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# Globalization, Latin American Migration and Catalan: Closing the Ring

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**Abstract:** This article examines the effects of globalization dynamics on the use of Catalan among Latin American migrants living in Catalonia. The globalization process pushes towards an increasing mobility of workers and companies. Barcelona is one of the cities where this dynamic has been more evident in the last two decades, with big areas of the city being reshaped in order to suit the needs of global capital. At the same time, Catalonia has been receiving vast numbers of Latin American migrants who already speak Spanish, one of the official languages of the region, but not the other, Catalan. This article will examine the conflicting pressures experienced by those migrants both in the labor market and in their communities.

**Keywords:** globalization; migration; Latin American; Catalan

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## 1. Introduction

The 21st Century has brought quite shocking changes for Spain and very specifically for Catalonia, the wealthiest region of the country, situated in the northeast and bordering France. Economic, social and demographic changes have happened fast since the return of democracy. This paper intends to reflect on the effect of those changes on the opportunity structure for Latin American migrants in Catalonia and also on the situation of the Catalan language in the region. Two facts are of special importance regarding Latin American migrants in Catalonia: Latin America is, today, the main area of origin of migrants to Catalonia, closely followed by the Maghreb [1]. Latin American migrants speak Spanish but are, however, often reluctant to learn Catalan, despite Catalan being the co-official language in Catalonia.

This paper is based on fieldwork conducted during and after my doctoral research on Argentinean and Ecuadorian migrants in Barcelona (Spain) and Milano (Italy) [2]. Fieldwork consisted in in-depth biographical interviews covering the entire employment trajectory of individual migrants, from education in the country of origin to arrival and settlement in Catalonia. Considering the bilingualism of Catalan society, special preeminence was given in the interviews to the issue of language use and language learning. It is important to take into account that many quick changes in the migration situation and in migration policy in Catalonia were happening in the first decade of the 21st century. These changes have had major effects in the situation of Latin American migrants and their linguistic choices reflect this.

The structure of the paper is as follows: (1) A brief historic account on migration in Catalonia; (2) A reflection on the effect of globalization trends in Catalan society and the way in which these trends affect international migration; (3) An outline of the situation of Latin American Migrants in Spain and Catalonia and how those migrants enter the Spanish labor market and (4) Concluding remarks on the relationship between globalization and Latin American migration for the case of Catalonia.

## **2. A Brief History of Migration in Catalonia**

Catalonia has always been an important migration hub in Europe. As a region located in the north-western tip of the Iberian Peninsula, separated from France only by the Pyrenees, it was a land of transition for the many peoples who populated Europe. It was also a region that developed an industrial tissue relatively early, which itself attracted migration. Catalonia became in the early 19th century the most dynamic region of Spain.

The textile industry flourished particularly not only in Barcelona and its immediate surrounding area but also in some towns in the inland areas of the Province of Barcelona, like Sabadell and Terrasa. As southern Spain was still predominantly an agrarian region, internal migration from Andalucia, Extremadura, Aragon and even some parts of Castille flowed to Catalonia. This internal migration was Spanish-speaking while the local language was Catalan.

Internal migration stalled during the II Republic (1931–1936) and again during the civil war (1936–1939) and finally in first years of the long dictatorship of General Francisco Franco (1939–1975). However, by the late 1950s migration flows resumed, this time arriving from the most impoverished regions of Spain. These internal migrants started populating the shanty towns that were appearing in the outskirts of cities like Madrid and Barcelona. The industrial boom that brought thousands of internal migrants to Catalonia became to be known as “desarrolismo” (developmentalism). This migration has been analyzed, among others, by Carlota Solé [4].

Internal migrants spoke Spanish, the only officially sanctioned language during the dictatorship but arrived in a region where factory managers and local workers spoke another language, Catalan. The Catalan language was not only unknown to them, but also formally banned by the dictatorship, who despised “peripheral nationalisms”. This dual barrier (linguistic differences and the prohibition of the local language) made their cultural integration more difficult. There was even some internal racism that prompted locals to call “charnegos” (a derogative term roughly meaning “neither from here not from there”) to the newcomers.

