

**MOBILIZING AGAINST MOSQUES: THE ORIGINS OF OPPOSITION TO
ISLAMIC CENTERS OF WORSHIP IN SPAIN**

by

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In memory of my dear friend and mentor, Harold Juli.

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Chapter I

Introduction: Toward a meaningful approach to analyzing opposition to mosques

Large and public confrontations over the establishment of mosques have broken out in recent years in several European and North American communities. The heated dispute over a proposed Islamic center several blocks from “Ground Zero” in Lower Manhattan, the banning of minarets in Switzerland, and strong opposition to the construction of a mosque near the site of the 2012 Olympics in East London are just a few of the more celebrated instances in which mosques have elicited a strong, and often divided, public reaction. It would be tempting to read these – and other episodes of contention surrounding mosques – as representing fundamental tensions between Islam and the West that have become magnified as a result of recent terrorist attacks and increasing flows of immigration from predominantly Muslim countries. However, such a view would be shortsighted, as there has been substantial variability in the reactions elicited by mosques across settings, despite the presence of comparable prejudices against Muslims and fears regarding the dangers of Islamic extremism.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Spain, where mosques have elicited highly divergent reactions in different regions of the country, making it a natural social laboratory for investigating the sources of hostility toward mosques and the populations they serve.¹ Since 1990, residents have mobilized in opposition to mosques in 30

¹ Although I use the term “region” here, Spain is technically divided into “Autonomous Communities” with varying levels of autonomy from the central state.

different municipalities in the northeastern region of Catalonia, whereas opposition has been much rarer in other parts of the country (Map 1.1).



Map 1.1: Location of municipalities host to mosque opposition in Spain since 1985 (Source: Author's review of Spanish press coverage and SOS Racismo's annual reports on racism in Spain).

The high level of opposition to mosques in Catalonia is surprising, as it has centered primarily on the presence of small and inconspicuous prayer rooms. In contrast to purpose-built mosques, which are generally identifiable by their distinctive Islamic architecture (i.e. domes and minarets), prayer rooms are typically located in converted apartments, garages, shops, and warehouses (Allievi 2009). Given their small size and nondescript appearance, one might expect that prayer rooms would generate relatively little opposition compared to large purpose-built mosques, whose grand scale and visibly

Islamic design make them particularly susceptible to being viewed as symbolic threats to dominant cultural and religious traditions (Cesari 2005a; DeHanas and Pieri 2011). In Catalonia, however, this has not been the case.

In addition, although fears regarding Islamic extremism are certainly present in Catalonia, they are arguably as strong, if not stronger, in other regions of the country. In Madrid, for instance, mosques have elicited opposition in just one municipality, despite the fact that it suffered a direct attack by Muslim extremists in 2004, when a group of terrorists carried out a series of coordinated bombings against Madrid's metropolitan train system, killing 191 people and wounding 1,800 others. In the months following the bombings, a number of high-profile actors and organizations in Madrid voiced their concerns about terrorism, frequently drawing linkages between mosques and terrorist cells in the region. Several newspapers reported that the authors of the attacks in Madrid had received spiritual guidance and inspiration from the imam of a small prayer room in the city. An article published in *La Razón*, a popular conservative newspaper, asserted that one out of every three mosques in Madrid had a connection to a "radical Islamist group," based on a report published by the Ministry of the Interior.² The article went so far as to map all known mosques in Madrid and to single out several believed to have connections to Islamic radicals (Image 1.1). Even the Association of Immigrant Moroccan Workers of Spain (ATIME), the most prominent Moroccan association in Madrid, contributed to the general discourse connecting mosques to terrorism by calling for the establishment of a Muslim council that might "normalize" the "uncontrolled"

² Serrano, Jaun. 2004. "Una de cada tres mezquitas de Madrid tiene conexión con grupos radicales islamistas." *La Razón*, May 31.

discourses of imams.³ In sum, the linkages drawn between mosques and terrorism were highly salient in Madrid following the attacks of 2004, making it all the more paradoxical that mosques as such have elicited so little opposition in the region.



Rajoy cree que ZP quiere una «España de monaguillo»
Dice que sólo ha hecho «dos cosas y media» como presidente.

Nacional

Una de cada tres mezquitas de Madrid tiene conexión con grupos radicales islamistas

Las vinculaciones alcanzan a Hamas, Hermanos Musulmanes, Justicia y Caridad, Morabitum o la corriente Tabligh

Más de un tercio de las 55 mezquitas abiertas al culto en la Comunidad de Madrid tiene algún tipo de conexión con grupos radicales islamistas o en ellas se han detectado la presencia de extremistas marroquíes. La mayoría de los autores del 11-M

pasaron por ellas. Según un informe de los servicios de información e inteligencia en poder del Ministerio del Interior, al que ha tenido acceso LA RAZÓN, entre estas vinculaciones figuran contactos con Hamas, Hermanos Musulmanes, Justicia

y Caridad, Morabitum o la corriente fundamentalista Tabligh. Los dirigentes musulmanes lo niegan rotundamente. En 12 años, los oratorios en todo el país han pasado de los 40 en 1992 a los 230 abiertos hoy, casi todos en locales y garajes.

JUAN C. SERRANO

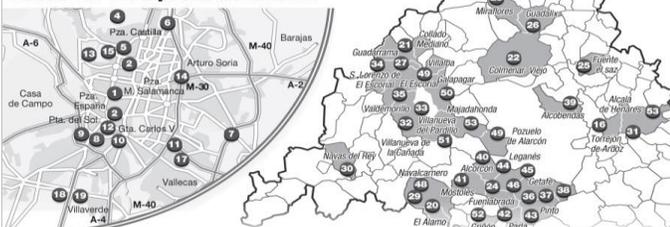
Madrid. La amplia expansión de mezquitas en España durante estos años ha tenido el mismo reflejo en la Comunidad de Madrid. En 1992, la inmigración musulmana contaba con tres lugares de culto, incluido el de la gran mezquita de la M-30 abierta ese año. Hoy, dispone de 55 en toda la región, especialmente en la zona sur. La gran mayoría, además, funciona como escuelas coránicas y de enseñanza del árabe para escolares. Esta rápida implantación, muchas veces sin ningún control y escasos medios financieros, está revelando ahora su lado más oscuro

Los servicios de información e inteligencia han detectado la presencia de radicales marroquíes o conexiones con grupos islamistas en un tercio de estos oratorios madrileños. En el primer caso, extremistas del país vecino han sido localizados actuando en centros de culto musulmán de la capital como el que posee la asociación «Convivencia sin Fronteras», en Villaverde. Fuera del casco urbano madrileño, y sobre todo en municipios del extrarradio con gran presencia de inmigrantes marroquíes, se han identificado radicales en comunidades de Fuenlabrada, Villanueva del Pardillo, Alcobendas, Alcorcón, Móstoles, Fuenlabrada y Parla. La mezquita Ataubá, de este último municipio, era frecuentada por Abdennabi Koumja, uno de los suicidas del piso de Leganés y autor material de la matanza de Madrid.

Todos los centros madrileños están censados en un informe confidencial, en poder del Ministerio del Interior, donde se clasifica cada uno de ellos junto a las vinculaciones—si tiene—extremistas, o las sospechas que se les atribuye. Entre estas relaciones figuran contactos con grupos integristas como Hamas, Hermanos Musulmanes, Justicia y Caridad, Alianza Islámica, el movimiento fundamentalista Tabligh o la corriente Morabitum.

Hamas. Considerada una organización terrorista por FE UUI. Israel v.

