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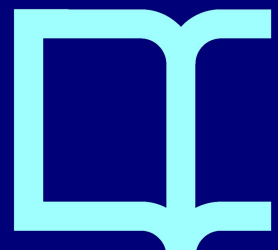
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Selfishness of the Affluent? Stateless Nationalist and Regionalist Parties and Immigration.

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Selfishness of the Affluent? Stateless Nationalist and Regionalist Parties and Immigration

This paper examines stateless nationalist and regionalist party (SNRP) discourses on immigration through an exploration of the economic dimensions of the centre-periphery cleavage. Using qualitative document analysis, the Republican Left in Catalonia (ERC) and the Scottish National Party (SNP) in Scotland are studied in order to see whether and how the relative economic position of a region shapes SNRP discourses on immigration. The period of analysis encompasses the last three terms of office for both parties, during which immigration and decentralisation have been very salient issues in Catalonia and Scotland. Results suggest that the relative economic situations and the economic crisis do not seem to affect general stances, which are positive in both regions. However, the economic contexts have an influence on how each party selects its main issues for debate, and the ways in which these are managed.

Keywords: Catalonia; immigration; integration; economy; Scotland

Introduction

Immigration is a central issue for stateless nations from both an academic¹ and policy perspective. The aim of this paper is to contribute to this emerging literature by examining a specific question: does the economic context affect SNRP discourses on the issue of immigration? Generally, scholars of SNRPs have paid more attention to identity and electoral strategy as factors that shape SNRP discourses on immigration (Hepburn, 2009; Jeram 2013). Economic conditions in the sub-state territory and wider state are factors that have hitherto been unexplored. As I will argue, this variable can help us better understand variation in SNRP discourses across time and space.

In the study of party politics, a significant branch of research focuses on populist radical right parties (Art 2011; Mudde 2007). Scholars have explored various topics related to these parties, such as party origins, discourses, electoral performance, voter profiles, and the effects they have on agendas and party systems (Mudde 2007). Because the radical right dramatizes the immigrant question and thus receives

considerable attention, research on mainstream political parties' responses to immigration is less plentiful.² Mainstream political parties are crucial actors in the agenda-setting and policy-making processes related to citizenship, entry, and immigrant integration.

Stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (SNRPs), a party family defined by their commitment to 'sub-state territorial empowerment', have become 'permanent features of the mainstream European political landscape' (Hepburn 2009, 477-482). Their emphasis on nationalism and decentralisation is a good reason to believe that immigration will be of special importance to them. The recent volume by Hepburn and Zapata-Barrero (2014) is the first dedicated to the links between sub-state nationalism, SNRPs and immigration. The various chapters explore the SNRP-immigration nexus, but minimal attention is afforded to whether and how economic factors shape SNRP politics.³ Other fields of research on immigration, focused on individual attitudes or electoral studies, integrate economic variables such as employment rates and GDP into their analysis (see, e.g., Rustenbach, 2010). It is worth inquiring, therefore, as to whether economic conditions modulate how SNRPs manage the 'legitimation paradox' (see Jeram, van der Zwet, and Wisthaler this issue). To this end, an analysis of two ideologically similar SNRPs in different relative economic situations, the Scottish National Party (SNP) in Scotland and the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) in Catalonia is carried out.

SNRPs and Immigration in 'Poor' and 'Rich' Regions

There are good reasons to think that the economy is an important variable mediating the SNRP-immigration nexus. First, the link between immigration politics and the economy has been demonstrated in other subfields of research. In a study of individual

perceptions towards immigration, Schneider (2008) points out that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to subscribe to prejudices such as the idea that ‘immigrants steal our jobs’, known in the literature as the ‘economic thread theory’. Assuming that political parties act as rational vote seekers, messaging about economic decline to justify anti-immigrant discourses can be effective in relatively poor settings. This is a primary strategy of the radical right; these parties use immigration as a scapegoat for economic or political shortcomings, elaborating common mottos such as ‘our people first’ (Guibernau, 2010).⁴ Second, the economic dimension of secessionism has been explored extensively, demonstrating that SNRP views on secession are driven by both material and ideological factors.⁵

This does not mean that SNRPs simply map onto a right-left ideological axis when it comes to immigration. Recent literature on political parties undermines the assumption that right-wing parties are ‘anti-immigrant’ and left-wing parties are ‘pro-immigrant’ (Cochrane, 2013). According to Schain (2008), both the political left and right have reasons to support both pro- and anti-immigrant positions. The findings that ascribe issue ownership or contagion effects to the mainstream political right have recently been questioned (Alonso and Claro da Fonseca, 2011; Odmalm, 2011). Furthermore, in a decentralized state, the centre-periphery cleavage might be more important in shaping these positions than traditional right and left ideologies (Hepburn, 2014).