Internal migrants had to learn Catalan. Catalan, even being formally banned, was the language of day to day interaction and therefore it had to be learnt in order to fully integrate with the locals. However, they could not demand language training from the central government (during the dictatorship there was no Catalan government) in order to enhance their knowledge of Catalan. Teaching the language was forbidden. Internal migrants from poorer regions of Spain such as Andalusia or Extremadura became part of the Catalan society through work in the factories and they learnt Catalan informally in speaking with their colleagues and friends. An important role in Catalan language transmission was played by the community associations and Unions in Barcelona, who combined political mobilization for improving working conditions with language training for newcomers [4].

Catalan became again the main language in Catalonia after Franco's death. The regional government of Catalonia, called the Generalitat (Generality) was reinstated and political power began to be delegated towards Catalonia and other regions. In 1978, a new regional constitution, the "Statute of Sau" was approved, recognizing the need for a reintroduction of the Catalan language in schools and public sphere in General. The Statute laid the first stone towards the implementation of the educational model that came to be known as "linguistic immersion". This model consists in the introduction of Catalan as the main vehicular language in education. The model allows for a comprehensive experience of learning in Catalan at all educational levels. Children are taught most courses in the Catalan language from the start, and there is a specific unit for Spanish language at Catalan schools. According to institutional sources [5], the system has been largely successful. Surveys have shown that nowadays most of Catalan society is bilingual, but it has also come under attack by conservative groups who defend monolingual education in Spanish.

The "linguistic immersion" model has enhanced the role of Catalan in Catalan society as well as its international prominence. Catalan is now spoken by second generation internal migrants with a degree of proficiency that can be defined as excellent. As for foreign migrants, they have been arriving in Catalonia for some time now and an interesting paradox emerges concerning their language learning. If Catalan should appear more foreign for them as many had not even heard about it before arriving into Spain, the opposite is true. They have access to Catalan courses from the start and often are more willing to learn than internal migrants. Catalan society is now more diverse and a more cosmopolitan society tends to allow more room for the inclusion of minorities. This has also been an effect of globalization, as we will see in the following pages. Globalization in Catalonia has increased the tensions between local and global norms. Robertson has spoken about the effect of global changes having a local impact, which is giving rise to the concept of "glocal", something that is global and local at the same time [6].

However, there are exceptions to the aforementioned willingness of migrants to learn Catalan, which concern some specific members of the Latin American community. As most of them are Spanish-Speakers, they are often reluctant to follow Catalan courses, as Catalan is a language they dismiss as "folkloric". Therefore, Latin American migrants often oppose policies which try to enforce and increase the use of Catalan language. Our informants expressed repeatedly critical opinions regarding Catalan nationalist policies pushing for an increase in the use and social presence of Catalan. They also expressed fears that promotion of Catalan would endanger the quality of the education received by their children. This can be seen in the following extract:

P: So, how did you manage with Catalan?

R: Well, when I arrived here I thought it was fantastic that they pushed for Catalan language and culture. For 17 years I was president of the parents union, where we channeled very interesting struggles in support of state education (...) I fought for the rights of parents of children that wanted them to be taught in their native tongue. In only two years, that changed. Political circumstances in Catalonia changed and immersion in Catalan entered the picture (...) I decided to back the right for children to be schooled in their native tongue, in particular I was fighting for the rights of the children that came from Spanish-speaking families. And then I clashed and I was looked at in a bad way by people. To me this was something inexplicable because I was just repeating the same ideas that two or three years ago I used to defend these people's rights (...). Scientists say that a kid (...) should be taught in his or her native tongue. There are many psychological reasons for this. Many of my colleagues were from Castille. (C., Argentinean migrant).

Interviews have repeatedly shown a reluctance to learn Catalan among Latin American migrants and a dismissal of both nationalist policies and the enforcement of Catalan [2,7]. This is specially the case among those migrants who arrived in Catalonia accompanied by spouse or partner from their country of origin and had no contact with Catalan-speakers in the communities where they lived. On the other hand, migrants who arrived unmarried, or remarried in Catalonia, appear to be more willing to learn Catalan and assimilate.

In fact, the presence in Catalonia of Latin American migrants who refuse to learn Catalan, notwithstanding the positive effects that this may have in their insertion and the overall effect in social cohesion, is one of the most telling effects of globalization in the Catalan context. In the following pages we will examine the effects of globalization in the Catalan economy and the labor market.