Todas las mezquitas de Madrid



1. An-Nisa	Núñez de Balboa, 10-6ª dcha	Madrid
2. Asociación Musulmana Haqqani	Pza. Calles, 4-10ª F	Madrid
3. Centro Islámico Formación Religiosa	Avda. C. Herrera Oria, 7-3ª C	Madrid
4. Comunidad Islámica Al Huda	Anastasio Herrero, 7	Madrid
5. Comunidad Islámica de Madrid	Abdul, 11	Madrid
6. Comunidad Sufi Khaniqah-I Ni Matullahi	Cortel de Pavones, 34-A Local 4	Madrid
7. Comunidad Islámica de Valdebernardo	Peña de Francia, 2	Madrid
8. Asociación Cultural Inqah Abul Bati	Peña de Francia, 12	Madrid
9. Asociación España-Bangladesh	Sebastián Herrera, 3	Madrid
10. Comunidad Islámica Mezquita Al Huda de Madrid	Francisco Iglesias, 63	Madrid
11. Comunidad Islámica de Vallecas	Sombrette, 24	Madrid
12. Centro Cultural Islámico de Paquistanes en Madrid	Guamán el Bueno, 3-2ª	Madrid
13. Fundación de Cultura Islámica (FCI)	Salvador de Madariaga, 4	Madrid
14. Liga del Mundo Islámico (Centro Religioso-Cultural Islámico de Madrid)	Navarra, 35	Madrid
15. Asociación Comunidad Hispano-Palestina Jenualén	Avenida, 19-Bajo	Madrid
16. Comunidad Islámica de Barajas	Cañada Real, parcela 16	Barajas
17. Comunidad Religiosa Islámica Mezquita Mossa Ebno Noayre	Campos Isabéiz, 22	Villaverde Bajo
18. Asociación Marroquí «Convivencia sin Fronteras»	Getafe, 10	Villaverde Alto
19. Comunidad Musulmana de Villaverde Alto, Al Safae	Timoteo Gaitán Ortega, 26	El Alamo
20. Comunidad Islámica de El Alamo	José Rivera S/N	Collado Mediano
21. Comunidad Islámica de Collado Mediano, Mezquita Ataubá	Pino, 25	Collado Mediano
22. Comunidad Islámica de Colmenar Viejo, Mezquita Al Hyra	Barrío Palacio, 8-PBS	Colmenar Viejo
23. Comunidad Islámica de Fresnedillas de la Oliva	Paraguay, 3	Fresnedillas de la Oliva
24. Comunidad Islámica de Fuenlabrada	Almendralejo, 27. Local bajo 2	Fuenlabrada
25. Comunidad Islámica de Fuente el Saz del Jarama (Madrid)	Alejandro Rubio S/N	Fuente el Saz
26. Comunidad Islámica de Guadale de la Sierra	General Muñoz Grandes, 1	Guadale de la Sierra
27. Comunidad Islámica de Guadarama	Eusebio Guadaix, 35	Miraflores de la Sierra
28. Comunidad Islámica de Miraflores de la Sierra, Mezquita Al-Tauba	Río Ebro, 7 Planta baja	Miraflores de la Sierra
29. Comunidad Islámica de Navalcarnero, Mezquita Mohsin	San Fernando, 13	Navalcarnero
30. Comunidad Islámica de Navas del Rey	La Riega, 11	Navas del Rey
31. Comunidad Islámica de Torrejón de Ardoz, Mezquita An-Nur	Cantarranas, 1	Torrejón de Ardoz
32. Comunidad Islámica de Valdemorillo	Caminero de Retamal S/N	Valdemorillo
33. C. Islámica de Villanueva del Pardillo, Mezquita Khalil Ibn Al-Walid	Duque de Medinaceli, 29, bajo dcha.	Villanueva del Pardillo
34. Comunidad Islámica del Escorial	Andrés Almáguer, 1	San Lorenzo del Escorial
35. El Escorial	Zurbarán, 1	El Escorial
36. Comunidad Mezquita Al Istekama	Dr. Barmaquer, 1	Getafe
37. Al Falah	Las margaritas, s/n	Getafe
38. Nueva Mezquita de Getafe	Costanilla de los ciegos, 17	Alcobendas
39. Comunidad Musulmana Baer de Alcobendas	Las eras	Alcobendas
40. Comunidad Musulmana de Alcorcón Al-Iman	Andrés Torrejón, 3ªC	Alcorcón
41. Comunidad Musulmana de Móstoles, Mezquita Attawhid	Jericó, 4	Móstoles
42. Comunidad Musulmana de Parla, Mezquita Ataubá	Travesía de san Ildefonso s/n	Parla
43. Comunidad religiosa Islámica El Hedaya de Pinto	Constitución, 18	Pinto
44. Comunidad religiosa Islámica Mezquita Al-Fath de Leganés	San Amado, 9 bajo	Leganés
45. C. religiosa Islámica Mezquita Bahman del barrio de La Fortuna	Río Nervión, 13	Leganés
46. Mezquita Al Fati	Cabrero, 7	Leganés
47. Comunidad religiosa Islámica Mezquita Al-Gofran de Pozuelo	Veleta, 11	Pozuelo
48. Comunidad religiosa Islámica Mezquita Al-Sunna de Fuenlabrada	Pío XII, 4, 35-37	Fuenlabrada
49. Mezquita Al-Iman	Procesión, 64 bajo	Villanueva de la Cañada
50. Comunidad Islámica Galapagar, Mezquita Omar Bin	Villanueva de la Cañada	Galapagar
51. Oratorio Villanueva de la Cañada	Calvario, 6	Villanueva de la Cañada
52. Mezquita del cementerio islámico de Grijón	San Roque, 17	Grijón
53. Mezquita de Majadahonda Al-Kayranam	Alfonso Dávalos	Majadahonda
54. Centro cultural Mezquita de Alcalá de Henares	Pío XII	Alcalá de Henares
55. Alimán		Collado Villalba

tras el 11-S, por Europa, es el principal movimiento islámico en los territorios palestinos. Los servicios de inteligencia sospechan que esta organización tiene conexiones con la mezquita de Abu Baker, en el barrio de Tetuán, la mayor de Madrid después de la situada en la M-30. Su imán, Riay Tatary, español de origen sirio, presidente además de la Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España, lo niega rotundamente. «Probablemente esa es una información del Mossad (servicio secreto israelí)», afirma. Tatary reconoce que desde la Mezquita se ayuda a una ONG y un hospital de Palestina, mediante el envío de donativos recogidos en colectas desde hace unos tres años. «Pero ese dinero—replica—no es para Hamas».

Hamas, seguida por decenas de miles de simpatizantes, está formada por un ala militar y otra política. La primera, liderada por las brigadas Izzedine al-Qassam, es la encargada de los ataques a Israel, cuyo Estado no reconoce. La segunda tiene la misión de construir escuelas y hospitales en Cisjordania, y en la Franja de Gaza. Además brinda ayuda a la comunidad en asuntos sociales o religiosos.

En la Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España están inscritas 42 mezquitas de todas las abiertas en Madrid. Tatary niega recibir financiación de Arabia Saudí, Qatar o Alemania, como señalan los servicios de información, pero en muchos de los oratorios madrileños se afirma que sobreviven gracias a las ayudas que reciben desde la mezquita del barrio de Tetuán.

«Ni un euro», exclama. «La única ayuda es un programa de la Comunidad de Madrid, que destina 24 profesores para la enseñanza infantil de árabe y los principios básicos del islam». Asegura que todos los centros de culto dependientes de la Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España se autofinancian a través de aportaciones individuales, incluida la mezquita que él preside. Pero la media de los alquileres que se pagan por locales v ariaras para des-

Image 1.1: An article in La Razón entitled “One out of every three mosques in Madrid has a connection with radical Islamist groups.” Such headlines contributed significantly to linkages between mosques and Islamic extremism following the train bombings in Madrid in 2004.

³ Granda, Elsa. 2004. “La mayor asociación de marroquíes propone un control estricto de mezquitas e imanes.” *El País*, August 26.

The divergent reactions to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid are additionally puzzling, given that Madrid is generally thought to be more politically conservative than Catalonia. In Madrid, the conservative Popular Party (PP) has governed at the regional level since 1995. Moreover, residents of the city of Madrid have elected a mayor from the PP in every municipal election dating back to 1991. By contrast, the presidents elected to head Catalonia's regional government have been far more mixed in political orientation. Although the current president, Artur Mas i Gavarró, represents Convergence and Union (*Convergència i Unió*), a right-of-center nationalist party, Socialist presidents were in power from 2003 until 2010. In addition, Socialist mayors have governed Barcelona, Catalonia's capital city, continuously since the first municipal elections were held after Spain's transition to democracy in 1979. Finally, 24 of the 30 municipalities where residents have opposed mosques in Catalonia were governed by a leftist party or coalition at the time of opposition. This suggests that opposition to mosques is not rooted merely in ideological conservatism.

The high level of opposition that mosques have faced in Catalonia has had important social, political, and legal ramifications. According to Moreras (2009), there has been a decline in the rate at which new mosques have been opened in the region since 2003, as Muslims have become increasingly fearful that establishing mosques will elicit hostility from residents living in the vicinity. Anti-mosque rhetoric has also proven to be a useful resource for conservative and far-right wing political parties seeking to bolster their support in areas where they traditionally have had little sway. Lastly, the high prevalence and intensity of opposition to mosques in Catalonia played a central role in motivating the Generalitat, Catalonia's regional government, to pass a "Law on Centers

of Worship” in July of 2009 (*La Llei 16/2009 dels Llocs de Culte*). This is the first law in Europe dedicated exclusively to the zoning and licensing of centers of worship. According to an affiliate of the Directorate General for Religious Affairs (*Direcció General d'Afers Religiosos*), which spearheaded the legislation, the main impetus for passing the law was to provide clarity and support for local governments faced with managing disputes over the establishment of mosques in the region.

