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Immigration in Catalonia

An Overview

Immigration is not a new phenomenon in Catalonia. Ours is a country that has taken in immigrants from a number of different origins and incorporated them among its assets as a nation. In view of its historical proximity and numerical significance we cannot help but recall the wave of immigration, mostly from the south of Spain, between the 1960s and mid-1970s. Although they are not so well known, also worthy of note are a number of internal migratory movements that, over the years, have led to the depopulation of some regions of the country, in the Pyrenees, for example, bestowing life and activity in others that became the receiving areas.

It is evident, then, that Catalonia has experience and vivid memories of all the aspects of the phenomena of migration. Telling evidence of this is the fact that Catalonia's particular model of integration has been recognised as such, to the extent that it is known as the "Catalan model". It is notable for the melting-pot vocation of Catalan territories and the different processes of fusion that have taken place. Often, however, this relatively successful past is used to give the impression that this experience is sufficient as a response to the new wave of immigration that Catalonia hesitantly began to experience in the early 1980s and that has now taken on very major proportions as we advance further into the 21st century.

Intense Growth in Very Few Years. Nobody would deny that the population of foreigners in Catalonia has grown spectacularly in a particularly short period of time. Nonetheless, it is not so evident that we have managed to grasp the true dimensions of such an abrupt change, which has almost certainly taken us by surprise. In order to capture how our expectations about the evolution of immigration fell well short of the mark, it might be highly illuminating to look again at the demographic forecasts made at the end of the 1990s. In one chapter that appeared in 1998 in a collective work on Catalan society (and published by the Statistical Institute of Catalonia¹), to give only one example of what was written at the time, the forecast for the coming years of the net figure for immigration of foreigners was below an upper limit of 10,000 people per year.

The reality of the immediately succeeding years demonstrated how wrong we were in all our estimates². In 2002, the net balance of immigrants came to 215,000 men and women. In 2003, the figure rose to 230,000. In only three years, from 2001 to 2004, the number of foreign immigrants to Catalonia trebled. And even now, in 2004, we have the same ascendant curve that only five or six years ago we failed even to intuit.

What has happened with immigration in Catalonia these last few years cannot be extricated from a generalised process in a much wider context. Hence we need to be aware of the fact that the number of people around the planet who have been displaced for a period of over twelve months³ from their homes or countries they have adopted (by citizenship) has grown by over 40 million in the last decade. If in 1990 the figures showed that some 120 million people around the world were migrants, the number had risen to 160 million by the year 2000, a growth of more than four million people per year. This means that the world's migrant population today (2004) is, in all probability, greater than 190 million people.

Understanding the scope of these migrations, and trying to make them understood, also requires taking into account these abovementioned facts and assuming, too that, in the coming decades, migratory movements are very likely to keep on growing. To the extent that, on the planetary scale, all forecasts point to the probability that demographic and economic differences between rich or developed regions and poor or underdeveloped regions will only continue to grow throughout the 21st century, we are not very well-equipped to argue that economically-induced migration —the greater part— is going to disappear.

The unequal distribution of wealth is of such a magnitude that a mere glance at a few figures is sufficient to understand the origins of some of this migratory thrust. The 30 countries with the highest GDP have a per capita income that is 22 times higher than that of the 170 countries with the lowest GDP. There is nothing to indicate that this unequal

■ ¹ Blanes, A. (1998) "El futur de la població catalana" in Giner S. (ed.) *La societat catalana*, Barcelona, Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya. Generalitat de Catalunya (169-183).

² Although we know that formulating predictions in the social sciences has always been a high-risk exercise, it is evident that the gap between the predictions and the reality of what has happened is simply gigantic, spectacular. As a political scientist who is an

enthusiast of predictions about electoral behaviour, I am hardly the one to be so bold as to point the finger at my colleagues, who, in the domain of forecasts, have a legitimacy that is far superior to that of political scientists. I have simply used this example to illustrate the distance between the expected scenarios and the social reality.