### 3. Globalization in Catalan Society

Globalization has been defined by the Spanish Sociologist Manuel Castells as “an economic system which works globally in real time” [8]. This means that, for the first time in human history, what happens in one corner of the world may have instant effects on distant locations. The economy now works 24 hours-a-day, which means that state boundaries do not serve to counter social change caused by economic change. In Catalonia, the high speed of economic and social changes brought upon by globalization is simultaneous with the arrival of foreign migration. It is also in sharp contrast with the backward Catalonia and Spain of the 1950–1960s, the decades in which most internal migrants arrived. Therefore, foreign migration is increasing at the same time that the pace of social change is accelerating, something that has implications for the way in which migrants settle and are perceived by Catalan society.

The civil war (1936–1939) and the dictatorship of General Franco (1939–1975) worked hard in order to isolate Spain from social changes that were happening in the rest of the world. The motto was “España: una, grande y libre” (Spain: one, big and free). This slogan was darkly ironic, as Spain was multiple (culturally), not-so-big and of course, as a military dictatorship, it was not free. Being a country which was cut-off from the rest of world for much of the 20th century (the Francoist regime even resorted to call the economic model for Spain an “Autarchy”), the reintroduction to the world that came with democratic reform implied deep changes in economic policy and in Spanish Culture.

Towards the 1970s, already under Franco's rule, a group of economists influenced by the teachings of religious order Opus Dei entered into the Spanish government. Theirs was a technocratic reform directed to integrate Spanish Economy in the European and global context. They intended to modernize Spain's economy, to put it more in line with the rest of Europe. However, nobody knew at the time what concessions Spain would make in order to join the European Union.

After Franco's death in 1975, the entrance of Spain in the EEC (European Economic Community) became a primary objective of Spain's democratic government. The transition to democracy was achieved in the first place through reform rather through rupture. Spain finally joined the EEC, along with Portugal, in 1986. The entrance in the EEC (later EU), meant an increase in trade with their immediate neighbors and an increase in mobility following the setup of the Schengen Treaty in 1985, which implied the free liberty of people across the members of 12 European Union Members states.

Migration flows have transformed Spain very quickly, as in only 20 years' time the migration rate has passed from 2% at the beginning of the 1990s to nearly 20% nowadays [9]. The migration rate is even higher in the inner city of Barcelona and in other mid-sized towns in the metropolitan area. The creation of migrant neighborhoods in many Catalan towns has meant a transformation in the urban landscape of Catalonia. Neighborhoods in the outskirts of big cities, which once were populated by internal migration, have now become Moroccan, Chinese or Latin American. The inner city of some towns has also become populated by migrants. Local governments face mounting pressure of demands from both locals and migrants; these demands are sometimes contradictory. The local government of the city of Barcelona has given rise to a discourse on migration that purports to integrate newcomers but in fact patronizes them, giving an image of a welcoming city that is contradicted by the discourse of some local associations [10]. In the following pages we analyze the situation of Latin American migrants in the Catalan labor market.

Structures such as the ERASMUS program, which enable European students to study abroad, have been key to the construction of links between nationals of member states. The film "L'auberge espagnole" (Cedric Klapisch, 2002) is a depiction of increasing cosmopolitanism of Europe in general and Barcelona in particular brought upon by the ERASMUS program. Through the eyes of a young French student that arrives in Barcelona to study and lives with a group of students from several countries, the film is a good portrait of a city where several languages coexist. It also has a sequence that shows what happens to foreign students in Catalan University. Barcelona is experiencing the tension between global changes and local needs. Borja & Castells have pointed out that increasing segregation in cities such as Barcelona is not the inheritance of past discrimination but a growing malaise of the global society where the age of global information is also the age of local segregation [11].

Intra-European mobility has been especially important for Spain, as before the 1980s very few Spaniards spoke foreign languages. The level of proficiency in foreign languages was considerably lower in Spain than in other European countries. This was especially important compared with foreign language proficiency in countries in central and northern Europe where is typical to learn at least two foreign languages from an early age. Furthermore, up to the 1980s the second language of choice at many Catalan schools was French, not English. However, both levels of mobility and language learning of the Catalan population have increased in recent years and today there is a higher percentage of the population that has lived and worked in other countries. Among the factors that have helped to

increase mobility and language learning amongst Catalans, mention must be made of the mobility programs sponsored by the European Union, such as the ERASMUS program of student exchange.

