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## Anti-social behaviour in the square. Differentiation mechanisms among non-native groups in a peripheral neighbourhood of Barcelona

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyses differentiation processes between non-native groups in a stigmatized peripheral neighbourhood of Barcelona. Its more established dwellers – internal migrants from the South of Spain – have set in place differentiation processes between them and the more recently arrived international migrants. To substantivize differentiation processes, in a context where race has been largely silent, they appropriate the “civic terminology” that has become popular in the city in the last decade. In the global context of hyper-regulation and increasing privatization of urban public spaces, this group’s discursive strategies, based on the *civic/non-civic* divide, aim to ensure control over accessible open public space, a resource that is locally scarce. Using the ethnographic example of the tensions around “proper behaviour” in the area’s main square, the article explores processes of identification and differentiation in a context where autochthony cannot be unproblematically called upon.

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Internal migrants coming to the city of Barcelona from other parts of Spain in the second half of the twentieth century built the peripheral neighbourhood of El Carmel. More recently, at the turn of the millennium, people coming from abroad moved in to this part of the city. This paper analyses differentiation processes set in motion by the first group between themselves and the more recently arrived international migrants. By doing so, the article adds to the literature on the politics of urban differentiation in a context where racial hierarchies are not immediately obvious and autochthony claims do not go uncontested. In particular, the paper shows how some groups enact autochthony in a context where *nativeness* cannot be unproblematically called upon. It does so applying a multi-scalar perspective that positions

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specific neighbourhood dynamics within broader city and global forces (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016).

Ever since the first shacks were built in El Carmel, this area has been subjected to strong territorial stigmatization (Wacquant, Slater, and Borges Pereira 2014), and its inhabitants looked down upon by more affluent city dwellers. At the time of the research, some of the more established groups went to great efforts to differentiate themselves from more recently arrived groups. The efforts to differentiate and how difference is substantivized cannot be separated from the presence of a social stigma on El Carmel dwellers. As it is the case in other locations (Lamont and Mizrahi 2012), internal migrants' responses to stigmatization in this area have involved reassigning the negative attributes imposed on them, to another group. In order to do so, they have appropriated the civic rhetoric, which is popular throughout the city of Barcelona. It was initially introduced by the city authorities at the beginning of the 2000s through civility campaigns and the passage of a civic ordinance in 2006. This research adds to the literature on boundary-work in urban settings by showing how concrete policies and the rhetoric used to justify them, serve as a resource for the articulation of social boundaries at the local level. Internal migrants' boundary-work discursively builds on the civic/non-civic opposition and a loose usage of the imaginary of the anti-social (*incivic*) behaviour in the neighbourhood public spaces. As the analysis will show, the civic terminology serves to support a veiled cultural racism in a context where openly resorting to race is unacceptable.

Specifically, this paper analyses the discursive ways in which some groups of more established neighbours articulate their demands regarding their rights over specific local resources. The paper focuses on the demands around "acceptable uses" and "proper behaviour" in local open public spaces. In particular, the article explores realities, struggles and representations around the neighbourhood's main square, Plaza Pastrana, which is one of the most densely populated and intensively used outdoor areas, in the context of an already densified city like Barcelona. This open public space needs to accommodate different uses which are sometimes incompatible. Specific groups of elderly established neighbours often portray resulting conflict as the consequence of the presence of "*incivic neighbours*" with incommensurable cultural traditions.

The paper is structured in six sections. The theoretical section positions this research within the long tradition of studies on conflict among migrant groups in urban neighbourhoods, and specifically within the more recent research on boundary-work. Section two contains the methodological design. Section three introduces the ethnographic case of El Carmel, its socio-economic profile, its history and the struggles around Plaza Pastrana. The next section presents and analyses the discourses about anti-social behaviour in the square. Section five deals with the processes of micro-

belonging in the case of a stigmatized identity and how these relate to the extension of the image of the “*incivic other*” in El Carmel. The final section provides some concluding remarks.