Although opposition to mosques in Catalonia has had a powerful impact on the lives of both Muslims and non-Muslims in the region, little is known about the actual sources of this opposition. As a result, efforts to prevent the emergence of future conflicts may be misguided. The aim of this dissertation is to explain why opposition to mosques has been so prevalent and intense in Catalonia, as compared to Madrid and other Spanish regions, and in so doing, to provide a more informed basis for politicians and community leaders, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, to mediate the emergence of future contention over the presence of mosques in the region.

Islam in Spain

Spain provides a particularly interesting context for studying the popular reception of mosques due to the strong historical presence of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula. Islamic Spain, or *Al-Andalus*, was a major center of Muslim civilization for much of what since has been termed the “Islamic Golden Age” (George 1998; Lombard 2004). Muslims ruled large areas of the Iberian Peninsula for nearly eight centuries between 711 and 1492, and fostered the flourishing of philosophers, mathematicians, poets, engineers, architects and others whose contributions have been pivotal to the

development of modernity. *Al-Andalus* was also a highly multicultural society, as Muslims lived alongside Jews and Christians, with whom they had a significant degree of social and cultural interchange.

The Spanish Inquisition, which did not officially end until the 19th century, had the eventual effect of eradicating Islam from Spanish society. Nevertheless, Spain's Islamic heritage remains apparent in its culture, language, and architecture (Image 1.2). Consequently, many today view Spain as a potential bridge between Islam and the West. This view has been put to task by the re-emergence of a significant Muslim population in the country over the last 30 years. The growth of Spain's Muslim population, which now numbers over a million, has been especially pronounced since the onset of the 21st century, as economic opportunities in construction, services, agriculture, and industry have attracted large numbers of immigrants from Africa and South Asia.⁴ At present, only France, Germany, and Great Britain have larger Muslim populations than Spain within the European Union. Despite the magnitude of Spain's Muslim population, however, as well as the important historical influence of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, little has been written on the current integration of Muslims in Spanish society.⁵

⁴ According to the Observatorio Andalusí (2010), there are currently 1,446,939 Muslims residing in Spain.

⁵ Seminal works on this topic include: Lacomba (2001), López García and Berriane (2005), and Moreras (1999).



Image 1.2: Historic sites erected during the period of Al-Andalus.

Spain’s Islamic heritage has had multiple and conflicting effects on the reception of newly-arriving Muslim minorities. On the one hand, it has enabled anti-Muslim social commentators like César Vidal (2007) to connect current difficulties surrounding the integration of Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants to a broader history of conflict between Christianity and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula. Similarly, leaders of the far right, such as Josep Anglada, have strategically referenced the historical presence of Islam in Spain to generate fears that newly-arriving Muslims ultimately intend to re-establish *Al-Andalus*.⁶ On the other hand, Spain’s Islamic past has provided Muslim leaders and those sympathetic to Islam with symbolic resources that they may draw upon

⁶ Marín, Hector. 2010. “Tensión con Anglada en L’Hospitalet.” *El Mundo*, October 24. Josep Anglada is the leader of the “Coalition for Catalonia” (*Plataforma per Catalunya*), a far-right political party that is staunchly anti-immigrant in its rhetoric.

to demonstrate the richness of Islamic culture and to make claims regarding Islam's rightful place in Spain's emergent multicultural landscape (Image 1.3).

PRIMERA JORNADA DE PORTES OBERTES DE LA MESQUITA D'ARENYS DE MUNT

**CARRER AMADEU VIVES, 10, BAIXOS (AL COSTAT DEL PI GROS)
DISSABTE 15 DE GENER DE 2011 DE 15 A 18 HORES**



Image 1.3: Advertisement for an “Open House” (Portes Obertes) at a disputed mosque in Arenys de Munt (Catalonia). The photo of the Great Mosque of Cordoba is used here to emphasize the important place of Islam in Spanish history, as well as its potential to enrich social and cultural life in Arenys de Munt.

Spain's Islamic heritage has also facilitated the establishment of state policies that afford Islam a special legal status in the country. In 1989, Islam was officially recognized as a religion “deeply rooted” in Spanish society, paving the way for the establishment of a “Cooperation Agreement” (*Acuerdo de Cooperación*) in 1992 between the state and the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE),⁷ an entity that serves as the principal interlocutor with the state in matters concerning Islam (Arigita 2006; Jiménez-Aybar 2004).⁸ The Cooperation Agreement with the CIE distinguished Spain as the only European country

⁷ The CIE consists of representatives from Spain's two largest Muslim federations, the Federation of Islamic Religious Entities of Spain (FEERI) and the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE).

⁸ The year of 1992 was selected for its symbolic marking of the 500th anniversary of the Inquisition.

other than Austria to afford Islam official state recognition. The agreement established a series of rights and privileges for Muslim communities, including the protection and recognition of mosques as inviolable spaces, the right to religious assistance in public establishments, the provision of classes on Islam to Muslim students in public and semi-public schools, the legal recognition of marriages performed in accordance with Islamic law, the provision of fiscal benefits for federated Islamic associations, the right to celebrate Muslim holidays, and the right of the CIE to partake in the conservation of Islamic historical sites and artifacts (Sánchez Nogales 2004). The special status afforded to Islam in Spain has stimulated a plethora of studies on the state's approach to recognizing Islam institutionally and the evolution of Islam's organizational structure in the country (Arigita 2006; Jiménez-Aybar 2004; Mantecón Sancho 1995; Motilla de la Calle 1985). However, few studies have looked at how the lofty aspirations embodied in the Cooperation Agreement of 1992, as well as in state rhetoric more generally, have been realized in practice.

Opposition to mosques in Spain

Given the profound influence of Islamic culture on Spanish society, as well as the special status granted by the state to the Islamic faith, one might expect that Muslims and physical symbols of their presence would be relatively well-received in Spain. This, however, has not been the case. The incongruence between the inclusivity demonstrated toward Islam in state rhetoric and official policy, on the one hand, and the harsh realities that many Muslim communities have faced when attempting to establish the structures needed to meet their religious and cultural needs, on the other, is most apparent in the

high level of hostility elicited by mosques (Moreras 2008; 2009; Zapata Barrero 2006; Zapata Barrero and de Witte 2007).

Residents have mobilized in opposition to mosques in 56 different Spanish municipalities, 30 of which are in Catalonia. “Opposition” refers here to organized attempts by local communities to shut down an existing mosque or to prevent the establishment of a new mosque.⁹ In most instances, opposition to mosques has occurred through petition campaigns that aim to dissuade local governments from authorizing the use of a given locale for worship. These campaigns generally have been organized either by neighborhood associations or by *ad hoc* pressure groups formed specifically for the purpose of opposing mosques.¹⁰ In addition to initiating petition campaigns, residents have taken to the streets on occasion in protest of mosques. Several street demonstrations have occurred in historically symbolic plazas that are emblematic of the neighborhoods or municipalities where they are located. Notable anti-mosque demonstrations have taken place in the Catalan municipalities of Mataró, Premià de Mar, Reus, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, and Viladecans, as well as in Seville (Andalusia) and Talayuela (Extremadura).

The fact that the present study focuses on *organized* opposition to mosques raises the question of whether divergent responses to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid reflect actual differences in popular sentiment toward mosques or whether they are best

⁹ This definition does not include isolated instances of vandalism. A review of the Spanish media indicates that vandalism has been more common and serious in Catalonia than elsewhere in the country. For example, incendiary devices were used to set fire to mosques in the Catalan municipalities of Cervera, Girona, Sant Boi de Llobregat, and Terrassa. But very often, such acts are isolated to a few individuals and hence may not reflect broader sentiments of the community. Moreover, minor instances of vandalism against mosques (i.e. spray painting) are so prevalent in Spain that they are often not viewed as “newsworthy” and hence difficult to document.

¹⁰ The largest campaign was organized in Badalona (Catalonia), where 20,800 signatures opposing a mosque in the city were presented to the municipal government in 2007.

explained by differences in the organizational potential of local communities where mosques have been established in the two regions. As scholars of collective action have made amply clear, the translation of grievances into concerted action is mediated by a host of factors, such as the availability of resources, the structure of political opportunities, the presence of frames that resonate with potential participants, and the strength of social networks (Benford and Snow 2000; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 1998; Zald and McCarthy 1979).

