcelona	215,055	13.66%
Sabadell	Barcelona	207,649	11.60%
Lleida	Lleida	139,809	21.09%
Tarragona	Tarragona	133,545	18.15%
Mataró	Barcelona	124,099	16.44%
Santa Coloma de Gramenet	Barcelona	120,029	21.89%
Reus	Tarragona	106,790	18.57%
Girona	Girona	97,292	19.90%

Source: IDESCAT

It is interesting to note that none of the towns with a higher migration rate are located in the province of Barcelona. Thus, factors channeling migration to certain locations appear not to be directly connected to dynamics of the Barcelona metropolitan area. The only evidence of a suburbanization of migration in Catalonia can be found again in the area of Girona, in the municipality of Salt. Migration to Girona is relatively low as many migrants live in Salt, a nearby town. Most of these are African migrants, who work in the surrounding factories, while Girona residents of Girona are mostly middle-class locals.

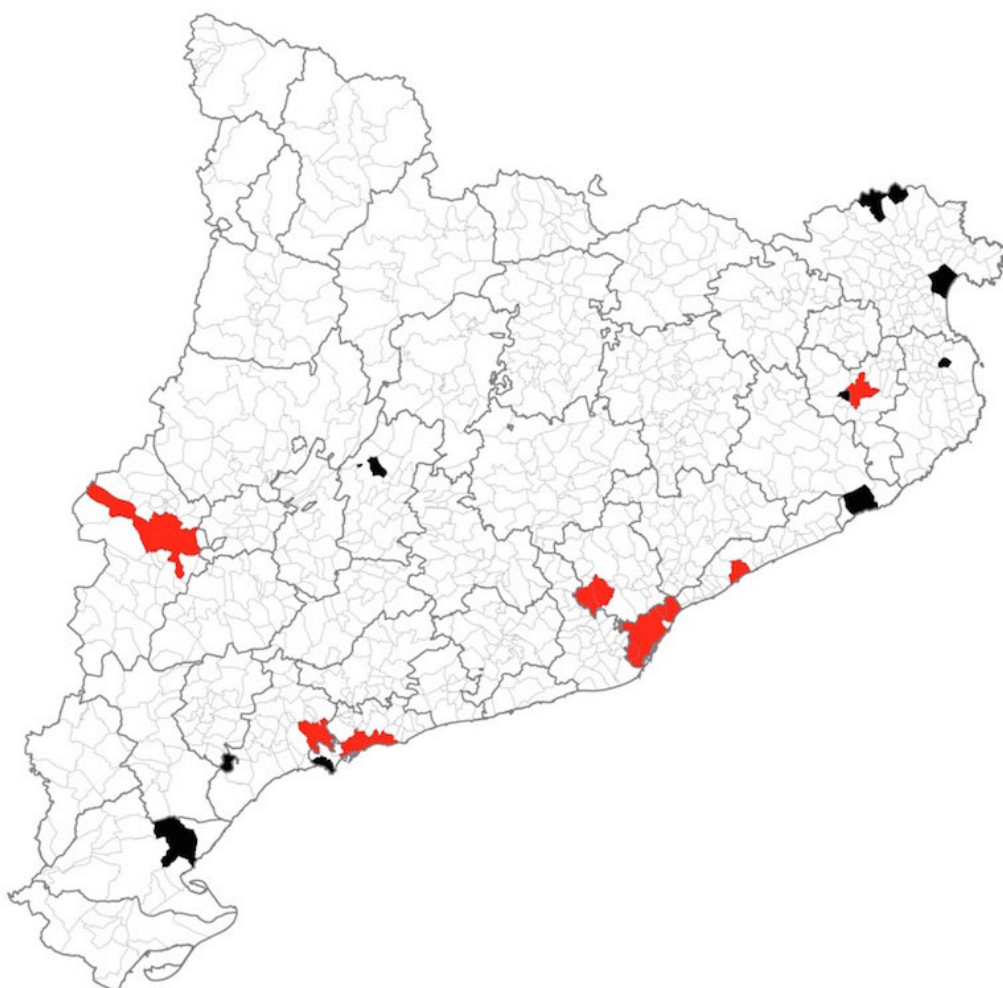


FIG. 1. Most Populated Municipalities (Red) and Towns with a Higher Rate of Foreign Migration (Black) (2012)

*Source:* Own elaboration of Idescat data.