³ This is the minimum period set by the United Nations for defining a person as a migrant.

distribution will be corrected in the near future. It is hence not difficult to envisage that migratory movements will continue to grow in future and that this increase will also be aided by the fact that, in general, it is now easier for the planet's population to communicate and move about.

MANAGING THE NEW IMMIGRATION

Diversity as a Characteristic of the New Immigration. To return to Catalonia, one must recognise that, with regard to the past, there is a new factor in the more recent immigration that might potentially give rise to a response in Catalan society that is rather different from previous responses. Without wishing to be an alarmist, I believe that this response could, at times, take the form of shock. The new element lies in the high degree of difference between the immigrant and autochthonous populations, with the clear understanding that this diversity is also an intrinsic feature within the collective that we generically identify as immigrant.

To speak of immigration today in Catalonia is to speak of complexity. It is a complexity deriving from a multiplicity of factors —cultural, religious, economic, urban settlement patterns, social, legal, etc.— which means that the challenges posed to us by this latter-day immigration has no direct parallels with previous migratory processes.

A quick look at Table I should be sufficient to obtain a rapid idea of the figures for members of foreign populations registered on 1 January 2004 and classified by zones of origin, with mention, too, of the main countries of origin.

Irregularity: an Expression of Policy Failure. The table gives an idea of the highly plural origins of today's immigrants and also the dimensions of one of the central issues, which is the number of foreigners whose status has not been regularised. Today, in the autumn of 2004, this is probably the burning question among all those that arise in discussion of the issue of immigration. It is evident that the question of irregularity will be positively resolved in general terms quite soon. However, it must be noted that, until it is resolved, any other debate will be affected or conditioned by this factor. Irregularity is the main problem raised today by the arrival of people from other countries, not only because of the numbers involved but also all the explicit and implicit social, economic, political, not to mention moral issues that derive from irregularity.

Again, it should be said, with regard to this matter, that the distance in statistical terms between the two groups of legal and illegal immigrants has continued to grow, year after year. In other words, the growth of the non-regularised foreign population has progressively increased to reach, in Catalonia, a figure of almost 300,000 people. This inevitably brings us to remark the failure of government actions aimed at dealing with both migratory flows and the stay in our country of people whose situation is irregular, administratively speaking.

This failure is still more resounding if we take as our starting point the fact that, in recent years, political action with regard to immigration has basically been focused on containing the entry of immigrants. In accordance with the law, foreigners in an administratively irregular situation have been detected and expelled and, finally,

Census-listed Foreign Population, Regularised Residents and the Difference in Catalonia 2003

	CENSUS		MINISTRY		DIFFERENCE CENSUS/MINISTRY		
Total Population	6,892,497		6,704,146		188,351	% census	% Ministry
Foreign population	689,349		383,938		305,411	44.3	79.5
EUROPE	156,964	22.8	88,440	23.0	68,524	43.7	77.5
European Union	93,080	13.5	62,366	16.2	30,714	33.0	49.2
Rest Europe	63,884	9.3	26,074	6.8	37,810	59.2	145.0
Romania	24,359	3.5	8,040	2.1	16,319	67.0	203.0
Russia	8,396	1.2	3,142	0.8	5,254	62.6	167.2
Ukraine	9,374	1.4	4,634	1.2	4,740	50.6	102.3
AFRICA	198,561	28.8	151,860	39.6	46,701	23.5	30.8
Maghreb	161,146	23.4	122,592	31.9	38,554	23.9	31.4
Algeria	6,484	0.9	4,572	1.2	1,912	29.5	41.8
Morocco	153,305	22.2	117,752	30.7	35,553	23.2	30.2
Rest Africa	37,415	5.4	29,268	7.6	8,147	21.8	27.8
AMERICA	270,665	39.3	102,332	26.7	168,333	62.2	164.5
South and Central	265,399	38.5	99,619	25.9	165,780	62.5	166.4
Argentina	32,182	4.7	9,724	2.5	22,458	69.8	231.0
Bolivia	13,130	1.9	1,493	0.4	11,637	88.6	779.4
Colombia	39,796	5.8	15,501	4.0	24,295	61.0	156.7
Ecuador	87,571	12.7	25,114	6.5	62,457	71.3	248.7
Dominican Rep.	13,697	2.0	10,372	2.7	3,325	24.3	32.1
Peru	22,944	3.3	18,083	4.7	4,861	21.2	26.9
ASIA	62,367	9.0	45,509	11.9	16,858	27.0	37.0
China	21,326	3.1	17,667	4.6	3,659	17.2	20.7
Philippines	6,932	1.0	6,031	1.6	901	13.0	14.9
India	6,434	0.9	3,880	1.0	2,554	39.7	65.8
Pakistan	15,840	2.3	11,720	3.1	4,120	26.0	35.2