The centre-periphery cleavage, as described by Rokkan and Urwin (1983), revolves around three dimensions: identity, in which the periphery tries to distinguish itself from the centre;⁶ territory, in which the periphery tries to gain or protect self-government;⁷ and the economy, which depends on whether the periphery is in a weaker or stronger economic position relative to the state. According to Rokkan and Urwin

(1983), while distinct identity is a necessary condition, economic grievances also play a role in producing and maintaining a centre-periphery cleavage.

Indeed, Connor (1984) critically reviewed the theory of relative group deprivation, which claims that nationalist mobilisation is in fact driven by economic factors, by claiming that while economic factors may serve as a catalyst, these are not a 'cause' of sub-state nationalism. In other words, while identity formation and institution building are 'enabling conditions', economic factors are 'constraining conditions' for sub-state nationalist mobilisation (Meadwell and Martin, 1996).

The interaction between economic conditions and immigration in stateless nations has, in the first instance, a demographic component linked to the so-called fear of internal minoritization (Lipton, 2012). According to Conversi 'most cases of demographic decline are bound to generate a counter trend in the search for a political solution through either self determination or a campaign to expel immigrants' (1997, 191). Connor (1984) described how economic growth coupled with mass migration brought rejection of immigrants in the case of Switzerland.

Findings on the link between SNRP and immigration with a focus on economic aspects are unclear. Indeed, Massetti (2009, 511) suggests that 'in some cases, especially in the presence of mass immigration and in periods of economic slowdown, regionalism in this context can assume the shape of the "selfishness of the affluent" ⁸ expressed in terms of a resistance to sharing their wealth with others (Massetti and Sandri, 2012). This suggests that immigration can fuel further the demands for resources, self-government or independence. Yet, this 'selfishness of the affluent' might not only be expressed through a tension between the centre and the periphery, but also from the periphery towards immigrants, as suggested by Connor (1984). Hepburn (2014) has proposed a related argument: SNRPs in relatively poor regions with skills

shortages in the labour market are more likely to support immigration than SNRPs in regions with flourishing economies and skilled (and sufficient) labour forces. In short, SNRPs will be ‘selfish’ and view immigration negatively when the ‘regional economy is outperforming the national economy’ (Hepburn 2014, 54). In turn, we should expect SNRPs in economically underperforming regions to view immigration positively because the injection of new skills can boost economic growth. Finally, in line with what Massetti (2009) argues, an economic crisis may further exacerbate the relationship in both directions: rich regions will become even more ‘selfish’ and poor ones will perceive immigration as a means to economic recovery. In the following sections, I explore these arguments in the two cases, that is, I explore how the relative economic position of the nation within the state influences the SNRP’s discourses on immigration.

Methodology

In accordance with Hepburn and Zapata-Barrero (2014), I divide party positions towards immigration into positive/inclusive and negative/exclusive categories. The former implies that immigration is viewed as a positive phenomenon, contributing both economically and culturally to society while the challenges it entails are manageable. Neutral positions are also included in this category. Negative or exclusive stances include reluctance to accept the arrival and settlement of newcomers, who are perceived as problematic and threatening for society. Parties may even call for the expulsion of foreigners, questioning their capacity to integrate. Given the multifaceted nature of immigration, a party can adopt an inclusive stance towards one dimension of immigration, for example social rights, but an exclusive one for another, such as the number of immigrants the territory can handle. Therefore, I analytically separate the main components of the SNRP positions on immigration in the following manner:⁹

Diagnosis: the party explains and describes the phenomenon of immigration to

the sub-state territory.

Flows: the party refers to the capacity/necessity of receiving immigrants in the sub-state territory, as well as to the importance of managing flows.

Labour: the party refers to immigrants' participation/contribution to the labour market. References to the informal economy and competitions for job are also included.

Rights: The party refers to the rights that shall or shall not be awarded to immigrants and whether these are conditional.

Welfare: The party refers to social benefits that shall or shall not be awarded to immigrants and whether these are conditional.

Diversity: The party refers to increasing diversity and its effects on the national culture and how to manage religious and cultural pluralism.