The strongest evidence of the increasing globalization of Catalonia is within the city of Barcelona itself. Starting 20 years ago with the hosting of 1992 Olympics, the city has born witness to a process of urban renewal that is attracting important levels of investment to the city. International corporations are continuously opening branches in the city, attracted by its Mediterranean location, office space (in districts such as the revamped “Poble Nou” which went through a redesign in the wake of the Olympics), and lively cultural scene.

In a previous research, we studied how European expats and skilled migrants working in transnational and multinational companies dealt with life in the city of Barcelona and with the issue of living a bilingual society [12]. Newcomers come to Barcelona attracted by the city and its cultural life, in a way which is not unlike Richard Florida’s thesis about the creative city [13]. Therefore, aside from immediate employment concerns, globalization and the increase in global popularity of Barcelona played a crucial role in their reasons for settling in the city.

Globalization changed dramatically the economic landscape of the city, as new economic activities replaced the old ones. A city that was not long ago based in industry is now a service-oriented node of Southern Europe. In the next figure we reflect the evolution of the economy of the economic sectors of the city.

**Table 1.** Economic sectors in Barcelona.

Sectors	1971	1981	1991	1996	2001	2004
<b>Primary</b>	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
<b>Secondary</b>	53.9%	37.8%	35.0%	27.7%	20%	19.2%
<b>Tertiary</b>	45.6%	58.2%	64.7%	71.9%	79.8%	81.6%

Source: [5,14]

Together with the changes in economy, the labor market has experienced important transformations. Today, most people in Barcelona work in the service sector. However, the service sector in contemporary cities is highly polarized between highly-skilled well-paid jobs in management and accounting of transnational companies, and low-skilled, lower paid jobs in cleaning, catering and retail services [15]. Barcelona is fast-becoming an increasingly dual city, polarized between highly skilled workers who are highly mobile and low skilled workers who are strictly local. The increasing duality and segregation in the city has been reflected in some academic works that are critical of the so-called “Model Barcelona” [16]. Among those highly skilled workers that are arriving in Barcelona we also find some cosmopolitan managers of the type. Beaverstock [17,18] studied in London and other settings.

These highly skilled professionals also need low skilled services of catering, cleaning, and retail, which are often occupied by newcomers. Migrants and newcomers to the city may end up in one or the other category, depending not only on their education and employment experience but also on the migration and employment laws of the host society which have changed ostensibly in the last two decades. The options and choices that migrants have regarding language learning and language use are determined by the way of entry in the labor market. Those who access highly skilled jobs have more

options regarding language use and adaptation to the city than those who work in unskilled jobs and are limited by economic and time constraints. Therefore, the opportunity structure offered by Barcelona is different according to the features of migrants.

Regarding the opportunity structure that the city offers to foreign migrants, in the case of Barcelona we are speaking about three different institutional levels that are intertwined in a very complex way. In the first place, the Kingdom of Spain, who is in charge on the main core of entry policies since the introduction of the first Foreign Law in 1986 [3]. Therefore, it is the central government who decides the number of migrants who can enter Spain each year. It is also the central government who establishes the yearly quotas of migrants that may enter the country according to the purported needs of every economic sector. This prerogative of the state has been criticized occasionally by the regional governments, which would like to input on quotas. Catalan nationalist parties argue that the economic strategy of Catalonia should differ from that of the rest of Spain.

Integration policies for migrants are designed at the level of the autonomous communities. In the case of Catalonia, this means integration policies have been managed mostly by political parties which define themselves as nationalist (more specifically the conservatives of CiU, with the exception of the period from 2003 to 2011, when a coalition of socialist and center-left parties governed). The “Generalitat” (the traditional designation of the Catalan government, which means Generalty) is in charge of designing the policies regarding the settlement of new migrants. These include the access to social services (health, education) and also programs related to social cohesion, multiculturalism and interculturalism. Among the most prominent of those we can mention the cultural mediators charged with the task of mediating in the daily disputes that endanger social cohesion in multicultural settings.

Last but not least, the municipal level is tasked with day-to-day duties of implementing policies devised in the other administrative levels. In practice, this means that the administrations which are nearest to the citizen are bound to comply with the often contradictory demands of higher administrative levels, all the while dealing with limited budgets. The result is that the demands of higher administrations are reinterpreted by “street-level bureaucrats” who have to make difficult choices. Solé [19] has shown how migrants often follow rigid paths in their relationship with the public administration of the host society because of their lack of procedural knowledge. Contradicting mandates, such as the simultaneous controlling of undocumented migrants and strengthening the social cohesion of neighborhoods, are frequent, as shown by Aramburu [20], among others.