### **Conflict and boundary-making in the neighbourhood in a multi-scalar perspective**

Conflict between different groups of migrants in city neighbourhoods has received sustained research attention. Early works by the Chicago School stressed the conflictive nature of social dynamics among different immigrant groups, particularly in the context of scarce resources (Park 1936) or sudden demographic changes (Suttles 1972). Further studies have given nuance to this conflict-based approach, with many case studies on the existence of, and conditions for, inter-ethnic encounters in urban settings, particularly in European cities (Fonseca, McGarrigle, and Esteves 2013). These works are wide-ranging, including analyses of the role of children as mediators (Schaeffer 2013), the facilitating or hindering role of the built environment for inter-group relations (Gale 2004), or the sensorial production of everyday multiculturalism (Rhys-Taylor 2013). A significant number of excellent qualitative studies focusing on the everyday dynamics and strategies in the context of living with difference in urban areas take London as their research site (e.g. Wessendorf 2014; Nowicka and Vertovec 2014; Back and Sinha 2016), with smaller Southern European cities like Barcelona receiving much less attention.

Recent approaches to urban belonging and group interaction have complicated the clear-cut separation between social groups preconized by the conflict-approach. Similarly, the research in this paper does not take differences as given but explores the differentiation mechanisms purposely set in place by particular groups. In doing so, it is informed by the anthropological tradition of anti-essentialist understandings of ethnic boundaries (Barth [1969] 1998), Elias’ seminal work on the relations between established residents and outsiders (Elias and Scotson 1965), and more recently on the work by Lamont et al. (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012; Lamont and Molnár 2002) on boundary-making in urban settings.

Lamont’s work on boundary-making illuminates the making and unmaking of group identities showing the dynamic nature of group differentiation. Her distinction between social and symbolic boundaries provides a framework within which to analyse group inclusion/exclusion rhetorics and their role in the creation of inequality and the exercise of power (Lamont, Pendergrass, and Pachucki 2015). Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions made by social actors that separate people into groups and that serve to generate feelings of similarity and group membership (Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168). Whereas, social boundaries, are “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material

and nonmaterial) and social opportunities” (Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168). Lamont’s work shows the necessary but insufficient condition of symbolic boundaries to constrain character and pattern social interaction. Only when symbolic boundaries are established and widely agreed upon can they take on a constraining character and become social boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168). The fact that symbolic boundaries do not translate immediately into social boundaries explains why processes of group differentiation can be contested. This is of particular importance in social contexts where, like the ethnographic site in this paper, traditional axis of difference, such as that based on autochthony, are not immediately available.

The symbolic tools different groups can, or cannot, resort to for their boundary-work, are determined by the interplay of variables at the city, national and even global level, as different “contexts make various kinds of rhetorics more or less readily available to social actors” (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012, 368). The highly popular Barcelona-wide civic terminology, which is central in El Carmel internal migrants’ boundary-making, is part of a broader trend in city politics aimed at controlling dwellers’ behaviour and reducing social conflict. The municipal agenda of many global cities is increasingly characterized by enormous vigilance and social control in the form of processes of regulation and supervision of the streets (Delgado 2007). In the case of Barcelona, this takes the form of soft-control measures to promote civic engagement, through education, advertising campaigns and legal regulations. The imaginary conveyed by such ideology, which is global in nature but city-specific in its forms, is key to understanding the everyday micro-dynamics in neighbourhoods like El Carmel.

Neighbourhood dynamics thus do not stand-alone but are enacted within larger power logics. Lefebvre (1970), among others, cautioned us about the risks of taking the neighbourhood as a portion of the city that can be contemplated detached from broader socio-spatial trends. As preconized by Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) only a multi-scalar analysis provides the basis for fully apprehending neighbourhood dynamics. Global trends of precariousness intertwine with city dynamics to maintain and even reinforce the peripheral positioning of some neighbourhoods. In these areas, local sociability takes place amidst global trends of massive dispossession (Harvey 2008), which has exacerbated the precariousness of individuals already dealing with precarious spatial and socio-economic positioning. The territorial stigmatization of certain parts of cities, while not a new phenomenon, is currently a distinctive feature of advanced marginality (Tyler and Slater 2018, 738) and territorial stigma heavily shapes “the lived experience of those trapped in these sulphurous zones” (Wacquant 2008, 169). Inhabitants of stigmatized areas like the one in this paper are forced to deal with the irreconcilable tension between internal self-perception of normality and the associated external negative image (Garbin and Millington 2012, 2068). The literature on territorial