Although such factors are important to consider when explaining any singular instance of opposition to mosques, they are unlikely to explain the divergent regional responses to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid. While a certain level of organizational capacity is certainly necessary for a given community to mobilize against a mosque, a recent study comparing levels of civic activism in Spain finds that general civic participation is slightly higher in Madrid than in Catalonia (Montero Gibert, Font, and Torcal Lorient 2006). Moreover, as I will explain in more detail below, many of the communities where mosques have been established in both Catalonia and Madrid consist largely of internal Spanish migrants with comparably strong legacies of community activism and participation in each region (Bier 1980). It is thus unlikely that opposition to mosques is a spillover effect of higher levels of civic activism or participation in Catalonia.

The most convincing evidence that divergent reactions to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid are rooted in actual differences in sentiment comes from a survey conducted in 2009 by the Center for Sociological Investigations (CIS) on attitudes toward immigration. As part of the survey, residents were asked to rate how acceptable they

found a number of scenarios, including the decision of people to protest the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood. The following table summarizes the responses given by residents of Catalonia, Madrid, and other Spanish regions:

Table 1.1: Attitudes toward mosque opposition in Catalonia, Madrid, and the rest of Spain				
		Catalonia N = 434	Madrid N = 365	Rest of Spain N = 2,028
People protest against the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood	Very acceptable	19.8%	14.8%	11.3%
	Pretty acceptable	33.9%	12.9%	23.8%
	Not very acceptable	28.6%	30.4%	37.3%
	Unacceptable	13.6%	31.0%	17.1%
	Does not know	3.0%	9.0%	9.9%
	No answer	1.2%	1.9%	.7%

Source: CIS. 2009. Study #2817: Attitudes toward immigration III (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración III*).

As illustrated by Table 1.1, respondents from Catalonia are significantly more accepting of opposition to mosques than respondents from Madrid ($p < .001$). 54% of respondents from Catalonia viewed opposition to mosques as “very acceptable” or “pretty acceptable,” compared to just 28% of respondents from Madrid and 35% of respondents from the rest of Spain. Similarly, only 42% of respondents from Catalonia viewed mosque opposition as “not very acceptable” or “unacceptable,” compared to 61% of respondents from Madrid and 54% of respondents from the rest of Spain. These findings support the claim that residents of Catalonia feel more negatively toward

mosques than residents from Madrid and other Spanish regions.¹¹ They also suggest that residents of Madrid tend to be more accepting of mosques than the typical Spaniard. Hence, the divergent reactions to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid do appear to reflect actual differences in sentiment.

Anti-mosque sentiment in Catalonia, moreover, is not confined to a conservative segment of the region's population, but rather cuts across the political spectrum. There are five main political parties in Catalonia: The Popular Party (PP) (conservative / non-nationalist), Convergence and Union (CiU) (conservative / nationalist), the Socialists' Party of Catalonia (PSC), the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) (nationalist), and the Initiative for Catalonia Greens (ICV) (ecosocialist / nationalist).¹² The following table shows how attitudes toward mosques break down by political orientation, according to the findings of a survey conducted between 2010 and 2011 by the Generalitat's Center for Opinion Studies.¹³

¹¹ The same question was included in two prior CIS surveys conducted in 2007 and 2008. In both surveys, 58% of respondents from Catalonia found it acceptable for people to protest mosques in their neighborhoods, compared to just 36% (in 2007) and 37% (in 2008) of respondents from Madrid. Respondents from some of Spain's other regions tended to fluctuate more in their responses from year to year, but this is likely due to smaller sample sizes. Moreover, Catalonia is the only Spanish region in which a majority of respondents consistently found opposition to mosques to be acceptable. Full results of the responses to this question in the 2007, 2008, and 2009 CIS surveys may be found in Appendix B.

¹² These characterizations are somewhat schematic. CiU has been variously represented as conservative or centrist, depending on the issue at hand. As a broad generalization, however, the right-of-center parties in Catalonia are the PP and CiU, while the left-of-center parties are the PSC, ERC, and ICV.

¹³ The survey was carried out between November 30th, 2010 and January 1, 2011. This was just after the last regional election, which took place in November of 2010. The CiU won the election with 38.43% of the vote, while the PSC came in a distant second with 18.38%.

Table 1.2: Attitudes toward mosque opposition in Catalonia by political orientation							
		Party voted for in the last regional election					
		PP N = 79	CiU N = 323	PSC N = 153	ERC N = 74	ICV N = 57	Did not vote N = 494
People protest against the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood	Very acceptable	49.0%	25.6%	24.5%	30.5%	15.0%	22.9%
	Pretty acceptable	25.9%	41.5%	33.0%	32.4%	31.5%	31.5%
	Not very acceptable	10.7%	21.1%	20.6%	22.2%	35.4%	24.1%
	Unacceptable	5.6%	7.7%	13.3%	7.0%	15.1%	12.1%
	Does not know	8.8%	3.4%	8.3%	5.0%	3.1%	8.5%
	No answer	0.6%	0.7%	0.3%	2.9%	0.0%	0.9%

Source: Center for Opinion Studies (*Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió*), Generalitat de Catalunya. 2010. REO 638: "Catalans' perception of immigration" (*Percepció dels catalans i catalanes sobre la immigració*).

Table 1.2 shows that although respondents who voted for conservative parties, particularly the PP (75%), were the most accepting of opposition to mosques, a majority of respondents who voted for the Socialists' Party (57.5%) and the Republican Left (63%) also found opposition to mosques to be acceptable. Even 45% of respondents who voted for the Initiative for Catalonia Greens, the region's most liberal and left-wing party, approved of mosque opposition. Given that anti-mosque sentiment cuts across the political spectrum in Catalonia, it is unlikely that the high prevalence of opposition to mosques in the region is attributable to the presence of a small group of xenophobic activists or to general social conservatism.

The presence of mosques in Spain

Although mosques have elicited significant opposition in Spain, Muslim communities have managed to establish 690 mosques, which are dispersed in regions throughout the country (Table 1.3).¹⁴ To put this number in perspective, however, there are over 2,000 Protestant churches in Spain, despite the fact that the number of Protestants residing in the country is roughly equivalent to the number of Muslims.^{15,16}

¹⁴ This number only includes mosques that are officially registered with the Ministry of Justice. Many mosques, however, are not officially registered because they are either operating illegally or in the process of formalizing their legal status. Hence, 690 is a conservative estimate of the total number of functioning mosques in Spain.

¹⁵ For data on the Protestant population of Spain, see the official website of the Federation of Protestant Religious Entities of Spain (FEREDE): <http://www.ferede.org/general.php?pag=estad#2> Accessed 12 January, 2011.

¹⁶ A recent article in *El País* reports that there are 600 Protestant churches in Catalonia, compared to 195 mosques: See Carranco, Rebeca and Lluís Visa.2010. "Los riesgos del 'Islam de polígono.'" *El País*, September 22.

Table 1.3: Muslim communities, mosques, and mosque opposition in Spain				
Autonomous Community	Muslim Population	% Total Population	Mosques	Municipalities Host to Mosque Opposition
Catalonia	368,090	4.9	145**	30
Madrid	234,078	3.7	79	1
Andalusia	230,756	2.8	90	3
Valencia	160,449	3.1	69	10
Murcia	74,821	5.2	45	3
Canary Islands	61,886	2.9	22	0
Castile La Mancha	46,815	2.2	45	0
Aragon	41,326	3.1	29	0
Melilla*	39,099	53.2	8	0
Balearic Islands	37,501	3.4	28	2
Ceuta*	33,043	42.0	41	0
Castile and León	28,555	1.1	15	2
Basque Country	25,946	1.2	18	2
Navarra	15,577	2.5	12	0
Extremadura	15,305	1.4	13	1
La Rioja	14,136	4.4	11	0
Galicia	10,911	0.4	14	2
Asturias	5,100	0.5	4	0
Cantabria	3,545	0.6	2	0
Total	1,446,939	3.1	690	56

Sources: For Muslim populations and mosques, Observatorio Andalusí (2010); for total populations, the Spanish National Institute of Statistics.

* Spanish protectorate in North Africa.

**According to the Generalitat, Catalonia's regional government, there are 195 mosques in Catalonia.

As in other European countries, mosques in Spain vary significantly in scale and design.¹⁷ Only 13 of the 690 mosques in Spain are purpose-built and visibly recognizable

¹⁷ What makes a structure a “mosque” in the first place depends on the activity that takes place within it (Muslims gathering for prayer), as opposed to the way it is designed (Metcalf 1996).

by their distinctively Islamic architecture (Image 1.4).^{18,19} The rest are prayer rooms that tend to be located in apartments, garages, shops, and warehouses (Image 1.5). Most campaigns opposing mosques have targeted Islamic prayer rooms, though there has been notable opposition to the establishment of purpose-built mosques in Granada (Andalusia), Seville (Andalusia), and Lleida (Catalonia).²⁰



Image 1.4: Purpose-built mosques.