In the years immediately before and during the ongoing economic crisis, conflicts between migrants and locals regarding the competition for dwindling public resources have escalated. Among the most usual issues of contention are the so-called “cafeteria grants” in primary and secondary schools. These grants are awarded so the most needful children of the community may have lunch at school. Some locals and right-wing parties such as Plataforma X Catalunya have complained that an unusual amount of grants are awarded to children of migrants and that local children are being left behind. PxC is a far-right party that was born in the mid-sized town of Vic in the late 1990s. This party has espoused a strict anti-migration rhetoric that has earned strong support within the context of economic crisis.

Aramburu [20] has shown that citizenship demands that are contradictory are connected with the speed of social change which is related to, but not caused by, migration and globalization.

However, these complaints fail to acknowledge that resources allocated to those social policies are not only very limited but that authorities are reducing them because of budget cuts. The result is a backlash against multicultural policies.

Globalization, in Catalonia as in other countries, is creating tensions: interconnecting economies and societies without offering the instruments to deal with increasing instability and diversity. In Catalonia the national question makes this even more complex, as people (both local and migrants) often feel insecure about which instance of the multi-level government is responsible for policies affecting them. Catalan nationalist politicians protest that Catalonia is being shortchanged by the central government in Madrid. Their claims of greater autonomy for Catalonia are also linked to the conflicts between citizens' demands and limited resources. In the next section we analyze the implications of these conflicts between demands and resources in the insertion of Latin American migrants in the labor market.

#### **4. Latin American Migrants in the Catalan Labor Market**

Latin Americans, and more specifically, Ecuadorians, are the biggest migrant community in Catalonia and have been so throughout the last decade. In 2012, there were 68,881 Ecuadorians in Catalonia. The only foreign nationalities whose numbers were bigger than Ecuadorians were the Moroccans (237,007) and Romanians (101,912). Other Latin American communities that were present were the Bolivians (52,485), Colombians (45,474), Peruvians (32,577) and Argentineans (28,923) [9].

The arrival of so many Latin American migrants in Catalonia was triggered as much by internal as external factors. The legal restrictions on migration flows to the U.S. introduced in the aftermath of 9/11 were one of the main factors that deviated migration flows, which previously had been toward the U.S., not to Spain and Catalonia. This is shown in the unprecedented increase in migration towards Catalonia from 2002 onwards [9]. Another element that changed was the demand of domestic service by Spanish families, which increased in the context of incorporation of women to the Spanish labor market [21].

The result has been the arrival of more 200,000 immigrants from Latin America to Catalonia in the last decade. Latin American migrants tend to arrive with a tourist visa (three months) and overstay the visa while looking for a job. They often begin working "in the black" (irregularly), in domestic service or the retail sector. Approximately 60% of them are women, an effect of the opportunity structure of the Catalan labor market, where domestic work is the prevalent employment niche among migrants. Latin American women travel to Barcelona in order to work as housemaids of Catalan families, often leaving their own children behind, in order to send remittances back home. This migration pattern is especially strong among migrants from the Andean countries, like Ecuador and Peru [22]. Often they have left their children behind and send remittances to their home countries [21].

Given the largely irregular labor market where migrants find jobs, job requirements are a strict prerogative of the employer, a high degree of discretion being the norm. This applies also to language use, which is only strictly enforced in public sector jobs and in some aspects of retail (via laws concerning the signposts of the retail outlets). In the construction sector, Spanish is clearly the most spoken language, as many workers are internal migrants (or their descendants) from other parts of



Spain and only speak this language. This is also the case in industry, as the boom in sectors as the textile was coincidental with the arrival of internal migrants to Catalonia.

In other sectors, such as domestic service and retail, the situation is more nuanced. Domestic service in Catalonia had been during the second half of the 20th century a prerogative of women from Andalusia. There has been, however, a transition to a workforce increasingly composed of Latin American women, while more local women are working outside the house. Latin American women are preferred to women from other countries in account of the perceived cultural proximity.

Maids are expected not only to clean and keep the house but also of taking care of children and the elderly, meaning that their use of language tends to reflect the dynamics of the family they are working for. This means that in Catalan-speaking families, maids will be in close contact with the Catalan language most of the time, increasing the likelihood of learning and using Catalan in their day-to-day lives. Latin American women working in Catalan speaking households may begin by speaking Catalan with the little children in the house, and after some time, also switching to Catalan with the family. This way, a habit that began at work slowly spreads to the daily lives, with a possibility that the family of the maid also learns to speak Catalan.