Source: Aja, E. and Nadal M. (2004) La immigració a Catalunya avui, Yearbook 2003, Ed. Mediterrània (p. 144)

steps for channelling the new demands of immigration in the direction of regularisation have been considered. The results, if we attend to the data we have available, are discouraging. The great efforts to reinforce policing facilities and improve new measures of vigilance and control at the entry points do not seem to have achieved the results announced by the previous Spanish (Popular Party) Government. On the contrary, what became manifest were the insufficiency and inefficiency that bedevilled the ways in which immigrants could enter the country with their documents in order, or in which illegal immigrants who, for different reasons, were already in the country could regularise their situation.

It should be remarked at this point that the causes of irregularity are very diverse and in no case can they be exclusively or even mainly reduced to the illegal entry of the so-called boat people. Irregularities occur, in many cases, as the result of unforeseen circumstances, for example a period of unemployment coinciding with the time for renewal of permits. In other cases, people have entered the country perfectly legally, for example as tourists, and have not returned to their countries of origin, remaining without taking the requisite legal steps. Whatever the case, it is clear that the regulations for channelling residence

permits or requests for them are totally restricted hence thrusting the majority of foreigners into a situation of irregularity.

As for the mechanisms for channelling migratory flows, the main mechanism the central government has chosen to adopt is that known as contingencies. Needless to say, this method has proved to be inadequate, probably because of the bias it has incorporated (basically favouring workers destined for the agricultural sector and mostly coming from Eastern Europe) and especially because of the low numbers (even considerably below those authorised) of people who have been accepted in recent years.

Migration policy has been guided by principles appropriate to a Ministry of the Interior, neglecting other aspects that must be taken into account for successfully embarking upon political action aimed at dealing with the phenomenon of migration. When political action fails (and the statistics confirm this failure) with the result that hundreds of thousands of people —the so-called irregular immigrants— are left in a situation of invisibility, it becomes much more difficult to influence the resulting situation. The State itself —at least in formal terms— closes the doors to any possible intervention except expulsion. At this point, one should note that, as was all too predictable, the use of this measure has been shown to be unfeasible in global terms.

Without underestimating other considerations that pertain more to the moral or ethical domains, it must be stressed that any migration-focused response that is based strictly on policing and the so-called border politics is unworkable, as events have lamentably borne out in recent years.

The problem of so many people who are trying to exist without the requisite documents can only be overcome through radical change in the political foundations that determine Spanish legislation, or by guaranteeing greater efficiency in observing political guidelines or the legislation in force. In other words, either these highly restrictive principles should be modified, and moves made towards smoothing the way to legality for all those people who live and work in our country, or there should be brought to bear a real capacity to stop the flow of immigrants, to seal off borders and expel all those without the requisite papers. Otherwise the problem will only continue to grow. My logical inclination is for the kind of solutions that will apparently go into effect at the end of this year —though they are neither as satisfactory nor as generous as one might have hoped— with new immigration regulations that favour the progressive and permanent regularisation of people who are able to demonstrate that they are working in the country.