¹⁸ This number does not include the small Morabito Mosque, which was established in Cordoba during the Spanish Civil War as a gift to the Moroccan troops fighting in support of Franco. This Morabito was converted into a library in 1950 and later reconverted into a mosque in 1992 at the request of the Association of Muslims in Cordoba.

¹⁹ The Spanish regions that have purpose-built mosques include: Andalusia (6), Ceuta (2), Madrid (2), Melilla (2), and Valencia (1). Although Catalonia is home to Spain's largest Muslim population, it does not have a single purpose-built mosque.

²⁰ Muslims in Barcelona have also encountered resistance to their efforts to establish a large, purpose-built mosque in the city. However, this resistance has come mainly from city officials and bureaucrats, as opposed to local residents. Efforts to establish a purpose-built mosque in Barcelona have additionally been hindered by disputes between different Muslim factions within the city over who should run the mosque, which communities it should serve, and how it should be funded. For a discussion of the history of proposals to establish a purpose-built mosque in Barcelona, see Moreras (2002).



Image 1.5: Prayer rooms.

According to a recent report by the Observatorio Andalusí (2010), about one quarter of Spain's Muslim population and just over 20% of the country's mosques are located in Catalonia (Table 1.3). The strong Muslim presence in the region has to do with a variety of factors which I will discuss at greater length in Chapter II. Nevertheless, other regions of Spain, such as Madrid, Andalusia, and Valencia, have sizeable Muslim populations and a significant number of mosques as well, and hence one might expect similarly strong opposition to mosques in these regions. By all measures, however, opposition to mosques has been significantly more frequent and intense in Catalonia, and particularly in the Barcelona metropolitan area, than elsewhere in Spain. Moreover, it is

not a foregone conclusion that opposition to mosques will be greatest in regions, cities, or neighborhoods with the largest Muslim populations, as it is precisely in such contexts that Muslims have the most voice when claiming a right to religious and cultural representation and recognition (McLoughlin 2005). Even if it is granted that the size of Catalonia's Muslim population is relevant to understanding the high level of opposition to mosques in the region, it is still necessary to explain the precise relation that exists between population size and opposition to mosques.

Theories of intergroup conflict

In examining the sources of divergent reactions to mosques in Spain, I examined a number of competing hypotheses. As José Casanova (2006, p. 76) points out, investigating issues pertaining to the accommodation and incorporation of Muslims in Europe is complicated by the fact that the “immigrant, the religious, the racial, and the socio-economic disprivileged ‘other’ all tend to coincide.” Given that the term “Muslim” has strong ethnic and class connotations in European contexts that extend beyond its primary signification as a religious category, it is important to not to assume *a priori* that religious difference is the sole cause of conflict over mosques and other markers of Islamic presence. For this reason, the initial hypotheses that I explored derived from general theories of intergroup conflict, as opposed to more narrow theories that focus exclusively on the religious dimensions of conflict.

Understanding the sources of hostility toward newly-arriving ethnic and religious minorities has been a longstanding concern of sociologists, dating back to the classical works of Thomas, Park, and others associated with the Chicago School (Drake and

Cayton 1945; McKenzie 1924; Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925; Thomas and Znaniecki 1927). Early ecological approaches tended to view inter-ethnic conflict as an important stage in more general processes of invasion and succession, on the one hand, or adaptation and assimilation, on the other. Competition over scarce resources, such as jobs, housing, and public space, was viewed as a central mechanism driving hostility toward “invading” groups (Park and Burgess 1921).

Competition theory has since been formalized and utilized by sociologists and social psychologists to explain the emergence of negative attitudes and practices toward minorities in a range of settings. Heightened competition, it is argued, increases the salience of ethnic boundaries and generates antagonism toward minorities perceived as threatening to the welfare, status, or position of majority groups (Bobo 1983; Olzak and Nagel 1986; Olzak 1992). This claim has found support in a number of recent empirical studies aimed at illuminating the sources of hostility toward immigrants and other minorities (Citrin et al. 1997; Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998; Kunovich 2002; Quillian 1995; Schlueter and Wagner 2008; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006; Soule 1992; 1999).

From the perspective of competition theory, it might be argued that mosques are viewed as symbolic of a new presence that threatens the economic livelihood of native residents. Muslim immigrants compete with Spanish workers for jobs, and they are often accused of being a drain on Spain’s strapped social welfare system. However, although certain segments of the Spanish population express feelings of resentment toward Muslims and other immigrants for taking jobs and public benefits, opposition to mosques has occurred primarily during a period of major economic growth and predominantly in a

region with one of the highest per capita incomes and lowest unemployment rates. In fact, between 1995 and 2007, when the vast majority of mosque opposition in Catalonia took place, the region's per capita income nearly doubled from 14,000 to 27,500 Euros (Figure 1.1). During that same period, Catalonia's unemployment rate decreased from nearly 19% to less than 7%. Therefore, a sudden rise in economic competition does not appear to explain the high degree of opposition to mosques in the region (Figure 1.2).

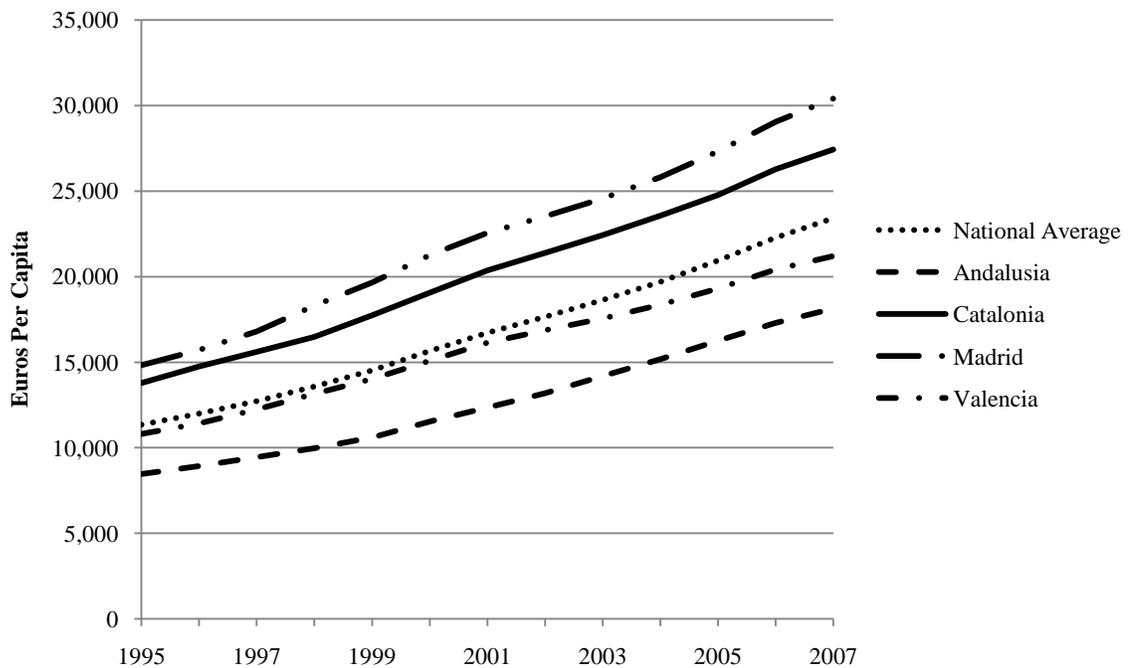


Figure 1.1: Average income in Spanish regions with over 100,000 Muslim inhabitants (Source: Compiled by author based on data from the National Institute of Statistics' Active Population Survey).