With regards to case selection, a paired comparison of 'most similar cases' is used. This strategy is suited for examining whether a single factor that varies across cases has an influence on the phenomenon under study. Hence, the aim is to select similar cases in terms of left-right ideology and party system relevance.¹⁰ To vary the independent variable of interest—relative economic position—one SNRP from a comparatively 'poor' region within the state is chosen, and a second from a 'rich' region. For the latter the case of the *Esquerra Republicana per Catalunya* (ERC) in Catalonia is selected and for the former the Scottish National Party (SNP) in Scotland (Massetti, 2009; Moreno, 1999). These parties share a left-wing ideological position and defend independence. In terms of their party system relevance, both the ERC and SNP have clearly shown blackmail or coalition potential in several elections and both parties have been part of governments in their respective regions.¹¹ This selection entails leaving aside another Catalan SNRP, *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), which was a right-wing autonomist coalition during the period of analysis. These characteristics make the

case of CiU too different from the SNP. Moreover, ERC members have held the post of General Secretary on Immigration for a significant period of the timeframe under analysis and the party has been a key player in the consolidation of the ‘Catalan way of immigration’. The SNRP *Solidaritat* was not chosen due to its lack of party system relevance and survival.

There is a marked variance between Catalonia and Scotland concerning their relative economic situations.¹² Scholars have tended to classify Catalonia as a ‘rich’ or ‘bourgeois’ region and Scotland as a ‘poor’ or ‘working class’ one (Masseti, 2009; Moreno, 1999).

To account for the potential effects of the 2008 economic crisis, I analyse the three last legislative terms for both parties, which span before and after the onset of the crisis in both cases: for the SNP (1999-2011) and for the ERC (1999-2010). This decade was turbulent in both cases, as Scotland adjusted to the devolution agreement of 1999 and Catalonia earned new powers from the Spanish state in 2006. Moreover, immigration was first politicised during the 2000s in both cases (Hepburn 2009; Zapata-Barrero, 2003).

The data for the content analysis is mined from different sources for each party. The document database for each SNRP consists of electoral manifestos, party platforms, regional parliamentary debates and party declarations derived from the four elections that occurred in each region from 1999-2011.¹³ Semi-structured interviews with party elites are used to increase the validity of the qualitative analysis.¹⁴ These materials were analysed following Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). Units of analysis were segmented based on a thematic criterion.¹⁵ The overall stance of each SNRP has been calculated with the following formula: 1 to 0 means an inclusive stance and 0 to -1 means an exclusive stance:¹⁶

$$\text{Stance} = (\Sigma \text{ Inclusive discourses} - \Sigma \text{ Exclusive discourses}) / (\text{Total discourses}).$$

Regional Economic and Migration Contexts

Catalonia

Catalonia is one of the richest regions in Spain and part of the 'Four Motors for Europe' with other economic powerhouse regions such as Baden-Württemberg, Rhône-Alpes and Lombardy. Catalonia is the biggest contributor to Spanish GDP (approximately 18% between 1996 and 2010)¹⁷ and is the fourth largest autonomous community in terms of GDP per capita. It has consistently performed above the EU average. Catalonia has a large construction sector, but is not as dependent on it as are many regions in Spain; economic growth has been mainly fuelled by the service sector, industry and tourism (INE, 2005).

In recent years, Catalonia's fiscal woes have become a rallying cry for the nationalists who blame the Spanish state (Ehlers et al. 2012). Indeed, Catalonia is the region with the fourth highest fiscal deficit; in other words, public expenditure is significantly smaller than the tax revenues generated by the region for the Spanish state's general revenues.¹⁸ Catalonia has been deeply affected by the 2008 economic crisis, with the unemployment rate reaching 23.8% from only 6% in 2007 (Idescat 2013a). Catalonia's GDP has been steadily decreasing, interrupted by a short period of recovery from 2010 to 2011 (Idescat 2013b).

Due to its economic vitality, Catalonia has attracted people from outside its borders since the eighteenth century (Conversi 1997, 188). Despite its low fertility rate, Catalonia has managed to maintain its demographic growth thanks to internal and external immigration (Cabré 2008). In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the region had six million inhabitants, but in 2006 Catalonia's population surpassed seven million due

to the ‘Catalan system of reproduction’, which is mainly based on domestic and foreign migration (Cabré 2008). In 2010, foreigners constituted 15% of the Catalan population.