Self-government and Immigration Policy. It is essential to approach the phenomenon of immigration from the point of view of institutional management. First, it should be noted that there are several kinds of determining factors that greatly obstruct immigration management. One of these is the insufficiency of state laws in the face of a worldwide predicament. Today's model of the nation-state is totally inadequate for managing immigration policy. It is insufficient for managing a phenomenon on a worldwide scale and neither is it effective when it comes to producing policies of proximity without which social cohesion is difficult to maintain. Both these questions are directly related with immigration.

In Catalonia, moreover, we suffer from a second determining factor because our governmental institutions are clearly limited in their ability to intervene in this domain. I do not wish to state that greater jurisdiction for the Generalitat (the autonomous Government of Catalonia) in the area of immigration would be the solution to the problems we are faced with today. It is evident that part of the solution to nation-state ineffectiveness would only be found in reinforcing the European Union. However, this is not to contradict the assertion that what is needed is a normative development that confers on institutions like the Generalitat and municipal councils clear jurisdiction in developing immigration policies that are worthy of the name. The complexity of the reality of migration requires proximity, and the central government does not guarantee this. The different branches of the Catalan administration, the Generalitat and local administration, need to apply immigrant reception policies but lack the basic powers

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to establish content, with regard to both the number and profile of immigrants, and having any active role in determining this content in concert with the State as a whole.

In our case, there is also a need for institutional intervention in order to ensure that the presence of new immigration does not have a negative impact on the processes of national consolidation and linguistic normalisation. Such measures must not, in any case, resort to alarmism and neither should

they be implemented as if there is some kind of threat to Catalan identity. Immigration represents no threat today, yet it is clear that the sensibility that needs to be conveyed to the new arrivals in order to favour the most rapid and complete possible incorporation into the country is unlikely to come from institutions like the central government, which has not been known to show much sensitivity in this regard.

In any process of social integration, the language of the country of reception is a basic factor. In our case, one observes obvious shortcomings in the ways in which the immigrant is offered an approximation to the Catalan language. The fact that there are two official languages might mean that, because of lack of knowledge, immigrants opt to learn one of them, in particular Spanish, thereby relegating Catalan to a second—or third—rate position of inferiority for the majority of the immigrant population. Initiatives like those of the *Consorti per a la Normalització Lingüística* (Consortium for Linguistic Normalisation - CNL) to give immigrants the opportunity to learn Catalan, and to set up easy-to-join and open-to-all Catalan courses with this aim are kinds of measures that are essential.

The idea is not so much that people should be able to speak Catalan as their everyday language but rather that people who speak other languages should accept in a totally natural fashion that the language spoken in Catalonia is Catalan.

For these and other reasons the Catalan Government needs to play a more prominent role in the determination of these policies. The Generalitat should participate with the central Government in a predetermined and permanent space with the aim of defining the most



relevant aspects of immigration policy. Notable among the issues at stake are questions referring to content (number and profile of immigrants) and the possibility of taking the lead with regard to measures that can affect Catalonia, for example the procedures for contracting workers in their countries of origin and also different kinds of intervention on control of the residence and work permits of this population.

The Solitude of the Local World. In another institutional sphere, the municipalities—and hence the local councils—are daily required to respond to the impact of immigration with some or other kind of intervention. On most occasions, the policies that need to be implemented in the municipalities require greater powers than the councils have. This situation should be understood if bridges of collaboration and inter-institutional coordination are to be established. It is probably necessary to determine criteria so that local regulations in this terrain are not an isolated and voluntary product of the councils. Local action with respect to immigration is exposed to the contradiction of obligatorily having to include in the census people to whom the central government does not concede a residence permit and yet, in many cases, also having to offer these people certain public services as a result.