#### 4. Migrants in Catalan Towns: a Scattering of Conflicts

Differentials in migration rates might be attributed to different local labor markets (municipalities specialized in manufacturing tend to have a higher share of migration than municipalities with a labor market based on services, with the exception of the Northern Catalonia coastline), transport connections and housing prices (as towns with lower housing prices tend to receive a higher number of non-European migrants). We may distinguish two groups of municipalities according to the factors influencing migration rates:

*a)* Towns where manufacturing activities deserted by locals are continued through migration (Guissona, Salt, El Perelló, and Ullà).

*b)* Coastal towns based on tourism and personal services where we find both European and non-Europeans migrants (Castelló d'Empuries, Lloret de Mar, Sant Pere Pescador, Salou).

Valls Molina [2001] has indicated that in towns where most of the population works locally migration rates are higher than in commuter “dormitory” towns. We consider that the higher migration rates in the former and the lower migration rates in the latter could be connected to the effects of housing prices in settlement patterns. Rescaling appears to be taking place more due to the pull factors of host towns (mainly related to the maintenance of local industries at the cost of ever lower salaries, plus a more affordable housing market) rather than through flight from Barcelona. There is little evidence of a deflection of migration from the city of Barcelona to smaller towns. However, it could be hypothesized that due to the compact nature of the Barcelona metropolitan area itself, as the city is surrounded by mountains and the sea, there is an unbridgeable geographical divide between the metropolitan area and the rest of the province of Barcelona that thwarts internal mobility of migrants. Migrants who cannot afford to live in the inner city move to working-class suburbs, the so-called dormitory towns, or out of the metropolitan area, hence increasing migration in cities such as Sabadell, Terrassa or Mataró.

Another perspective is provided by Bayona & Gil [2010], who argue that intensification of migrant flows is increasing segregation in Catalonia between a “dynamic rural,” attracting migration because of labor opportunities and a “regressive rural,” losing population. The demographic perspective of Bayona & Gil, however, does not acknowledge that the “dynamic rural” is based on worsening labor conditions and informal work as the only means of insertion for many foreign migrants. Therefore it is possible to detect a direct relationship between economic downscaling processes and migration rescaling. Migrant settlement in Catalonia has preceded conflicts over public space and public resources, linked to the ongoing economic crisis.

#### 4.1. *Migrant Rescaling and the Rise of Xenophobia*

Medium-sized towns in the inner Barcelona province are experiencing issues associated with migration growth with a three-five year delay with respect to Barcelona. The same type of conflicts over the use of common space usual in Barcelona in the mid-2000s are currently starting to happen in smaller towns. Most of these towns lost population during the 1990s, just before the beginning of foreign migration increases, due to decreasing birth rates among locals. Internal migration has also played an important part in urban and migration rescaling, as municipalities receiving foreign migration today were previously host to internal migration from other parts of Spain; something that Valls Molina considers might help these towns to design new integration policies for the new migration [Valls Molina 2001].

Political opposition to migration has been rising, one of its manifestations being the creation of the far-right party “Plataforma X Catalunya” (Platform for Catalonia). PxC supports tightening of migration controls and opposes the recognition of social citizenship rights to migrants. PxC was founded in April 2002 and quickly gained support and political seats in the municipal assembly of Vic. Its website, [www.pxcatalunya.com](http://www.pxcatalunya.com), indicates the party favors “Equity against globalization,” implying that globalization has *per se* a negative effect on social cohesion of cities and communities. The party criticizes prevalence of liberalism over family values and attributes to migration the increase in crime, unemployment and the collapse of welfare services. Among their proposals there is the suppression of regularization (amnesty) processes that allow undocumented migrants to obtain citizenship rights. The political platform of PxC may be equated to that of other far-right parties in Europe, such as the Front National in France and the BNP in Britain.

The town of Vic could be considered an example of the link between downscaling and the rise of anti-migration policies. The economic basis of Vic is the food industry, in particular pork processing, used for the traditional “embutidos” (cured sausages of the area). Migrants are a majority today in these meat-processing plants. At the beginning of the Twenty-first century, meat packing plants in Vic began to hire migrants from northern and central Africa, mostly Moroccan and Senegalese. The main migrant groups living in Vic are African and Muslim, something that has important implications for ethnic relationships. Even though instrumental to the economy, settlement of immigrants of Islamic confession in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Spanish 11 March 2004 train bombings has not been easy.