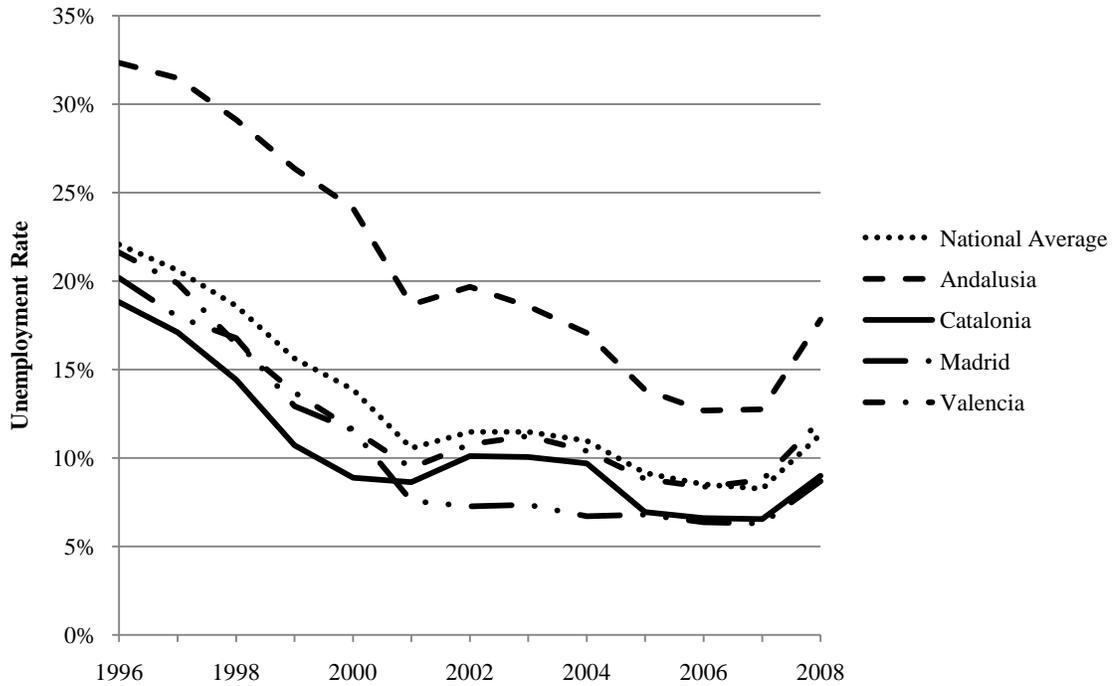


Figure 1.2: Unemployment rates in Spanish regions with over 100,000 Muslim inhabitants (Source: Compiled by author based on data from the National Institute of Statistics' Active Population Survey).

The 2009 CIS survey on attitudes toward immigration, moreover, indicates that perceptions of heightened competition due to immigration are actually slightly lower among residents of Catalonia than among residents of other Spanish regions (Table 1.4). If competition over scarce resources was the main factor explaining divergent reactions to mosques, we would expect to see more opposition in Andalusia, which is home to one of the country's largest Muslim populations and traditionally has had one of Spain's highest rates of poverty and unemployment.

Table 1.4: Perception of competition due to immigration in Catalonia, Madrid, Andalusia, and the rest of Spain					
		Catalonia N = 435	Madrid N = 366	Andalusia N = 512	Rest of Spain N = 1,519
Immigrants take away jobs from Spaniards	Highly agree	17.9%	21.0%	36.5%	24.5%
	Agree	37.0%	19.1%	32.2%	35.9%
	Disagree	27.8%	27.6%	18.6%	24.4%
	Highly disagree	12.6%	26.2%	8.8%	10.9%
	Does not know	3.0%	5.2%	3.9%	3.8%
	No answer	1.6%	.8%	0 %	.6%

Source: CIS. 2009. Study #2817: Attitudes toward immigration III (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración III*).

The high level of perceived competition due to immigration in Andalusia is reflected by the fact that 69% of respondents “highly agree” or “agree” that immigrants take jobs away from Spaniards, compared to 55% of respondents from Catalonia and 40% of respondents from Madrid. The low level of competition perceived by respondents from Madrid may be a contributing factor to the low degree of conflict surrounding mosques and other issues pertaining to immigration in the region. However, given that opposition to mosques has been relatively rare in Andalusia, which has one of the highest rates of poverty and unemployment in the country, it is unlikely that opposition to mosques is reducible solely to competition over jobs, social welfare, and other limited economic resources.

While most scholars recognize that competition is important to consider when analyzing inter-ethnic conflict, many have argued that perceived threats to social identity

and dominant cultural or religious values may play an equally strong role in generating hostility toward ethnic and religious minorities (Huddy and Sears 1995; Schneider 2008; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Some have highlighted how perceptions of identity and cultural threat are influenced by unacknowledged prejudices acquired through the socialization process (McConahay and Hough 1976; Pincus and Ehrlich 1994; Sears and Henry 2003). Others have shown how they are shaped by ideological context and the manner in which diversity is represented in public discourses and policies (Coenders et al. 2008).

In the case of Spain, Prado (2008) has argued that the high level of opposition to mosques in Catalonia is the product of a general intolerance of Islam that has deep historical roots in the region. He focuses on the negative representations of Islam present in Catalan historiography and writes that anti-Islamic sentiment continues to be reflected in public discourses and policies in the region. Others have argued that the strong regional identity present in Catalonia and its assimilationist approach to managing cultural diversity have generated an especially high degree of concern regarding the threat posed by foreign traditions to the region's culture and values (Gil Araujo 2009). By contrast, Madrid's identity as a melting pot of cultures and its more multicultural approach to managing diversity may foster greater acceptance of mosques among its residents.²¹

It is certainly true, as Prado argues, that the historical Othering of Muslims, most notably those of North African descent, has contributed to negative attitudes toward Muslim immigrants in Catalonia. As I will explain in Chapter II, this is central to understanding why mosques are particularly susceptible to opposition in the region.

²¹ Madrid's identity as a melting pot of cultures is reflected in the regional slogan, "Madrid, the sum of everyone" ("*Madrid, la suma de todos*"). For an analysis of the distinct models of managing diversity in Catalonia and Madrid, see Davis (2008).

However, negative images of Muslims and North Africans are not present exclusively in Catalonia, but rather are part of the collective imaginary of Spain as a whole (Corrales 2002). When explaining divergent reactions to mosques within Spain, it is thus essential to analyze how the negative images of Muslims and North Africans present in the Spanish collective imaginary have interacted with more contemporary processes and developments that vary from region to region.

With regard to Catalonia's strong regional identity and assimilationist approach to managing diversity, it is likely true that some residents in the region view Muslims and other foreigners as a threat to their identity and culture. However, as I will explain in Chapter III, many of the communities that have mobilized against mosques in Catalonia are composed of internal Spanish migrants and their offspring. The most intense conflicts between Muslim and non-Muslim populations, including the 1999 riots in Terrassa and episodes of mosque contention in Badalona, Premià de Mar, and Santa Coloma de Gramenet, were organized largely by internal migrants residing in predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhoods.²²

Through my interviews, moreover, I discovered that the most vocal opponents of mosques in Catalonia were not necessarily the most ardent nationalists. In support of this finding, the results of the Center for Opinion Studies' 2010 survey on perceptions of immigration in Catalonia suggest that residents of the region who think of themselves primarily as Catalan are slightly less hostile to mosques than those who think of themselves primarily as Spanish (Table 1.5).

²² The riots in Terrassa were catalyzed by a series of fights between North African and Spanish youth. Although mosques were targeted by vandals, the demonstrations and rioting that took place focused more generally on the presence of North Africans, as opposed to mosques *per se*. These events constituted the first major conflict between immigrant and native populations in Spain.

Table 1.5: National identification and attitudes toward mosques in Catalonia						
		With which of the following phrases do you most identify? I feel:				
		Only Catalan	More Catalan than Spanish	Equally Spanish and Catalan	More Spanish than Catalan	Only Spanish
People protest against the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood	Very acceptable	25.5%	22.4%	22.1%	33.9%	26.1%
	Pretty acceptable	28.7%	35.3%	35.3%	32.3%	33.9%
	Not very acceptable	24.1%	27.0%	24.6%	19.4%	17.0%
	Unacceptable	17.5%	9.0%	10.3%	8.9%	3.0%
	Does not know	3.5%	5.8%	6.7%	5.6%	17.6%
	No answer	0.7%	0.7%	1.1%	0.0%	2.4%

Source: Center for Opinion Studies, Generalitat de Catalunya. 2010. REO 638: "Catalans' perception of immigration."

Table 1.5 shows that 60% of respondents who identified as “only Spanish” and over 66% of respondents who identified as “more Spanish than Catalan” approved of opposition to mosques, compared to 58% of respondents who identified as “more Catalan than Spanish” and 54% of respondents who identified as “only Catalan.” Those who identified as Catalan, moreover, were significantly more likely than those who identified as Spanish to view opposition to mosques as “not very acceptable” or “unacceptable.” To be sure, a majority of respondents approved of opposition to mosques, regardless of their national identification. However, the fact that those who perceived themselves as more Spanish than Catalan were the least accepting of mosques suggests that hostility toward mosques is not reducible to reactionary nationalism.