Small municipalities with little economic and administrative capacity are faced with even more difficulties than the larger ones. In general, however, the resources available to the municipalities to cope with needs deriving from immigration are noticeably scarce. Great advances have manifestly been made in the domain of concepts but resources and agility of procedures have remained the same. There has been no compensation in terms of special resources for the overload that immigration has so often represented for local government, with all the tensions that this creates in a financial situation—the local government one—that was already inadequate. Supra-municipal planning at the regional and sub-regional levels could help to resolve some of the difficulties by improving the efficiency of available resources. Activities of this type can save councils from being faced with a double dilemma: not knowing what to do, and not knowing what resources to use, assuming they do know what to do.

One of the most common errors of the different administrations has been to leave immigration policy in the hands of the social services. Immigration has brought out the weak points of the welfare state in Catalonia. In any case, the activities of social policy need to focus not only on foreign immigrants but on the citizens as a whole. Social service policy should be accompanied by a universalisation of immigrant rights. Otherwise we would be cultivating a policy that is more appropriate to the nineteenth century than to the twenty-first. In fact, it ought to be kept in mind that any response from the public sector vis-à-vis immigration runs the risk of stigmatising the immigrant. There is a general tendency in society to blame immigration for too many things and this should be rectified in order to avoid future conflicts. One of the most frequent complaints is that immigrants use up the resources of the welfare state.

At this point, it should be remarked that immigration exposes the social deficiencies that were already inherent in our welfare and social protection system. Immigration sometimes acts as a mirror that magnifies some of the worst aspects of the system, thereby making them more visible. In the case of social policy—especially economic transfers—what appears is an increase in demand that is not accompanied by any

increase in available assistance. In the social sphere, this means that what some people have defined as the soup-kitchen syndrome—which is to say a certain kind of struggle for a scarce resource and a sense of grievance, and thence blaming of the immigrant for monopolising this resource— could take root and extend.

Political action with regard to immigration should have both medium- and long-term perspectives, which in any case should look beyond the date of the next elections. Fortunately many *immigration plans* have been drafted with a longer-term view than that of council electoral cycles, and neither are they restricted to the area of personal services. When they have been drawn up with the participation of all political forces, even those that are not represented in the town hall, and including NGOs, associations and other entities in recognition of the co-responsibility of civil society in the task of managing diversity, the results have been much more positive.

In any reflection on these aspects of the matter, some remarks

need to be made on the associative network. To begin with, there is clearly excessive fragmentation among many social agents and, in general, there is little coordination. The non-governmental network has frequently been obliged to take responsibility for the processes of receiving immigrants, especially in cases of those whose situation has not been regularised. This is a subsidiary function of the administration, although its different branches, either at national or local level or, in other words, the Generalitat or municipal councils, do not give the matter sufficient attention. In recent years these tasks have multiplied exponentially. The fact that it is estimated that there are tens of thousands of people in Catalonia without residence or work permits has given rise to this growth in services and assistance activities in the non-governmental sphere.

The Limits of Liberalism. The constraints, however, will not be overcome by means of institutional or jurisdictional revamping, or with policy design and drafting. There are more general deficits, of a political nature, that will need to be reviewed in order to make any advances in creating new conditions favourable to a political model in which diversity does not constitute an obstacle for social and political cohesion.

The inability of liberalism to deal reasonably with the cultural pluralism presented by immigration is a serious problem. It is not possible, from the standpoint of the classical, predominant liberal paradigm, to respond adequately to a situation that is as plural as that presented by present-day social reality, when there are people who still persist in claiming that the only rights that exist are individual and social and that there is no such thing as collective rights (of all kinds of minority groups, stateless nations, etc.). Political liberalism is still too timorous in its advance towards recognising this new generation of rights, despite the efforts that some people have made in recent years to bring collective rights into some harmony with liberal doctrine and incorporate them therein.

Respectful and effective dealing with diversity and plurality is a very complicated matter for any branch of the administration if the foundations of political integration

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have not been already established. It is impossible if foreigners have not previously been permitted to join a shared public sphere. It would be difficult to administer diversity in any responsible and effective manner unless a prior principle of basic equality had been introduced, this being based on citizen rights.