Politically, the 1999-2010 period included important events that helped consolidate the ‘*Via Catalana d’Integració*’ (Catalan Way of Integration). The Spanish Constitution bequeaths immigration competencies to Madrid, but gradually the autonomous communities have gained *de facto* competencies in immigration, especially at the integration stage due to its transversal nature (Montilla Martos 2011). The Catalan government has been legislating and executing policies related to immigrant integration since the early 1990s (Franco-Guillén 2011), most notably the institutionalization of a Catalan Secretary of Immigration in 2000 and a first Citizenship and Immigration Plan in 2005. Recently, the main political and civil stakeholders in Catalonia signed the 2008 National Pact for Immigration, which was followed by the approval of the first Reception Bill in 2010. As stated by an ERC party representative, the broad political and social consensus achieved for these two texts demonstrated a convergence in the discourses of most political forces in the Parliament with the exception of the Popular Party (PP), which has traditionally favoured stricter immigration and citizenship policies.¹⁹

Scotland

Scotland has been consistently described as a working class region in the postwar period, even though it has an abundance of natural resources and significant oil reserves on its territory (Hechter 1975; Keating 2009). In 1970s and 80s, ‘It’s Scotland’s oil’ was a popular slogan of the SNP which aimed to convince Scots that only independence would allow Scotland to enjoy the fruits of the North Sea oil reserves. In contrast with Catalonia’s diversified industry and numerous ‘micro’ firms (Moreno 1989), the Scottish economy has been driven by large uncompetitive heavy industries that has

gradually declined (Hechter 1975). While Scotland is a rich region in global terms, its GDP per capita (excluding oil revenues) falls two points under the UK mean.²⁰ More importantly, Scots perceive that their economy performs poorly in relation to the rest of the UK, which is quite different than the prevalent Catalan economic grievance of being ‘held back’ by the Spanish state (SurrIDGE 2006). Public expenditure per capita has been higher in Scotland than in the UK as a whole, and this perpetuates a sense of relative ‘backwardness’ among Scots (Johnson and Phillips 2012).²¹ The economic crisis did not affect Scotland or the rest of the UK as profoundly as it did in Southern Europe; in fact, GDP growth rates have been stable since 2009 (BBC 2015). Moreover, the unemployment rate never reached double digits in Scotland, as it did in Catalonia, rising to 7.5% in 1999, decreasing to 3.9% in 2009, and increasing again to 8.5% in 2010.²²

The demographic evolution in Scotland has been noticeably different from that of Catalonia. The two regions had similar population sizes during the 1980s (approximately five million), but emigration reduced Scotland’s population until 2003 when its net migration rate became positive for the first time ever.²³ Since then, Scotland’s immigration rate has steadily increased, reaching 4.75% in 2010, but this statistic is quite low in relation to the UK. Due to a low fertility rate and ageing population, the current level of migration is not sufficient to level off Scotland’s population decline. Demographic decline has become a preeminent concern for political actors in Scotland because of its potentially damaging consequences for the Scottish economy.

Immigration, asylum and citizenship are all competencies of Westminster. The Scottish Parliament does, however, control policy areas relating to immigrant integration, such as education, health and social services. Somewhat surprisingly, the Scottish Government has been less active than the *Generalitat* in terms of developing

broad strategies and actions plans in the realm of immigration. Documents and policies of note are *One Scotland, Many Cultures* and the *Fresh Talent Initiative* in 2004, which aimed to attract skilled immigrants to Scotland, although it mainly helped foreign students remain in Scotland after their studies (Skilling 2007). Given Scotland's low proportion of immigrants, the Scottish Government and some political parties have sought to attract more immigrants to Scotland and claim more powers from Westminster rather than working with the powers it already has.²⁴ The tenor of debate regarding immigration in Scotland has been less controversial than in Catalonia. The two dominant parties, the SNP and Labour, have presented similar ideas about immigration, and there was no significant change in policy when the SNP formed a majority government in 2011.²⁵

Results

General Stances

An overview of ERC and SNP discourses on immigration reveals two key starting points: first, both parties have a generally positive stance towards immigration; second, the issues at stake during debate differ in their respective regions. The following tables and graph illustrate these statements:

[Table 1 near here]

[Table 2 near here]

[Graph 1 near here]

We can see that both parties have remained positive about immigration over time, as seen in Table 2. The ERC scores relatively low in the areas of flows; the party accuses the Spanish state of sending illegal immigrants with 'suspicious intentions' to

Catalonia and highlights the region's limited capacity to receive migrants, referring to its insufficient allotment of competencies (C-P1:10051).