In addition, although Catalonia does indeed have a more assimilationist approach to managing diversity than other Spanish regions, its brand of assimilationism is not necessarily antithetical to the presence of mosques and other visible expressions of Islamic identity. The type of assimilationism particular to Catalonia is premised, rather, on the idea that immigrants should become familiar with Catalan culture and learn to speak the Catalan language, which does not imply that they must give up their cultures and languages of origin. In fact, the aforementioned Law on Centers of Worship, which was initially proposed by the leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia, was passed precisely to guarantee the right of Muslims to establish mosques. According to several of the more nationalistic individuals whom I interviewed, the vivid memory of cultural oppression under Franco has made them especially sensitive to the importance of respecting minority rights. This sentiment is evident in the following remarks made by

David Torrents, a local representative of the nationalist Convergence and Union party in Badalona. He states:

I believe that, at times, we nationalist parties are more understanding of the differences of any culture that might come to establish itself in Catalonia. Why? Because we have been persecuted for a long time. [The Spanish] have denied us many rights. And when we receive a petition from some cultural or religious entity to develop something particular from its country, we are more understanding of them because if we deny them something that they denied us for a long time, we will be reproducing the same thing as the Spanish, or what Spanish culture has done with Catalan [culture]. Therefore, we are open to them. But on the other hand, we explain to them what we are – today for you and tomorrow for me – rights and obligations. What we must have clear is that everyone has rights, but at the same time everyone has obligations.

Hence, although the strong sense of national identity in Catalonia has undoubtedly added a layer of complexity to the management of cultural and religious diversity, certain aspects of the region's nationalist rhetoric may actually facilitate the acceptance and accommodation of minority traditions and practices. For this reason, it is by no means a foregone conclusion that reactions to mosques will be more hostile in Catalonia than in other Spanish regions.

Meaning-making and mosque opposition

Understanding why opposition to mosques has been so prevalent in Catalonia, I argue, requires looking beyond broad economic indicators and generalizations about national or regional cultures, and developing a more nuanced understanding of the processes that influence how mosques are rendered meaningful at the local level. Part of what makes reactions to mosques in Western contexts such an interesting but complicated object of study is that mosques are subject to a multiplicity of interpretations. At the most general level, they represent the durable presence of Muslim minorities in the settings where they are located (Leveau 1988; Poston 1992). However, they also conjure up a host of other images and significations that vary based upon the specific socio-spatial and temporal contexts in which they are established. Depending on where and when mosques are established, they may be interpreted variously as signs of the progressive Islamicization of public space, harbingers of Islamic extremism, or potential sources of cultural enrichment, to name a few common significations. Understanding the reactions that mosques elicit thus requires a careful analysis of the processes that influence how they are made meaningful in the contexts where they are located or proposed (Maussen 2005; 2009).

The importance of being attentive to how mosques are made meaningful when analyzing popular reactions to their presence is evidenced by previous studies conducted in European and other Western contexts. McLoughlin (2005) brings attention to how the reactions elicited by mosques vary depending on whether they are interpreted as instruments of self-segregation and auto-exclusion, on the one hand, or structures that promote social control and integration, on the other. Others have shown how reactions to

mosques depend largely on whether they are perceived to cohere or to conflict with the desired image of the cities in which they are proposed (Gale 2005; Kuppinger 2008; Sunier 2005). Gale and Naylor (2002), for instance, argue that the acceptance of mosques in several English municipalities has been facilitated by the success of Muslim leaders and others in framing mosques as central to the production of cosmopolitan and multicultural cities, with the effect of replacing older images of mosques as “alien” and incommensurate with British cityscapes.

As highlighted by Gale and Naylor’s study, Muslim leaders have the potential to influence the meanings attached to mosques and to foster their acceptance through engaging in dialogue with public officials and local residents (Cesari 2005b; de Galembert 2005). By contrast, when those initiating the establishment of a mosque are perceived as aloof and uninterested in sharing their plans with the public, they are more likely to be viewed with suspicion and to encounter opposition (Cesari 2005b; DeHanas and Pieri 2011; Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg 2005). The level of skill with which Muslim leaders are able to dialogue and negotiate with public officials and local residents is often related to the longevity and level of organization of the communities that they represent (Cesari 2005a; Landman and Wessels 2005; Manco and Kanmaz 2005; McLoughlin 2005).

Despite a growing recognition of the importance of being attentive to processes of meaning-making when analyzing the sources of conflict over mosques, scholars have devoted surprisingly little attention to the actual narratives that local residents advance when articulating their motivations for opposing mosques. In fact, the present study is the first to my knowledge that employs semi-structured interviews to access the narratives

that underpin (or preclude) episodes of popular opposition to mosques. Most studies have focused instead on the discourses of public officials and “political entrepreneurs of Islamophobia,” as they are often much more loaded with symbolic rhetoric (Allievi 2009). Studies that have analyzed popular opposition to mosques have tended to presume that such opposition is rooted in overt or hidden prejudices emanating from global terrorism and the increasing fear and mistrust of Islam and its adherents in Western societies (Beck 2002; Jonker 2005; Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg 2005). However, while the stigma suffered by Muslims residing in Western contexts has undoubtedly been exacerbated by recent events, the divergent reactions to mosques, both within and between countries, demonstrates the need to examine how such stigma is mediated by contextual factors present in localized settings where Muslims and non-Muslims coexist and interact (Allievi 2009; Cesari 2005a).

Being attentive to the local narratives that residents employ when articulating their motivations for opposing mosques is essential for accessing the symbolic significance that people attribute to the presence of mosques in their neighborhoods. Social scientists increasingly have recognized the centrality of narrative to the interpretation of key events and the emergence of social action (Richardson 1990; Sewell 1992; Somers 1992; 1995; White 1987). Following Somers (1994, p. 59), narratives may be understood broadly as “constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by causal emplotment.” As she argues, isolated events are transformed into meaningful episodes through being emplotted within social narratives that draw out their significance by placing them in spatial and temporal relationship to other events. Hence, the very same event (i.e. the opening of a mosque) may be

understood quite differently, depending on how it is emplotted within distinct narratives. The manner in which events are emplotted, in turn, influences their potential to generate social action (Jacobs 1996; Steinmetz 1992).

Narratives, however, do not emerge out of thin air. Rather, they bear a strong connection to the patterned sets of social relations and conditions present in the settings in which they are produced (Emirbayer 1997; Somers and Gibson 1994). This is not to say that narratives are mere reflections of more basic social forces, as they have the power to influence the very relations and conditions that shape their emergence. However, it does highlight the importance of analyzing the relations that narratives bear to the socio-historical development of the settings in which they emerge. This is essential for explaining why certain narratives are present in some settings but absent in others, and why similar issues, events, and actions frequently elicit quite distinct responses, depending on the specific social and historical context in which they occur (cf. Kimeldorf 1988).

Memory, community, and symbolic boundaries

Previous studies of the incorporation of Muslim minorities in European and other Western contexts have tended to focus on how public policies and attitudes regarding mosques, headscarves, and other physical markers of Muslim presence have been shaped by national philosophies of integration, entrenched models of religious governance, and established understandings of the place of religion in the public sphere (Cesari 2004; Ferrari 2005; Fetzer and Soper 2005; Koenig 2005; Scott 2007; Soper and Fetzer 2007; Sunier 2005). While these studies help to illuminate broad national differences in public

policies and discourses related to the incorporation of Muslim minorities, they frequently overlook local and regional variation (Bader 2007), and neglect how national laws and policies may have disparate effects, depending on the norms of civic engagement, social relations, and institutions present in localized contexts (Gregory 1982; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993; Somers 1993).

Increasingly, scholars have called for greater attention to how cultural and religious differences are experienced, interpreted, and negotiated through quotidian practices and encounters that take place in specific local settings (Baumann 1996; Brubaker 2006; Daniels 2010; Nagel 2002). This focus on the “microcultures of place” is essential for capturing the precise ways in which abstract rights and obligations meaningfully interact with distinctive experiences and understandings of diversity on the ground (Amin 2002, p. 967). To be sure, local experiences and understandings of diversity are not completely autonomous from broader regional, national, and global processes and events. The argument is rather that they should be analyzed in their own right and connected to extra-local developments through empirical investigation, rather than *a priori* deduction (Burawoy 1998).