Particularly relevant is the fact that it is impossible for the immigrant population to exercise voting rights under any circumstances. In practice, this fact becomes an obstacle involving nothing less than community-based exclusion of immigrants, thereby making their full integration unworkable. The right of suffrage is one of the greatest instruments of integration of the liberal democracies since it is an expression of the principle of equality. Its extension to the immigrant

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collective must mean that immigrants can leave behind their condition of being an immigrant to become yet another citizen of the country.

Only comparable rights and duties for the population as a whole in a country can guarantee the idea of integration. Logically, the legal dimension of integration alone is not sufficient to guarantee social cohesion, but it is absolutely necessary.

Unless the present bases of political liberalism as applied to immigration are overturned, there is a risk that immigration policies will end up reducing the immigrant to a category that is subject to the needs of the job market rather than to the authority of a democratic principle. In terms of incontrovertible political and social cohesion, Europe successfully overcame the excesses of human commodification at the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to an intelligent combination of universally applied political democracy and social rights.

CLOSING REMARKS

Catalan society and its institutions need to have a model or project for receiving and incorporating the immigrant population. Political actions should be guided and determined by such a project. This shared model is what can guarantee the coherence and efficiency of the different branches of the administration, while designing and implementing their policies. It is evident that it should take into account Catalonia's previous experience of immigration. The very clear component of the fusion that resulted from former migratory processes is solid enough for an attempt to be made to repeat it today. The management of diversity in our country does not have to copy what is happening in other countries. The cultural and national characteristics specific to Catalonia enable us to think about the opportunity of advancing with our own home-grown model.

It is also clear that the debate that would lead to the definition of this model should take place within the framework of institutions pertaining to the Generalitat, in other words, the Catalan Parliament and Government, without this working in detriment of additional spaces of participation so that the possibility of contributing is guaranteed to other actors in the institutional and civic spheres.

This model would only be possible if the project were based on wide-ranging political and social consensus. Such a consensus would not work against the essential leadership the Government would have to provide in order to give the indispensable momentum and coherence to each and every initiative in the public sphere in response to the issues of immigration. Naturally, in every sphere of activity, the leaders would need to respond to the reality that exists today.

Finally, I shall list a number of ideas that may be useful in opening up the debate about the direction in which we should be moving in our policies of adaptation.

1 Any policy of adaptation requires some kind of monitoring of migratory flows.

It is not possible to design policies, envisage the resources needed, assign services, and so on, without some real-world estimates of the number of inflowing immigrants. I am not proposing that borders should be closed. There is room for many more people in Catalonia than we have today but, however true this may be, in Catalonia, as in any other country, reception capacity is not unlimited. Only if we accept this reasoning and what derives from it, can we be in a position to avoid the kind of collapse we now have with the present policies of adaptation, and to circumvent the instrumental use of fear that we find in the more conservative sectors with regard to immigration.

It is not possible to consider any policy of integration if this is based on a model that envisages immigrant presence in the country as a temporary phenomenon, and that therefore does not take sufficiently into account the desire to stay on permanently. It is not reasonable to think about effective policies of integration if the adjudication and renovation of residence permits is essentially subject to periodical labour requirements. The dignity of any human being should be seen as being superior to any other criteria, especially those that belong to the economic or labour spheres.

As long as a major part of the immigrant population remains in a situation of irregularity, we shall need to envisage a complicated, an extremely complicated period in which adaptation might occur. The simple fact of the existence of non-legal immigrants automatically makes any immigrant suspect. This suspicion then invites police checks, neighbours' doubts and many other factors that make coexistence difficult.

2 From a different perspective, there is a need for considering change in the basic elements of political culture vis-à-vis the foreigner. We need to accept as a collective that the opportunity to dignify one's own existence and to prosper, even if this means leaving one's own country and seeking acceptance in another, is a right that can be denied to no one. It makes no sense that we should accept the free circulation of capital and goods but not of people.