The results demonstrate the different emphases of the parties: the ERC accentuates rights and diversity while the SNP underlines flows. This variance can be explained by the 'migratory moment' each region found itself in during the period of analysis. As described in the previous section, Catalonia presented a profile of constant attraction of migratory flows, driving the ERC's discourse to focus on other aspects such as the management of reception and integration. In contrast, Scotland's struggle to attract and retain immigrants led the SNP to insist on the management of flows.

In Catalonia, the ERC defined immigration as a structural fact, as something that has been present throughout Catalonian history. This idea, highlighted in manifestos (C-P1:09902) and debates (C-P11:0551) throughout the period of analysis, was clearly stated by the party's speaker in 2000: 'we can state without a shadow of a doubt, that immigration, and extra-communitarian immigration is a constitutive phenomenon of the Catalan society, even an old phenomenon' (C-22:01820).

Many discourses put forth by the ERC also come with a diagnosis of the cause of global migration. The party identifies globalization and income inequality as triggering factors for migration to Catalonia, which is portrayed as a land offering opportunities to newcomers (C-P11:4167). The party frequently mentions the privileged position of the region as generating a 'call effect' for migrants (C-P1:1226). In addition, a discourse is also found which denounces the Spanish state for the lack of resources it has allocated to nullify the strain immigration has put on the Spanish welfare system (C-P10:8457).

The ERC is especially concerned with managing immigration. With respect to flows and the labour market, the focal point of discourse is Catalonia's lack of relevant

competencies (C-P11:4177). Culturally, diversity is generally understood as enriching and worth preserving as long as immigrants adhere to liberal democratic values. This explains the production of legislative and political texts such as the National Pact for Immigration and the Bill of Reception. Also, access to Catalan language courses for immigrants is considered urgent by the ERC. Investment in Catalan language courses is justified by way of the centrality of the language to national belonging and the economic opportunities Catalan fluency affords newcomers.²⁶ Generating job opportunities for immigrants is intimately linked to the sustainability of welfare and social services; Catalonia can only absorb so many immigrants without overburdening the native population. Former president of the ERC, Josep-Lluís Carod-Rovira, summarises these sentiments:

And it is true that we cannot say we will give papers to everybody in the world. We can't because no serious country in the world can. Because we cannot grant decent living conditions to everyone in the world who wants to come, but of course more people can come. We can still give [decent living conditions] to more people, because we have a human resources deficit. And we must properly do that. We must respect those who come and they have to do the same with us. They have to agree with our laws, our democratic values and our language and culture. If Catalonia has an active intercultural recognition to living together in diversity, an effort for social equality and a positive evaluation of diversity, we have a right to ask newcomers for a commitment to cultural and linguistic 'Catalanness'. (C-P14:3417)

The SNP also displays a positive stance towards immigration in the materials analysed. The SNP discourse frequently references the available 'space' for more immigrants in Scotland. First minister of Scotland and former MP Alex Salmond stated:

I want to start from a simple proposition - Scotland is not full up. We need more people. And if people from other countries are willing and eager to come to

Scotland and make their futures here, then I say we should welcome them. (S-P12:0277)

Moreover, the SNP's main concerns regarding immigration differ from those of the ERC. In contrast to Catalonia, the SNP does not fret about Scotland's capacity for reception and the consequences of immigration on social service provisions; in fact, the contrary occurs: the party suggests services will improve on account of the larger tax base immigration creates.

Detention centres for immigrants and asylum seekers administrated by the UK government in Scotland have been targets of the SNP; the party considers the UK's treatment of irregular migrants and asylum seekers as unacceptable and contrary to Scotland's interest in boosting its population. Hence, the documents analysed include many claims for more Scottish powers related to asylum and visa processing. Some Scottish parliamentarians have openly argued against the UK government's deportation strategy, and in many cases the 'waste' of immigrants' skills were highlighted in their statements; for example, 'Scotland has spent centuries exporting its talented people across the world. When highly educated people like [...] want to make a life in Scotland for their families, they should be welcomed and supported, not hounded by Home Office bureaucracy' (S-P12:2889).