Something very similar happens with retail workers. Catalonia still has a myriad of small retail establishments that are family-operated. Evidently, there are also big supermarkets and department stores, in which the linguistic use is slightly different. However, in small retail outlets, customer service is expected to be provided both in Spanish and Catalan. The factor which has a greater influence on the language that is used in each business is location. In Barcelona, working class neighborhoods like Sant Andreu or Nou Barris are predominantly Spanish-speaking areas, while upper-middle class areas like Sarria or Las Corts see a higher percentage of Catalan speakers.

In the following paragraph, we quote the words of an Argentinean woman who works in retail in Sitges, a mid-sized town in the Catalan coast-line. Sitges is a town known as a cultural and bohemian milieu, therefore both Spanish, Catalan and even English are commonly known to be spoken in their streets. She explains briefly when and why does she speak Catalan, and she states that she never felt the need to follow any Catalan courses:

“The girl next door is Catalan-speaking and we get along well. I think that everywhere you can find both good and bad people (...). Even when there have been (here) people speaking in Catalan and I have brought it to their attention because they were they say, sorry, because they are speaking in Catalan. And I answer, I understand. But I do not know, maybe I have been lucky, I do not know if other people.

Q: And do you speak Catalan?

R: I speak some with my daughter. There are days that I speak Catalan with my kid.

Q: Have you enrolled in any Catalan courses?

R: No, because I do not practice. I never had the will to do it.

Q: So, How do you manage when tending to Catalan speaking customers?

R: I do not speak Catalan. When they speak in Catalan I answer them in Spanish and I have not had problems. Never at all. I do not know why languages are so important and why there are so many problems (communicating) because I do not have any problem (Norma, Argentinean migrant).

Latin American staff is more likely to be found in shops and bars located in working class neighborhoods than in upper middle class areas. In the wealthier areas Latin American workers are

mostly employed as internal domestic service and rarely interact with people other than their employers and their relatives.

This class distinction is also reproduced in the surrounding towns of the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Some of the suburbs, like Vallvidrera or Sant Cugat, are suburbs in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the term, populated with professionals and executives from multinational companies. In those areas, Catalan, as well as foreign languages such as English, is more widely spoken than Spanish. On the other hand, towns as Cerdanyola del Valles and Santa Coloma de Gramenet correspond to a social typology: working class people with lower educational credentials. In this type of zone, Spanish is clearly the predominant language.

Given their cloudy legal status (as visa overstayers) migrants tend to enter the labor market through informal unskilled work, a niche where Spanish speaking internal migrants were predominant before the arrival of foreign immigration. Therefore, there is a linguistic continuity of sorts in these areas, even though the new migrants suffer additional problems connected with their legal status and the discrimination they suffer in their dealings with the “street level bureaucrats” [23].

Location is crucial in explaining both labor market dynamics and linguistic choice of Latin American migrants in Catalonia. Highly skilled migrants who have been hired by transnational companies work in international environments and tend to favor the use of English. On the other hand, unskilled migrants and those migrants who cannot validate their diplomas end up doing mostly manual and low-level service jobs that do not require proficiency in foreign languages.

Migrants working in low-level service jobs speak Spanish or Catalan depending on the dominant language in the neighborhood that they live. As Newman [24] has stated, local contexts are often more important than macro-linguistic policies in the language choice of migrants. Despite the policy aiming for enhancing social cohesion between locals and newcomers, tensions and contradictions occasionally arise in neighborhoods where the dominant language is Spanish while in the schools linguistic immersion in Catalan is the norm. Newman cites the case of some schools in peripheral working class neighborhoods in Barcelona where the presence of Latin American migrants was seen as reinforcing the dominance of previous internal migration.

Latin American migrants face a difficult choice: learning Catalan in order to access the public sector or work (often irregularly) in retail or industry, where use of Catalan is seldom enforced by employers. Most of them opt by not learning Catalan, citing lack of time or money as the reason for refusing to learn the language of the region. It must be noted that in Barcelona and other mid-sized cities, the council offers free Catalan courses for newcomers. However, among Latin Americans the main reason for not learning Catalan is in fact cultural: they consider it a “folk” imposition.