Urban change and its undesired effects have been the driving force behind the rise of PxC, a party that has capitalized on the discontent of elderly locals regarding socioeconomic changes [Hernandez-Carr 2011]. In the 2010 Catalan regional parlia-

ment elections, PxC came close to obtaining representation, ultimately being defeated by the rising tide of several small Catalan nationalist parties. In the 2011 municipal elections, PxC obtained 67 council members, most of them in towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants. The existence of political parties opposed to immigration is not a new phenomenon in Europe but represents a change for the political climate of Catalonia, which was traditionally perceived as a welcoming and cosmopolitan region.

The political strategy of PxC consists of recruiting locals who feel sidetracked or wronged by migrants and multicultural policies. Recurring issues of contention are the over the use of urban space and the role of religion in everyday life, as migrants are perceived to challenge the alleged secularization of Catalonia. The discourse by PxC simplifies the complex changes brought in Catalan society by globalization and claims that “those from the homeland” should be given priority whenever there is shortage of resources. A further issue, previously unheard of in Spain, gained momentum in 2010, when the ruling party in Vic proposed to deny undocumented immigrants the right to be registered in the “Padrón” (municipal registry). The proposal had both statistical and social implications. Registering in the “Padrón” is the only way for migrants to be recognized as entitled to access to social services. Non-registered migrants may be denied access to medical daycare in the public health system and their children may have difficulties to enroll in schools. The debate on migrants’ access to municipal services has become more controversial in the last five years, as public bodies at all levels cut spending during the crisis. To understand the implications of this debate, it is essential to take into account that Spain is one of the few countries in Europe allowing for undocumented migrants to register in the municipality and gain social rights in conditions akin to locals [Aja & Diez 2005]. Withdrawing undocumented migrants from municipal registries, for the political forces that support this, would serve a double aim: *a*) Limiting competition for scarce resources to natives; *b*) Making undocumented migration invisible.

A recent (2012) reform in the Spanish Health Service has gone in this direction, suppressing social security cards for undocumented migrants. Citing budget constraints and the need to stop “health tourism,” the reform has left undocumented immigrants in Spain with access to emergency health care only.

Rise of xenophobic discourses in small towns could be interpreted as a signal that migration in Catalonia is a “glocal” phenomenon. As defined by Borja & Castells [2001], “glocal” can be defined as something global and local at the same time. In Catalonia, global conditions appear to be channeling migration toward towns such as Manresa.

Contention for limited resources (jobs, government aid, etc.) is often harsher in small towns than in big cities also because local inhabitants are less used to diver-



sity than people in Barcelona. Towns where declining, labor-intensive economic activities predominate are the main settlement areas for foreign migrants in Catalonia. Following the classification by Glick Schiller and Çağlar [2009], downscale towns are currently a destination for migrants looking for unskilled jobs.

What we find here is what Kitty Calavita [2005] labeled as immigration incorporation into “obsolete industries;” industries that could not be sustained without hiring migrants willing to do the same kinds of jobs that locals did thirty years ago, but at a lower price. Migration in this case substitutes productive change, innovation and the development of new economic models. In order to keep an economic model based on low-skilled, low-salaries jobs, migration is needed, but not wanted. Following Castells [1997], we may hypothesize that anti-migration movements such as PxC could be creating a kind of “identity of resistance,” emphasizing tradition as movement of political resistance to changes brought by globalization. We consider that the contradiction between migrant flows needed for economy, but unwanted for the perceived threat to social cohesion and the rejection of multiculturalism, is one among several explanatory factors behind displacements of migrant communities from one town or region to another. Therefore, xenophobia itself could be considered as a factor of migration rescaling. In the following section of the paper we will examine this last hypothesis through the analysis of Manresa, a town located in the center of Catalonia, which has experienced both spatial rescaling and migration rescaling in the last ten years, becoming a representative example of the effects of urban rescaling in migration.