Again, we must reject attitudes of tolerant paternalism towards immigrants because they are poor. We need to construct a plural recognition of our society, in the awareness that this is precisely the kind of social pluralism that liberalism has been unable to create to date. This is not a matter of blind acceptance of coexistence between different groups merely as a lesser evil. It is a question of understanding that our society has changed in some aspects that were once seen as immutable.

Western societies have probably never before known such a degree of cultural heterogeneity as what we are now experiencing. We need to learn to live in diversity among different collectives, a diversity that evidently must not serve as an excuse for social or political inequalities. This is a very far-reaching cultural change and difficult to accept for some members of the population. Probably years will have to go by before we achieve a social mass that would be sufficiently solid to enable us to state that diversity is one of the characteristics of our society.

3 It is reasonable to think that acceptance of this diversity should not be constructed on the basis of segmentation and spatial and social differentiation among the diverse collectives. Should this occur in a generalised fashion, it will be the germ that will prevent cohesion in the future. Yet, one should also warn that the natural tendency of any migratory process is to generate such differentiation. A tour through our cities and towns clearly confirms this. Far from leading to resignation, corroboration of this fact should move us to draw up new policies that aim to avoid chronic repetition of segmentation within the collective. Our model cannot be that of the United States, with the exacerbating factor that other assumptions or models, too (the Dutch one, for example), still run the risk of ending up with results that are in no way more satisfactory than those of the American model.

The aim is to find out how to foster social mobility and break up social inherency. It is therefore essential to recognise the social and working rights, as well as short-term political rights, of any person residing in Catalonia.

4 Immigration does not debilitate the welfare state but it does, in the worst of cases, expose pre-existing shortcomings. On the other hand, it is also necessary to appreciate—which is all too infrequently the case—the contribution made by the immigrant community to our country's generation of wealth. I do not refer to the coffers of social security alone, but also to the non-regularised population working in the black economy, generating wealth in both production and consumption terms.

5 Such measures need to be taken with the conviction that regularisation must not involve any kind of stigmatisation. We began to make the great social leap forward in Europe when some social policies—at the end of the nineteenth century—left the realm of the specific and took on the dimension of universality or, in other words, when they finally left behind the poor laws, which had functioned as a mere sop towards poverty, in order to bring society into the welfare state.

6 Public administration must act in a transversal sense, in an effective and indisputable direction. Leadership is essential to guarantee such a transversal line of action. However, this idea is not sufficient if we take into account the many and serious difficulties that lie behind any action that is supposed to be transversal. Transversality is only possible from a working and organisational culture that is different from what we have today in most areas of administration.

7 In recent months we have moved forward in the sense of not presenting immigration as a problem in the public arena. Now, perhaps, is the time to accept that discussion needs to be politicised, but also making sure it does not lapse into mere party politics.

8 There are still institutions that fear having to produce a plan that deals with these issues. It is impossible to have a viable plan—at either municipal or national level— unless two conditions are observed: first, a clear set of priorities in terms of objectives and, second, appropriate economic resources. A plan does not mean compiling in a document a narrative and a list of good intentions about extant policies and services.

9 Needless to say, political leadership is required at national level to give momentum to any measures that are taken. Parliament and the Government need to be involved, and guidelines must be clearly stated. Also needed among the institutions is understanding, not just passive but patently active, something that has been conspicuous by its absence in Catalonia in recent years.

To conclude with a final statement, it is essential to achieve political and social acceptance of the migratory phenomenon that is presently being experienced in Catalonia. This acceptance has to begin with the idea that what the newcomers want is simply to be recognised as citizens so that they can live in the present and future with a dignity that in many cases has hitherto been denied them. Social coherence will depend on the capacity we have for constructing a universe of values, attitudes and perceptions that is shared by autochthonous and new inhabitants alike. It will depend on factors that we find existing in any society, and that we can identify as the basic elements upon which we construct our present and future. Defining these elements and knowing how to agree upon them within our society is the next step we shall have to take. If we manage to do this, we will be able to hold at bay the immigration-derived fears and phantoms that circulate among us today with regard to our social and national future **II**