While both the SNP and the ERC celebrate diversity (S-P12:2712), the SNP, unlike the ERC, does not want to oblige immigrants to adopt Scottish specific values or cultural attributes. However, the SNP is not completely neutral about how immigrants to Scotland integrate—the party expresses a desire for immigrants to feel attached to the Scottish nation rather than adopt a British identity. In debates on the Borders and Immigration Bill and citizenship tests in the House of Commons, an SNP

parliamentarian Peter Wishart conveyed a serious concern about the potential consequences of suggested reforms for Scotland's interests:

When minority communities settle in Scotland, they quickly identify with Scotland and become patriotic. In fact, some of the most patriotic Scots are from our new communities, and we take immense pride in that. (...) I ask the Minister directly and hope that he might address the question in his winding-up speech: why can we not have more national and, perhaps, regional-specific tests to secure the type of citizenship that reflects properly the communities in which people will live? There is no point in having a test that has nothing to do with the countries in which people will live (S-P10:474).

Economic Status and Discourse on Immigration

The ERC's diagnosis on the economy is quite clear: immigration makes an important demographic contribution to Catalonia and may also be beneficial because immigrants take jobs that the autochthonic population does not want (C-P87:04290).

As previously mentioned, centre-periphery relations are very important to the party. Catalan politicians have claimed that the Spanish state has sent numerous irregular immigrants from the Canary Islands and Andalusia to Barcelona, which the ERC believes is unjust and indicative of the state's malevolence towards Catalonia:²⁷

The encouragement of internal migration flows of *Sans Papiers* towards Catalonia has been stated by several NGOs working on this field. Irregular migrants from Melilla appearing all of a sudden in Catalonia, and the massive arrival of Ecuadorian tourists are just the tip of the iceberg. This suggests some sort of collusion or passivity between the State and mafias to drive irregular migrant flows towards our country (C-P11:0492).

An even more important source of centre-periphery tension is the financial consequences of irregular migration. The desire for devolved powers on migration flows and other fields related to immigration has been constant in the ERC's three

legislative terms of office under study (C-P23:03789). Managing flows is perceived by the ERC as a means of targeting potential immigrants for direct legal access to Catalonia who would fill labour market gaps (C-80:0948). The ERC recognizes the large 'black' economy in Catalonia, in which immigrants have become victims of entrepreneurs who take advantage of their precarious situation. The ERC's proposed solution is to prosecute employers exploiting irregular migrants and regularize immigrants who are contributing to the economy. The ERC is in favour of committing more resources to integration because of the long-term benefits for Catalonia and the ERC petitioned the Spanish state to create an integration fund for the regions. However, this was abolished in 2010 on account of the economic crisis (C-P93:26). The party also calls for a reconfiguration of public services and more resources from the Spanish state to ensure immigrants have equal access to rights and opportunities.²⁸

The party does, however, express a notable fear that immigration could foster a feeling of competition for scarce resources among the autochthonous population. This coincides with the beginning of the economic crisis and the ERC proposal to adapt public services to match the number of users in order to avoid competition over scarce resources (C-P80: 0841). Despite the fact that the analysis does not reveal significant changes in the ERC's discourses, thus questioning the 'selfishness of the affluent' hypothesis²⁹, the economic crisis has led to the inclusion of a new item related to the aforementioned economic thread theory. Whilst avoiding calls for expulsion or closed borders, ERC members have declared that the economic crisis will be especially harsh for newcomers (C-P55:0417) and a question on the impact of unemployment was brought before a parliamentary commission. Also, comments have been raised about preventing competition over scarce resources among persons that are most affected by the crisis. As an ERC interviewee puts it:

Clearly there must be some sort of management, because otherwise you cannot offer all... and now, with all this unemployment, we start seeing these messages such as “our people first”, and other parties could start co-opting this stance. And this is tricky, because... what means “our people”? (...) Now there are these intense budgetary cuts on health and social welfare, and this has some effects. It really can give people the impression that they are competing for the same with “the other, the different” (C-P94:011)

For the SNP, the reversal of Scotland’s demographic decline via increased immigration is prominently connected to the economy. The SNP’s deputy leader said this in 2005:

Scotland faces a number of big challenges in the years ahead. One of the biggest is our declining population and that makes it more important than ever to encourage people from other parts of the world to choose Scotland as their home (S-P12:1826).

References to the economic situation in Scotland relative to that of the UK are made in order to justify the SNP’s calls for Scottish control over immigration. These proclamations sometimes accuse London of draining Scotland of ‘their people and resources’ (S-P12: 0973). A UK MP representing a Scottish constituency neatly summarized this discourse in 2003: ‘the attitude of the UK government towards immigrants is neither compassionate nor considered. It also ignores the dramatic population crisis facing Scotland’ (S-P12:282).