stigma provides an interesting catalogue of resistance practices that show different ways in which stigma is negotiated and resisted (e.g. Tyler and Slater 2018). These resistance practices, as this paper shows, can include practices of stigmatization within the stigmatized area itself. Groups like internal migrants in El Carmel who traditionally have been subjected to strong territorial stigma, face a growing sense of dispossession and an acute awareness of the frailty of their limited social advances. This, in turn, generates defensive responses towards other marginalized groups.

The research in this paper takes an original approach by focusing on how internal migrants subjected to strong stigmatization by a third more powerful group, protect their relative socio-positioning in the city three-folded hierarchy in relation to a less-established group. Focusing on the discursive construction of *we* and *them* between internal and international migrants, it contributes to the denaturalization of the sometimes problematic clear-cut categorization between internal and international migration (King and Skeldon 2010; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002).

## Methods

Information for this article comes from a two-year ethnographic research project. In the early stages of the research, core concepts, such as that of “public space”, and even that of “immigrant”, were problematized. In line with some anthropological accounts about Barcelona (Delgado 2011), preliminary data advocated not treating such categories as neutral. As other authors have shown (for the case of Barcelona see Aramburu 2008 or Delgado 2011) public space is not only a spatial category, but it is also a political one. The research project, thus, proceeded to work with localized, dynamic and politicized definitions of what public space means, and who is locally considered as being an immigrant. This approach allowed for uncovering the underlying power relations that give shape to local social classifications.

The methodological design of the project relied on four techniques. First, non-intrusive observations were carried out in selected open spaces of the neighbourhood, and particularly on Plaza Pastrana. The non-intrusive observations in Pastrana took place during May and June 2016, covering different days of the week and time slots. In the detailed annotations generated were aspects related to the visibility of diversity and the interaction between bodies marked as different in the area, but also to the experienced general environmental sensations (i.e. temperature, general bodily wellbeing), as well as auditory and olfactory ones.<sup>1</sup> Such data were complemented by information obtained through twenty in-depth semi-structured interviews carried out with dwellers, workers and authorities of El Carmel. Finally, the research involved one-year extended participation in an established local organization, *El Carmel Neighbourhood Association*. In the aftermaths of the

restoration of democracy in Spain, this group brought together most of the area dwellers in their demands for basic services for their neighbourhood. At the time of the research in 2016, this once vibrant association was struggling to survive after an uneasy generational replacement. Local authorities, though, still consider this association as one of the neighbourhood legitimate representatives. This status provided me with access to neighbours' demands and the authorities' responses to such demands. For the research in this article, the periodical meetings of the "Working Work for the Problems in Plaza Pastrana" (*Taula de Treball per la Convivència a Plaza Pastrana i Entorns*) were of particular interest. The meetings were called after recurring complaints by a group of elderly neighbours of the square about the state of the area. It brought together local shopkeepers, associations' representatives, neighbours, technicians and local politicians, in order to discuss the state of daily coexistence in the square and to agree on measures to improve it. Finally, the research also included three photowalks. This participatory technique brought together some groups of El Carmel dwellers to take photos during collective walks around the neighbourhood under the broad theme of "Diversity in the public space of my neighbourhood".

### Living in El Carmel

After the Spanish civil war and its subsequent dearth, many Spaniards from rural areas, particularly from the South of the country, started migrating to the cities. In Barcelona, this labour inflow met a shortage of accommodation, which led to the creation of shantytowns like El Carmel (Camino et al. 2015). Ever since the first shacks were built in this steep and isolated area,<sup>2</sup> working class migrants arriving to the city have been able to find low-quality but affordable accommodation in El Carmel. Consequently, the neighbourhood dwellers have been traditionally subjected to strong territorial stigmatization (Wacquant, Slater, and Borges Pereira 2014) by the more affluent areas of the city, as one resident recalls:

The ambulances and taxis did not take you up to the neighbourhood. If you got sick you have to go to hospital by your own means, because of the bad reputation of the area ... I tell you from my own experience. I used to go dancing and when people asked me where I was from, I never said from El Carmel, because they literally stepped back and made an empty circle around you.