In our interviews with Latin American migrants living in Barcelona, they repeatedly stated that learning Catalan was not necessary, as with Spanish “they have enough”. This statement tells of a perceived lack of necessity of learning the language spoken in Catalonia as they already speak the language spoken in the whole of Spain. It is also telling of the perceived opposition towards Catalan nationalist policies, which are seen as exclusionary by many Latin American migrants.

The social structure of neighborhoods and towns where migrants live is strongly correlated with their language choices. The working class areas in Barcelona (Sant Andreu, Horta-Guinardó, Sant Martí) are mostly Spanish-speaking, whereas in the upper class neighborhoods (Sarrià, Pedralbes) Catalan predominates. The same happens with the surrounding towns where wealthier towns as Sant Cugat and

Sant Just Desvern are places where more Catalan than Spanish is spoken while in working class suburbs as Montcada I Reixac and Cerdanola is the other way round. All in all the language is correlated with the class, as in working class environments Spanish is still the predominant language. This class divide may contradict the alleged cosmopolitanism of Catalan language policies, creating tensions between institutional discourse and daily practice [24].

The pathways to enter Catalan labor market have changed greatly in the last thirty years for locals and migrants alike, not only regarding the use of Catalan. When Woolard did fieldwork on language use in Catalonia in the 1980s, both the linguistic situation and labor market dynamics were different compared with the present [25]. Nowadays Catalan is more strictly enforced by the regional government policies than in the 1980s, while the number of migrants (who may speak Spanish but very rarely speak Catalan) has increased exponentially. This means that the linguistic question has become even more controversial, as language policies by the regional government and language use among migrants go in opposite directions. This opens the gate to an increase in social exclusion among Spanish-Speaking migrants which could only be nuanced by the fact that the second generation is already educated in Catalan [26].

Latin American political refugees who arrived to Catalonia in the 1970s and 1980s encountered fewer barriers to work in Catalonia than the more recent economic migrants. The reasons are complex, but are closely connected with the specific manifestations of the globalization process in the Spanish and Catalan context.

In the 1970s, the number of university graduates was still very low in Spain and Catalonia. The university system in Spain was underdeveloped in comparison to that of countries in central and northern Europe. The rate of university graduates in Spain was around 5% at the time. Studying was costly, there were fewer universities and few grants, and the upper classes often studied abroad.

In a context where access to higher education was largely restricted to the upper classes, when Latin American professionals fleeing the dictatorships in the southern cone started to arrive in Spain, they found a labor market which was still being built. In specialties such as Psychology or Dentistry, Argentineans became pioneers in the field, as there were relatively few local professionals. This also happened in other Southern European countries, such as Italy, where Latin American exiles in the late 1970s found professional opportunities [27]. A bureau specialized in psychoanalysis “Apertura”, Barcelona, was created by Argentineans. More recently, the first Latin American theater festival was coordinated in 2005 by an Argentinean actor and producer.

However, migrants who arrived later had a much difficult time trying to find a suitable job or even having their academic qualifications recognized. This was a consequence of economic, political and educational changes that were radically transforming the Spanish and Catalan labor market.

Some of the transformations that have affected the labor market insertion of Latin American skilled migrants were connected to the entrance of Spain in the European Union, which happened in 1986. The entrance of Spain into the European Union has meant an increase of intraeuropean mobility [28] and simultaneously, a gradual closing of the external frontiers of the Union [29]. Newly arrived economic migrants have encountered more difficulties to settle in Spain and Catalonia than the political exiles of the 1970s. Whereas in the 1980s most migrants got access to Spanish citizenship in just two years, nowadays this is thwarted by administrative barriers. The most frequent mechanism of entry for Latin Americans is through a tourist visa. Migrants arrive as tourists (three months) look for a

job, usually in the informal economy, and then they overstay their visa, remaining in the country until they find a regular job with a contract or are detected. As the bulk of the job opportunities for migrants lies in the informal economy, getting a work contract becomes increasingly difficult and even people who have lived in Spain for 10 years or more cannot apply for the Spanish citizenship as they have not had a regular contract, and therefore no working permit. Undocumented migrants find themselves in a difficult situation, as they are limited to cash-in-hand jobs in catering or retail, while the lack of a regular contract prevents any possibility of legal stability in the long term.