The SNP is less expressive than the ERC with respect to the cultural contribution of immigration. Rather, the SNP’s discourse on immigration emphasizes the economic contribution of immigrants and the preference for newcomers with specific skills:

Too many of our brightest people have to leave Scotland to succeed. We will look at ways of encouraging these people to return. We will also examine ways of

encouraging skilled migrants to settle in Scotland, improving the tax base and wealth creating capacity of our economy, by building a nation where people with skills, capital and ambition can find a home (S-P2:0326).

Finally, unlike in the case of the ERC, the economic crisis does not seem to have had any effect on the SNP's discourse on immigration. Indeed, the demographic crisis is the only crisis that appears in the sources analysed. In sum, the SNP and the ERC note their perceived economic situations—Scotland as 'poor' and Catalonia as 'rich'—and relate their discourses on immigration to it, but the results show convergence rather than divergence: both parties present a positive stance towards immigration. Extant theory predicts that the ERC should want to 'protect' its relatively strong economy and take a negative stance towards immigration, which has not been the case.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to explore how the economy shapes SNRP discourses on immigration. A review of the literature suggested several paths to follow. First, Connor (1984) predicted a systematic rejection by sub-state nationalists of immigration due to economic factors, pointing to the so-called 'selfishness of the affluent'. Moreover, Conversi (1997) predicted a negative reaction to immigration linked to demographic equilibrium, an idea that Hepburn (2014) later completed by adding that the relative economic position of the region can determine whether the stance towards immigration is positive (in poor regions with labour shortages) or negative (in rich regions without labour shortages). The case comparison of the ERC and the SNP was employed to explore these arguments. Does the economy have any influence on SNRP discourses towards immigration? I have argued that, indeed, the relative economic situation does matter, but the causal paths might be different than scholars have suggested previously.

ERC's discourses do not conform to theoretical expectations; that is, in a relatively rich region with a flourishing economy, a negative stance towards immigration should emerge. The ERC portrays immigration as a part of Catalan history and an inevitable process for a modern economy. The response to immigration, then, is to protect social cohesion through ensuring adequate reception of immigrants, equal opportunities and the possibility for immigrants to learn Catalan. Also, the economic crisis does not raise negative reactions or concerns other than the need to maintain social cohesion, making sure that no individual loses his or her access to rights.

With regards to the SNP, in congruence with Hepburn (2014), and in contrast to Connor (1984) and Conversi (1997) immigrants are seen as a potential tool for overcoming Scotland's demographic decline and labour shortages. The SNP has not evoked the economic crisis as a justification for neither positive nor negative views of immigration. The party has maintained a consistently positive stance.

Each party affords different weight to the various dimensions and themes related to immigration. For the SNP, there is much interest in increasing flows to Scotland and obtaining more competencies for Holyrood, and for the ERC, the focus is on granting equal rights, opportunities and access to welfare for immigrants. This is clearly in line with the economic situation in each region.

There are a number of conclusions that can be inferred from the data. First, the different emphases of each party stems from the 'migratory moment' currently underway in each region. While both regions have similar fertility rates, Catalan population decline has been staved off by the migratory waves of the twentieth century. Scotland, on the other hand, has had more trouble attracting immigrants and preventing emigration. Thinking counterfactually, if Scotland were receiving the same amount of

immigrants as Catalonia, we could reasonably believe that the SNP would mirror the ERC's discourse. Each party acknowledges these two differing contexts, which have consequences for each region's respective economy, and some of their stances on immigration come from their understandings of this issue.

Second, the centre-periphery cleavage is also important. Both the ERC and the SNP have consistently pressed their respective states for decentralization and resources. Also, both parties are highly critical of central government policies and laws on immigration. In the case of Catalonia, the fiscal deficit is frequently mentioned and immigration is seen as a 'victim' of the 'unfair situation'. In the Scottish case, Westminster is accused of blocking economic growth by preventing newcomers from entering and settling in Scotland.

The analysis has highlighted issues that further research could tackle. First, despite the lack of consensus over whether left and right positions can explain stances on immigration, it is true that both the SNP and the ERC are (moderate) left-wing parties and their discourse is coherent with Schain's (2008) suggestion of immigrants as a source of working class support. A replication of this exercise with right wing parties in bourgeois and working class regions would be desirable. Secondly, following the idea that the SNP and the ERC are situated on the same side of a continuum of stances towards immigration, but these stances have nuances which are influenced by their migratory contexts, the idea of path-dependency emerges as a possibility for further exploration. As already suggested by Arrighi de Casanova (2012) and Jeram (2013), an SNRP may select its initial immigration stance to oppose central policies, which is then subject to 'positive feedback' as its immigration agenda becomes entangled in the nationalist narrative.