## **5. Migration and Population Growth: the Case of Manresa**

In the following pages we examine the case of Manresa (76,000 inhabitants), capital of the “comarca” of Bages, inhabitants and located 64 kilometers west of Barcelona in the inner Barcelona province, near the province of Lleida. Manresa is a mid-sized town that offers a good opportunity to test our hypothesis on the relevance of push and pull factors on migration rescaling. Manresa is far enough from the big city to offer different incentives for prospective migrants to settle. The economy of Manresa is based on retail and textile industries. The town has been receiving foreign migration since the beginning of the Twenty-first century. Migration today represents 12% of the population of Manresa. The following Figure offers a map of the geography of immigration in the “comarca” of Bages:



TAB. 4. *Main Foreign Nationalities in Manresa (December 2012).*

Countries	Total	M/F (%)	% of total migrants
Morocco	6,154	56.35% / 43.63%	44.61%
Romania	1,555	50.73% / 49.26%	11.27%
China	688	53.05% / 46.94%	4.98%
Senegal	564	73.22% / 26.77%	4.09%
Ecuador	439	49.8% / 50.1%	3.18%
Bolivia	427	39.57% / 60.42%	3.12%
Poland	389	58.09% / 41.9%	2.82%
Colombia	320	43.93% / 54.06%	2.32%
Ukraine	193	52.84% / 47.15%	1.4%
Italy	178	62.92% / 37.07%	1.29%
Peru	156	52.56% / 47.43%	1.13%
Others	1,827	N/A	19.79%

Source: Manresa Town Hall. Data from the Municipal Registry of Population

## 6. Conclusion: the Interplay between Urban Rescaling and Migration Rescaling in Catalonia: Cause or Effect?

Changes in settlement patterns of migrants in Catalonia are triggered by a combination of several factors. In the first place, there are the geographical constraints, as Barcelona is surrounded by mountains and the sea, making an indefinite expansion of the housing market in the city unlikely and hence rising housing costs for migrants and locals alike. The geography of the city acts therefore as a factor of both urban rescaling, as it attracts urban populations to the neighboring towns, and of migration rescaling, as there is a limit to affordable housing that newly arrived migrants may find in the city.

Considering this, it is possible to hypothesize that in Catalonia, migration rescaling has not simply been a side effect of the economic crisis; but also part of the complex and interlocking set of causes of the crisis. In Catalonia, migrant labor has been “used” to maintain traditional, labor intensive, low-skilled economic activities at odds with productive innovation. As an example we can mention the construction bubble, which benefited from the arrival of migrants. When the construction bubble burst it took over the jobs of migrants and locals alike. The prospects for long-term settlement of migrants are another factor contributing to rescaling. Migrants settle in places where they can set up stable households and businesses (i.e., affordable housing markets and employment opportunities). Due to urban congestion, in recent years Barcelona has appeared to meet their expectations to a lesser extent than medi-

um-sized towns. The case of Manresa shows that migration flows, at least in Catalonia, are attracted by specific local factors linked to the urban downscaling processes. Migration rescaling could therefore be considered an effect of urban rescaling linked to the combined effect of economic crisis and productive change.

Migration rescaling would be more a consequence of local factors affecting receiving locations than an effect of “migration flight” from Barcelona. Barcelona, even if hit by the crisis, could still be defined, according to Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s classification, as an upscale city, attracting both high and low skilled migration. On the other hand, towns such as Manresa or Vic display their own small-scale economic dynamics where migrants substitute locals in low-skilled jobs. Following Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s classification, Manresa could be considered a downscale town, as its local economy attracts migration but the town is incapable of building a cosmopolitan environment and economic growth. Unfortunately, one of the results of the simultaneous decline of the economy and migration growth in Catalonia is the rise of xenophobic politics among the sidetracked local population.

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## Migration rescaling in Catalonia

### Cause or consequence?

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**Abstract:** This paper offers a portrait of the evolution in settlement trends of foreign migration in Catalonia and the relevance of “rescaling” for explaining change in settlement patterns of migrants in the last ten years (2003-2013). “Rescaling” is defined here as restructuring of urban locations linked with settlement patterns of migrants. The interplay between residential patterns of migrants and the ongoing economic crisis has been proven to be, in fact, a key factor in explaining the process. The so-called “construction bubble” brought thousands of migrants to work in Barcelona and surrounding towns. Migrants found jobs mainly in construction (men) and in household cleaning (women). However, the crisis created a pool of jobless migrants that began to relocate to cheaper locations. Among those cheaper locations, we find towns such as Badalona or Mataró on the coastline, or Manresa and Vic further inland. We are examining the adverse effects that the crisis has had in terms of the insertion of migrants in these towns, as xenophobia and racism are on the rise. The far-right party Plataforma X Catalunya is winning support in certain towns as resentment toward migrants is rising among the lower echelons of the working classes, who compete with those migrants for dwindling public resources. We conclude the paper with a reflection on the likely outcome of those changes.

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*Keywords: Catalonia; Rescaling; Settlement Patterns; Immigration; Xenophobia.*

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