The only mechanism to solve this eventuality has been the “regularizaciones” (amnesty) processes that have been occasionally decreed. Since the onset of the first Foreign Law in 1986, five “regularizaciones” have been approved in Spain (1989, 2000, 2002, 2005) [3]. Amnesties have been criticized by other country members of the EU, specially Germany and France, afraid that migrants would eventually move to northern European countries after having their documents.

For women, jobs in domestic service are the most common point of entry to the Catalan labor market. But these jobs tend to submit them to a triple discrimination: as women, as migrants and as workers [21].

In the last decade some programs have allowed for legal entry of Latin American workers thanks to guest worker programs signed with some countries, most notably Ecuador and Colombia. These programs concern mostly farming work in countryside areas that are suffering depopulation. In Catalonia these has been most notably the case of the province of Lleida, where migrants have been arriving to work temporarily in the crops and rural areas.

Generally speaking, Latin American migrants do not speak Catalan in their daily lives. As they work with other migrants or with Spanish speaking internal migrants, they do not require Catalan in daily life. However, the legal framework is increasingly enforcing Catalan as a requisite for integration. This demand has been a fruit of political developments in Catalonia linked to the process of devolution which started in the 1970s. In the beginning of the 21st century, standard linguistic tests (sanctioned by ALTE), were introduced. From that date on, there were five standardized levels of proficiency in Catalan:

**Table 2.** Levels of Proficiency in Catalan.

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Description</b>
A Basic	Capability to live daily live in Catalan
A Elementary	Corresponding to B1 of the EFR
B Intermediate	Corresponding to B2 of the EFR
C Sufficiency	Corresponding to C1 of the EFR
D Superior	Corresponding to C2 of the EFR

Source: [9]

The standard requirement for public sector jobs has come to be the C Level, a fairly high level of sufficiency that is difficult to obtain for non-native speakers. In fact, the requirement of the C level has acted as a gatekeeper for migrants aiming to apply for public sector jobs. This level of Catalan is required even for unskilled jobs such as city cleaning services.

Laws regulating the required knowledge of Catalan are recent. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that they are at the same time rejected by the migrants and largely unknown to the locals, especially by those who entered the labor market when requirements were less strict. The combination is potentially explosive, as it means the existence of a legal framework that restricts access to employment in the public administration whilst offering arguments to those reactionary forces that consider that there are “too many immigrants”.

Second generation migrants attend schooling in Catalan and experience less discrimination than their parents [7]. However, evidence also shows that having been born in Catalonia and being able to speak in Spanish and Catalan does not necessarily mean that they have a more satisfactory professional insertion than their parents. This is a consequence of the Spanish labor market having changed in the interim, something that is a clear effect of the insertion of Catalan economy in globalization. Therefore the relevance of Catalan in the labor market changes not only according to regional or even state policies, but also according to the degree of insertion of the Catalan society in an increasingly globalized society and the position occupied in the social structure by migrants and their descendants.

## 5. Conclusions

The title of the article pointed out that the relationship between Latin American migration and globalization in Catalonia meant a closing of the ring. The circularity of migration between Latin America and Catalonia is the main signal of the arrival of globalization to Catalonia: whilst in the 19th Century, Catalans migrated to America, nowadays Latin Americans are migrating to Catalonia.

Globalization, however, has specific effects for Latin American migrants arriving to Catalonia. The increasingly global labor market is today more unstable than it was a century ago. Therefore job requirements such as linguistic proficiency not only in Catalan but in foreign languages are increasingly being used as gatekeepers in the Catalan labor market. Latin American migrants who only speak Spanish are lagging behind locals and also other migrant communities by their lack of language proficiency in both the local (Catalan) language, and the global (English) language. The result is the confinement of Latin American migrants in low-skilled service jobs, regardless of their qualification level. The only exception to this would be highly-skilled Latin American professionals who were hired in their countries of origin and had studied foreign languages in their countries of origin.

A likely result of the situation is a growing polarization of the Catalan labor market along linguistic lines. At one end there would be migrant unskilled workers whose sole knowledge of Spanish would hamper their mobility to better jobs and at the other end we would find the highly skilled workers who are knowledgeable of foreign languages but have little stimulus to use Catalan as they are part of global networks where English and other languages are more important. Therefore, in Catalonia, globalization appears to be deepening social inequalities given the different value accorded to languages by the different levels of the public administration and by the public sector.

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## Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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