(38 year-old female resident, daughter of internal migrants)

Most of El Carmel original settlers came from Andalusia, although the total number of migrants coming from the centre of Spain and Galicia was also significant. This genesis is still distinctively perceptible in the area's current demographic profile (Barcelona Municipal Register 2018). In 2017, 28.5 per cent of the population in the neighbourhood was born in Spain but not in

Catalonia, compared to only 17.4 per cent in Barcelona as a whole (Barcelona City Council 2017).

After the 1990s, when Spain became a destination country for international migrants, the internal migrants in El Carmel were joined by migrants coming from abroad. In January 2017, the percentage of El Carmel foreign-born population was below the city average (23.7 per cent) but it was still significant at 19.8 per cent (Barcelona City Council 2017). Bolivians, Ecuadorians and Pakistanis were the three main nationalities in the area (Barcelona City Council 2017). Andean nationals have been systematically the main nationalities in El Carmel since the turn of the millennium (Barcelona City Council 2017). Numbers for each nationality are however small as there is a multiplicity of nationalities present in the neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> In 2016, at the time of the research, the neighbourhood population was made up of “old” neighbours coming from other parts of Spain and their descendants, and “new” neighbours coming from abroad. This new/old labelling both refers, to each group’s length of residence in the area, as well as to the average age of each group. As it is often the case with international migration, in El Carmel, working-age international migrants and their families arrived into an area with a rapidly ageing population.

El Carmel is not only in the geographic periphery of Barcelona. It is also socio-economically marginal as signalled by its disposable income per capita: in 2015, it was almost half that of the city as a whole (Barcelona City Council 2016). The area also presents high population density. With 33.8 people per square kilometre, compared to 15.8 in Barcelona, it doubles the city average (Barcelona City Council 2017). To make matters worse, this site has been traditionally neglected by local authorities and presents serious problems regarding the quality of accommodation, public services, urban planning and accessibility. The absence of basic public services fuelled an autonomous and combative local social fabric, which has currently almost vanished. In particular, demands for more and better public spaces have a long history in El Carmel. As shown in [Figure 1](#), there are few public open spaces in the neighbourhood, which are small on average and scattered throughout the rough orography of the area. There are also continuous complaints about these spaces being poorly maintained. The only existing large space, *Rambla del Carmel*, is ill-designed and remains unused. There are no trees or proper urban furniture and it is surrounded by heavily-transited lanes, which turns it into an uncomfortably noisy space.

Plaza Pastrana is the symbolic centre of the neighbourhood. It is a small concrete square completely surrounded by five-story buildings (see [Figure 2](#)). As one of the few pedestrian, flat and accessible public open spaces in the neighbourhood, it is heavily used by a variety of users: residents coming and going to the metro entrance, children from nearby schools playing after school, elderly residents sitting on its benches, groups of





**Figure 2.** Aerial view of Plaza Pastrana. Source: Department of Public Works and Maintenance (District of Horta-Guinardó 2017).

children played, but, well that was nonsense.

(36 year-old female resident born abroad)

After such a difficult history, the prevalence of negative discourses about the current state of Pastrana Square appears paradoxical.

### **Anti-social behaviour in Plaza Pastrana**

In June 2016, some posters appeared in El Carmel calling Pastrana residents to a meeting to talk about “the worrying growth of anti-social acts (*actos incívicos*) in the square”. The neighbours who organized that meeting – all of them Spanish-speaking elderly internal migrants – have been voicing their concerns about the negative situation of Pastrana in different fora ever since the square was eventually open in 2011. The terms of their complaints, though, have changed. During an open audience with the district authorities in 2011, one of the elderly internal migrants openly pointed to some groups of international migrants as the cause of the problems in the square:

[...] many immigrants have moved to Plaza Pastrana, since the metro was opened, mainly Romanians, Moroccans and Latinos. He notes that these

people have become the owners of the public space in the neighborhood and that drug problems have increased, they steal and hit children [*sic*]. He complains, therefore, that this situation cannot continue, since, if it continues, he says that one day there will be a tragedy.