Finally, both parties make references to the incorporation of newcomers into the sub-state nation as opposed to the state nation. While SNP assumes that most immigrants in Scotland will develop a Scottish rather than British identity, for the ERC, it is not as clear and some concerns were raised. The immigrant integration trajectories in different cases—whether the predisposition is towards the sub-state or state nation—might provide a better understanding of why SNRP confront immigration in one way or another.

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1Notes

1 See Kymlicka (2001) Zapata-Barrero (2009) for overviews on the theoretical and policy implications.

2 Exceptions include Triadafilopoulous and Zaslove (2006) and Alonso and Claro (2011).

3 One exception is Hepburn and Rosie (2014).

4 This was, precisely, the main slogan of the Plataforma x Catalunya (PxC), the extreme-right party in Catalonia.

5 Examples of this can be found in Connor (2001) on ethnonationalism, Dietrich (2013) on secession and Conversi (2014) globalization.

6 Scholars have explored how aspects of identity construction emerge from discourses. See Hepburn (2009) and Kleiner-Liebau (2009).

7 See Barker (2012) for an exploration of how distribution of powers affects the saliency of the immigration issue.

8 This was expressed by Harvie (1994), quoted in Massetti (2009, 194)

9 These components have been inductively generated through a first open codification of the materials.

10 That is, showing what Sartori (2005) called blackmail and coalition potential.

11 ERC did so as a part of a tripartite coalition.

12 On a global basis, one could argue that both Catalonia and Scotland are wealthy countries. However, we can also agree with Connor (1984) that the economic dimension of these peripheries is to be considered in relation to their centres. As he argues, 'it is not what it is but what people perceive as is that has political consequences' (2001, 116)

13 223 documents were analysed (all translation by the author). Citations included in the database are labelled 'S' for Scotland and 'C' for Catalonia followed by the number of the document and the starting line. For example: S-P2:300 signifies that the quotation can be found in the second document of the Scottish database at the 300th line.

14 Interviews were done with two types of party members: the parliamentary representative responsible for immigration issues and the party staffers responsible for immigration issues. The interviews were carried out between March and May 2012 in Barcelona (Catalan) and Edinburgh (English) respectively.

15 That is, coding was implemented when a topic relating immigration and any of the aforementioned components emerged, and counted as one. Sources were weighted equally except from interviews, that were coded but not counted.

16 Discourses were counted as aggregated number of quotations.

17 Specific data can be found at INE's web page, www.ine.es.

18 Catalonia's fiscal deficit has been estimated at between 5-10% every year since 1996 depending on the method of calculation (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009). See also Tremosa (2013) for an overview.

19 However, while independence-seeking SNRPs tend to espouse positive stances towards immigration at the autonomous community level in Catalonia, notice must be taken that the more central parties, the socialist (PSC) and the right wing nationalist (CiU) parties exhibit variance at the local level (Garcés-Mascareñas, Franco-Guillén and Sánchez-Montijano 2012).

20 For an overview of these figures, as well as a discussion of the complex allocation of the oil revenues, see Johnson and Phillips (2012).

21 There is a certain amount of confusion around the distribution of resources between the UK and Scotland. In fact, despite the belief that Scotland is a net receiver of transfers, the way oil revenues are accounted influences the final results. See Maxwell (2011).

22 See www.ons.gov.uk/

23 See <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/>

24 Catalonia started managing immigration in the early 1990s when immigrants represented less than 3% of the population, but in Scotland there has been no equivalent planning or legislation.

25 Immigration was politicized in Catalonia by 2000, even though the foreign population amounted to 2.9% of the total. This casts doubt on the argument that Scotland's relatively small immigrant population explains the political consensus.

26 See Franco-Guillén and Zapata-Barrero (2014) for an in-depth discussion on this idea.

27 The analysis reveals that the other SNRP in Catalonia, CiU, has also expressed similar arguments.

28 Although it is not the main objective of this paper, it is important to note that the ERC makes frequent references to granting political rights and access to nationality. The party considers the Spanish nationality laws unjust.

29 Following Masseti's suggestion (2009, 511), which referred to right wing parties, the examination of the CiU becomes especially relevant. However, in the case of CiU discourses, examples of the selfishness of the affluent have not been found at the autonomous level and in fact the Catalan government, currently governed by the coalition, has recently rejected a Spanish ban on offering health services to irregular immigrants.