(Minutes of the District Public Audience, 1st December 2011)

Two years later, in 2013, talking on behalf of a self-styled *Plaza Pastrana Civic Platform*, the same person is recorded in the minutes, which state that he “raises a question about the *incivismo* [lack of civic-mindedness] in this square. He explains that the civic platform of neighbors has been born to fight against the *incivismo*, which increases in summer and becomes horrifying” (Minutes of the District Public Audience, 2nd December 2013). Between 2011 and 2016, the openly racist terms have completely disappeared from the complaints issued around the situation in Pastrana. They have been replaced by a more diffuse *cívico/incívico* terminology, which connects incivic acts (i.e. anti-social behaviour) with international migrants. The “longing for coherence” in the narratives of culture loss analysed by Back and Sinha (2016) in a London neighbourhood acquires in El Carmel the image of the degradation of civic values. The history of Plaza Pastrana shows how the rupture narratives put forward by some groups of elderly neighbours, minimize previous conflicts (Astor 2012, 345). This is clear given the troubled history of this square and the overall territorial stigma of El Carmel.

The calls to a thread of “rampant spread” and the “invasion” by certain groups of a limited and originally peaceful public space are by no means exclusive of El Carmel. They are acknowledged in several other peripheral neighbourhoods of Catalonia metropolitan areas (Astor 2016; Lundsteen 2017). Unsurprisingly, these same images were attached to the original settlers of El Carmel, as a part of their territorial and social stigmatization:

I guess they [the people previously living in Barcelona, the “Catalans”] thought the same thing about us when we all arrived, uncivilized and in such high numbers [*en manada*, literally in droves].

(60 year-old female resident born in Andalusia)

In 2016, at the time of the fieldwork, the word *incívico* was present in every event I attended about Plaza Pastrana and appeared in most of my interviews. As signalled by the name of the civic platform and the reasons for calling for a meeting on Plaza Pastrana in 2016, such term was used reprovngly to signal all sorts of behaviours in El Carmel public spaces. This includes criminal offences, such as drug dealing or robbery, but also everyday activities that some groups may consider a nuisance, such as children playing ball or youngsters listening to music. In this way, the word denotes any behaviour that any person or group may deem as offensive or unpleasant.

The emergence of the *civic/non-civic* terminology and its current pervasiveness in El Carmel is not a trend exclusive to this neighbourhood. Ever since

2006, the word *incívico* has become a buzzword in Barcelona. That year, Barcelona authorities passed the municipal *Ordinance of Measures to Encourage and Ensure Coexistence among Citizens in Public Spaces in Barcelona*, commonly known as the *Civism Ordinance* (Barcelona City Council 2006).<sup>4</sup> This by-law established a punitive management of public space, in line with the global trend of “zero tolerance” policies (Larrauri 2007). It was heavily opposed due to the vagueness of its writing and the fact that it coded many activities that certain groups have developed as coping strategies against poverty and precariousness as offences (OSPDH 2005).

Although Barcelona authorities never strictly implemented the Civism Ordinance, it was extremely successfully in introducing the *civic* terminology in the city’s everyday jargon. This terminology not only was adopted by the Catalan-speaking more affluent middle-classes of the city, who have looked down on internal migrants as the ones in El Carmel and their “improper” use of urban public spaces. It also became popular among city dwellers from marginal areas. El Carmel original settlers have incorporated the civic terminology into their everyday language and imaginaries about the city. They are now prone to describe certain uses of the public space as *incivic*, despite previously making similarly intensive use of the public space as those they currently complain about. The rural origin of many of those former migrants, together with their initial extremely precarious housing conditions, explained why they used the public space to perform tasks that in Barcelona were by then already secluded to the private space. One neighbour recalls from her childhood:

Me and my sisters were all wild. We were untamed coming from the countryside. We were outdoors all the time. First, as little kids playing. Later on, with our boy-friends.

–Do people back there live more outdoors?

No, I think it was just us, because we came from a different culture, from something different. And because my mother was certain that nothing wrong was going to happen to us for being outside.

(65 year-old female neighbour originally from Andalusia)

A good example of how even groups at the bottom of the social hierarchy have internalized this ideology took place in the second gathering of the “Working Group for the Problems in Plaza Pastrana”. Confronted with the prospects of increasing the number of tables legally permitted in the café terraces of Pastrana, all the attendants to the meeting – even the ones who have complained the most about the crowded conditions in the square and the improper use of the space made by some groups –, voiced no concerns, “as long as people behave themselves”. It is hard to see how adding more sitting space to

an already overcrowded space will not add extra tension among users of the square.

Such a paradoxical reaction provides rich information about how the tensions around proper uses of the square link with specific groups' traits. The first and most obvious reading goes back to the underlying assumptions of the civic/incivic model that uses individual behaviour – informed by certain urbanity norms – to explain situations where structural constraints are in fact more determining than personal behaviour. There are however other demographic readings, regarding class, generation and traditions, which culminate in reinforcing differentiation processes between the uses of the space by older and newer neighbours. All these three features merge to convey a specific image of the uses carried out by more recently arrived working-class and younger international migrants, compared with those by more established, elderly and slightly economically better-off groups. The class reading leads to the understanding that those who can afford to sit in a bar terrace are perceived as less problematic than those who resort to buying drinks and snacks from nearby convenience stores and consume them on the benches in the square. Generation consideration reinforces this idea, given that youngsters are less likely to have the economic means to make use of the terrace. The third consideration points to the seemingly different habits of the two groups. Sitting in a terrace is perceived as a proper tradition compared to other non-commercial uses of the square.

### **Belonging to a stigmatized neighbourhood and the *incivic* immigrant**

The civic jargon that differentiates between the *civic us* (the original settlers) and the *incivic they* (the newer arrived international migrants), replaces the no longer socially acceptable racist terminology (Stolcke 1995; Delgado 2003). Other urban contexts have witnessed a similar change in discourses. Modood (1997) shows how the same change took place in the UK over two decades ago. At that time, the more sophisticated elements of the so-called cultural racism started to substitute biological racist justifications. As Modood states, this was done by using apparently non-coloured ideas based on the “redefinition of Britishness by de-emphasising ‘whiteness’ in favour of characteristics such as ‘law abiding’, ‘family loving’, ‘individualism’, and so on” (Modood 1997, 161). In a similar fashion, at the meeting called in June 2016 mentioned above, an aged audience cheered on angry interventions by the organizers about the situation of Pastrana as with this contribution:

We are seeing here unfortunately people who come from other places ... People who have all our respect because we have nothing against anyone, but they

have a culture completely different from ours, so it is going to be very difficult that they integrate [into our neighbourhood] because they are not used to these things and we need someone to tell them how they should behave. There must be respect in any community. When people [meaning Spaniards] went to Germany, if they misbehaved, they were sent back home by train. We have nothing against anyone. We only demand that the municipality put the necessary means to end this situation, so we can rest at night. There is enough legislation and laws [to do so]. So, we can be quiet in our house and we can go without being threatened or insulted. And that we can also be fine in the streets, it's disgusting to see how dirty the streets are now.

(Elderly male inhabitant of Pastrana originally from Andalusia)

Some of the few younger neighbours attending the meeting questioned this alarmist discourse about the negative situation of the square. They were not convinced either about the causes the speakers put forward to explain the situation, that linked the supposed increase of anti-social acts in the area with the behaviour of "people coming from other places with other cultures". Their attempts to express that they "do not think things were that bad" were met by boos. Cries from the audience did not allow a conciliatory middle-aged woman to finish her intervention when she stated that:

To me, people should be able to talk to each other and reach an understanding in order to begin to solve the problems. Not confronting each other. Because we, being immigrants as most of us are, we also came with a culture different from the Catalan one ...

It is important to state that every person who took the floor in that meeting spoke in Spanish, and not Catalan, the other official language in the region. Some of them had a clear Southern Spanish accent, in spite of their many years of residence in Catalonia. This language usage is relevant because it signals a two-folded socio-economic differentiation extended in Barcelona (Aramburu 2018). At the top of the hierarchy, there are the Catalan-speaking Barcelona middle and upper classes. They can easily claim autochthony by enacting the *we-here-always* triad, which is often invoked in nativism approaches to claim legitimacy over a territory or certain resources. At the bottom, there are working class migrants who came from the South of Spain and their Spanish-speaking offspring. They are still derogatorily named *charnegos* (Clua 2011). For this group the triad *we-here-always* is not as straightforward as for the Catalan group. By claiming autochthony to the neighbourhood, its elderly residents can bypass their somehow problematic adscriptions to Catalonia, and even to the city of Barcelona. For many of El Carmel's more established dwellers, the neighbourhood is conceived as the only true space of their own, often in opposition to their areas of origin, Catalonia and even the city of Barcelona. This process of micro-territorialization of belonging is enacted by non-native groups in places where it is difficult for them to draw wider identifications (Astor 2012; Marzorati 2013). The

neighbourhood is the only space where they can claim to be the established group (Elias and Scotson 1965), and therefore feel entitled to set up their own rules for everyday conviviality. However, the bad reputation of El Carmel complicates such localized bounded territorial adscription. Its dwellers confronted the outwards stigma of the neighbourhood with the inward day-to-day of living in it. This outside-inside clear-cut difference appears in many interviews:

This neighborhood has always had a very bad reputation. Yes, it is true. But if you lived here, nothing bad happened to you *here*. There were no burglaries, you did not have problems in the streets, because we all knew each other and, well ... There was no metro yet, but it was not that bad.

(38 year-old female resident, daughter of Spanish migrants)

Similarly, following some robberies in the neighbourhood in 2017, an open discussion as part of a virtual group of El Carmel, showed that most participants agreed that although the neighbourhood used to have bad reputation, those who had lived there felt safe:

So, in the past, when the police did not even patrol these streets, there were no robberies. Do you mean we need now to stay in [because of the perceived insecurity in the neighbourhood]? I don't know ... Before, although there was much messing around, people respected the neighbourhood.

(middle age female resident)

Some went as far as to state that those who commit crimes in the neighbourhood are "bastards, I have also messed around, but never in the neighbourhood" (male resident in his thirties). This introduces a rupture from the past, because in spite of El Carmel's bad reputation, the neighbourhood was conceived as a safe place for its inhabitants. According to some narratives as the ones presented in the meeting, this is no longer the case due to those *incivic* international migrants. Official crime statistics and the more nuanced narratives by neighbourhood leaders do not support this degrading image.

Not every neighbour, compared to the two women quoted above, was so quick to recognize the similarities between the current situation and the situation they had to endure upon their arrival in Barcelona. Both groups, internal migrants then and international migrants now, were portrayed as invaders, particularly of the city's public spaces, and accused of destroying a previous peaceful communal living. Most Spanish-speaking neighbours of El Carmel, however, go to great efforts to distance themselves from the figure of the immigrant. They do so in two different ways. First, by adapting the *we-here-always* triad so they can accommodate their situation. The boundaries of the *here* are either expanded to include Spain as a whole, or reduced to just focus on El Carmel. *Always* is enacted by resorting to this group's longer residence time in the neighbourhood and the fact that they portray themselves as the truly original settlers of El Carmel. Second, they distance themselves from the image of the "bad immigrant" by setting in motion

differentiation processes based on their supposed original willingness to integrate into Catalanian culture. Their proper behaviour contrasts with that of current migrants and their *incivic* acts. Although, some of the older neighbours recognize their own migrant past and more generally that of many Spaniards as international migrants, they are prompt to point out that in both cases misbehaving elements were an exception, and in any case, they were quickly disciplined.

### Final remarks

This paper has presented a case of boundary-work *in progress*. In the analysed neighbourhood, the more established group has appropriated the civic terminology to substantivize processes of social differentiation between them and other groups at the bottom of the local social structure regarding public space usage. In a context where it is no longer acceptable to explicitly resort to racial hierarchies to justify social differences, the civic terminology supports a veiled form of cultural racism based on individual behavioural differences. The appropriation of the civic terminology by El Carmel internal migrants supports a moral differentiation that is central to the boundary-work enacted by this group. The symbolic divide built upon the moral distinction between *civic* and *incivic* uses of the public space constitutes a symbolic boundary that is in process to become a social boundary (Lamont and Molnár 2002).

The differentiation processes which state the difference between *they* (*incivic* international migrants) and *us* (hard-working families coming from the same country) serve to claim rights over local resources, in this case the proper uses of Plaza Pastrana. As demonstrated, this is not straightforward, since autochthony cannot be tapped into in a non-problematic way. To further complicate matters, the construction of the self-image by the established group takes place in a context of territorial stigmatization (Wessendorf 2014). This territorial and social stigma affects the ways this group has built its self-image. In turn, it shapes this group's current relations with less-established groups in the area. As older dwellers try to detach from the stigma upon their neighbourhood, and consequently upon themselves, they impose the burden for bringing back the neighbourhood bad reputation onto more recent migrants. Drawing upon theories of prejudice, Astor (2016, 100) shows how groups who have experienced severe processes of discrimination become strongly place-protective: "feelings of threat elicited by immigrants are likely to be especially pronounced among established, but socially alienated subgroups that have suffered past discrimination and remain subordinated along racial, ethnic, or class lines" (Astor 2016, 101). His insights are fully applicable to the social dynamics in El Carmel. The attempts to distance themselves from the more recently arrived working-

class migrants coming from the Global South are a clear sign of the fact that those groups who have suffered discrimination are more likely to exercise the same discriminatory tactics towards less settled groups, given the perceived fragility of their relative social improvement.

In the negotiations over who defines how to behave, the locally more established groups have appropriated the civic terminology, originally imposed onto them by Barcelona's more affluent groups. The civic terminology derives from an approach to urban problems, and specifically those taking place in the city's public space, that understand conflicts as the result of individual behaviours, and not the consequence of massive inequalities, both at the global and urban scale (Delgado 2011). Dissension over urban public space, then, can be neutralized by carefully regulating city dwellers' behaviours. This discourse of civism has permeated the population of Barcelona and is already part of the usual terminology in the city. Institutional pedagogy (Acosta et al. 2008, 5), with the indisputable cooperation of the media (Silveira 2006), has generated an abstract language of "the right thing" where it is not obvious who is to define what is proper social behaviour. This discursive mechanism is a perfect tool to exert social control, not only by specific state institutions, but also by different groups that have appropriated an empty or loosely defined concept to set up boundaries between *us* and *them*. This is particularly the case when legitimation based on autochthony is not readily available. The evolution of the discourse around Plaza Pastrana and the proper way of using and being in public spaces (i.e. being *civic*), is used in attempts to disregard specific groups. The disciplinarian logics that stem from the larger structure are then used by the lower social strata to discipline other groups in similar social positions. This way the research has demonstrated how concrete public policies and the rhetoric used to justify them serves as a resource for the articulation of social boundaries at the micro level.

## Notes

1. The materiality of the built and social environment, including the presence of unpleasantly intrusive sound or smells, impacts on actual interactions and consequently it can also be used in group boundary-work. However, the sensorial aspects of interaction remain an aspect requiring further exploration.
2. The road tunnel linking El Carmel with the rest of Barcelona was only opened in 1987 in the context of the city 1992 Olympics major restructuring. The metro arrived to this neighbourhood in 2011 after a considerable delay due to the collapse of one of its tunnels.
3. In January 2018, out of the 6,253 Carmel dwellers born abroad, the three main nationalities only accounted for 1,052 people (Barcelona City Council 2017).
4. This ordinance has become the model for similar ordinances in many other Spanish cities.

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