Studies across a range of settings and time periods have documented that local expressions of hostility toward minorities have been particularly forceful in historically working-class communities.²³ Contention surrounding mosques in Catalonia and other Western contexts is no exception, as opposition to mosques has commonly taken place in

²³ Much of the existing literature on working-class opposition to minority presence has centered on tensions deriving from the entry of African American migrants into historically white working-class neighborhoods in the US (Bobo 1983; Buell 1980; Drake and Cayton 1945; Greeley 1971; Myrdal 1944; Rieder 1985; Sugrue 1996; Wilson and Taub 2006). A number of recent studies have documented similar dynamics in Britain and other European settings (Alexander 1996; Amin 2002; Back 1996; Keith 1993; Lucassen 2005; Mac an Ghail 1999).

industrial or de-industrialized areas with large working-class populations (Buijs 1998; Jonker 2005; Kuppinger 2008; Manco and Kanmaz 2005; Moreras 2009; Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg 2005). Yet existing studies of popular opposition to mosques have paid inadequate attention to how the history, structure, and culture of working-class communities have contributed to anti-mosque mobilization. Instead, scholars have tended to focus on the susceptibility of working-class communities to anti-Muslim rhetoric advanced by the media and opportunistic political actors. The power of anti-Muslim rhetoric to generate active resistance to mosques, however, often depends on how it interacts with more localized struggles over identity and belonging (Allievi 2009).

Lamont's (2000) insightful analysis of working-class culture in the US and France provides some clues as to why mosques have encountered such hostility in historically working-class neighborhoods. She argues that, in lieu of possessing a high level of wealth or education, white workers maintain a sense of dignity by emphasizing their distinctive moral values and qualities as a strategy for distancing themselves from racial and ethnic minorities. The values of discipline and solidarity emphasized by the working class are not solely mentalities, but are inscribed in their physical surroundings and communal ways of life (Kefalas 2003).²⁴ They are also embedded in local narratives that juxtapose a "golden ethnically undisturbed past" of community and solidarity with a troublesome multicultural present in which immigrants and other minorities are blamed for processes of urban degradation and social breakdown (Amin 2002, p. 961; Back 1996, p. 45; Keith 1993). These "rupture narratives," I argue, play an important role in solidifying ethnic

²⁴ Kefalas (2003, p. 5) shows how the care that working-class residents of a Chicago neighborhood put into keeping their homes clean, cultivating their gardens, and preserving the quality of their communities is reflective of their "class-bound moral values" and efforts to "fortify moral and symbolic boundaries against social forces that threaten their way of life."

boundaries through reinforcing moral distinctions between those who do and do not share the values deemed necessary for being included in the local community.²⁵ They also motivate local residents to take action against processes of social change perceived as threatening to the quality and integrity of their neighborhoods (Small 2002; 2004).

Scholars of collective memory have highlighted how narratives of community and identity develop through a dynamic process of actively interpreting and reinterpreting the past in light of changing circumstances and conditions (Halbwachs and Coser 1992; Hervieu-Léger 2000; Schwartz and Schuman 2005; Zerubavel 1995; Zubrzycki 2006). Processes of mnemonic “editing” allow for the assimilation of complex and often conflicting experiences into coherent and culturally meaningful collective narratives (Zerubavel 2003). Working-class narratives that juxtapose a glorified, ethnically homogeneous past with a troublesome multicultural present, for instance, generally entail a significant degree of memory work that accentuates certain aspects of the past, while minimizing others.

In Chapter IV, I illuminate the specific mnemonic strategies that working-class residents utilize in constructing narratives about the past and present of their communities in the face of demographic transformation. These narratives, I contend, play a powerful role in constituting and solidifying symbolic boundaries that separate Muslims from non-Muslims. The contours along which these boundaries are drawn, as well as the intensity with which they are defended, I argue, depends critically on how Muslims and physical markers of their presence are interpreted through local narratives that connect their presence to broader transformations in the social, cultural, and moral fabric of community life.

²⁵ I thank Margaret Somers for suggesting the term “rupture narrative.”

Urban space, social privilege, and neighborhood defense

In addition to connecting the emergence of opposition to mosques to temporal narratives that center on processes of urban degradation and social breakdown generated by immigration and ethnic diversification, I show how the reception of mosques in Catalonia, and particularly in the Barcelona area, has been undermined by spatial narratives that link their presence to urban marginality, territorial stigmatization, and incipient processes of ghettoization. Critical geographers have brought attention to how the configuration of urban space is reflective of unequal power relations and social divisions generated by capitalism (Castells 1978; Harvey 1985; 1996; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989). The uneven development of urban space, in turn, plays an important role in shaping local understandings of difference and hierarchy (Davis 1990; Gieryn 2000; Martin and Miller 2003). These understandings, however, often mistake the manifestations of unequal power relations for their causes. For instance, the settlement of working-class immigrants in poorer neighborhoods is commonly identified by longstanding residents as a major *source* of urban inequality, when it is more accurately understood as a *consequence* of the uneven development of urban space.

Given the tremendous rise in immigration to Europe and other Western contexts over the past several decades (Castles and Davidson 2000; Hooghe et al. 2008), ethnic composition and the physical markers of immigrant presence increasingly have become central criteria for differentiating between ‘desirable’ and ‘undesirable’ neighborhoods in a range of cities. The images that specific neighborhoods acquire over time may, in turn, have a significant impact on the status of their residents and their future prospects for development (Sampson 2009). For this reason, residents often take great measures to

ensure that their neighborhoods maintain a positive reputation (Firey 1945; Guest and Lee 1983). Practices of neighborhood defense, I argue, often derive from anxieties related to how the entry or concentration of immigrants in a given neighborhood will damage its status, and by extension the status of its inhabitants, *vis-à-vis* other neighborhoods.

Narratives that link immigration to territorial stigmatization are likely to be strongest in settings characterized by pronounced social inequalities and spatial divisions, as the unequal distribution of immigrants across neighborhoods in such settings often leads physical markers of their presence, whether ethnic or religious, to be perceived as signifiers of urban marginalization and decay. In Chapter III, I trace the hostile reception of mosques in Catalonia to the strong socio-spatial divisions characteristic of industrial and de-industrialized cities where Muslim immigrants have tended to settle in the region. These divisions have contributed to the identification of mosques as symbolic of the ethnicization, stigmatization, and ghettoization of the neighborhoods where they are established, accounting for why they have become such a strong focal point of contestation.

Research design and methods

In order to document the prevalence of opposition to mosques in Spain, I reviewed roughly 2,500 articles that have been digitized and indexed in the online databases of *My News* (1995–2010) and *WebIslam* (1997–2010). These databases include articles from major newspapers and news wires, such as *Europa Press*, *El País*, *ABC*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, and *La Razón*, as well as a wide selection of provincial and local

dailies from regions throughout Spain.²⁶ I conducted the broadest of searches using the keywords “mosque AND residents” (“*mezquita*” Y “*vecinos*”). I also collected information from the annual reports of SOS Racismo (1995–2009), an NGO dedicated to fighting racism and discrimination. These reports contain extensive documentation of inter-ethnic contention throughout Spain and have devoted a significant amount of attention to mosque opposition. Analyzing these sources enabled me not only to document the presence of opposition to mosques, but also to see how local residents have publicly articulated their reasons for opposing mosques and the trajectories that controversies surrounding mosques have followed over time.

Scholars have pointed to the risks involved with relying on newspaper data to document protest events (Earl et al. 2004; Oliver and Maney 2000; Ortiz et al. 2005; Snyder and Kelly 1977). In particular, it is likely that not all cases of opposition to mosques have been covered in newspapers. Given this possibility, I put extra effort into meeting with representatives of Muslim federations and associations, governmental agencies, and civic groups that actively work to mediate tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim groups in different regions of Spain so as to learn about any instances of mosque opposition that might not have been covered by the Spanish press or by SOS Racismo’s annual reports. It is worth noting, moreover, that others who have written on mosque opposition in Spain also have found a disproportionately high level of opposition in Catalonia, as compared to other regions of the country (Moreras 2009; Prado 2008).

Once I had come to a firm understanding of how opposition to mosques varied across Spanish regions, I utilized a combination of in-depth case study and comparative

²⁶ I also conducted supplementary searches of articles indexed directly by *ABC*, *El País*, and *La Vanguardia*, whose electronic archives date back to 1995, 1976, and 1881 respectively.

case analysis to uncover the sources of this variation. I began by conducting an in-depth study of opposition to mosques in the municipality of Badalona, a large industrial city just to the northeast of Barcelona. My decision to begin my fieldwork in Badalona was motivated by the intense opposition that mosques have faced in the city over the past decade. This has made it a particularly revealing and strategic site for studying processes that may be present, but less apparent in other contexts (Eisenhardt 1989; Flyvbjerg 2006). After identifying the central narratives that have emerged during the course of mosque debates in Badalona, I selected two other municipalities in the Barcelona area and three municipalities in the Madrid metropolitan area to determine the extent to which the narratives present in Badalona were also present in other municipalities in Barcelona, and to identify the factors that might explain the infrequency of opposition to mosques in Madrid.

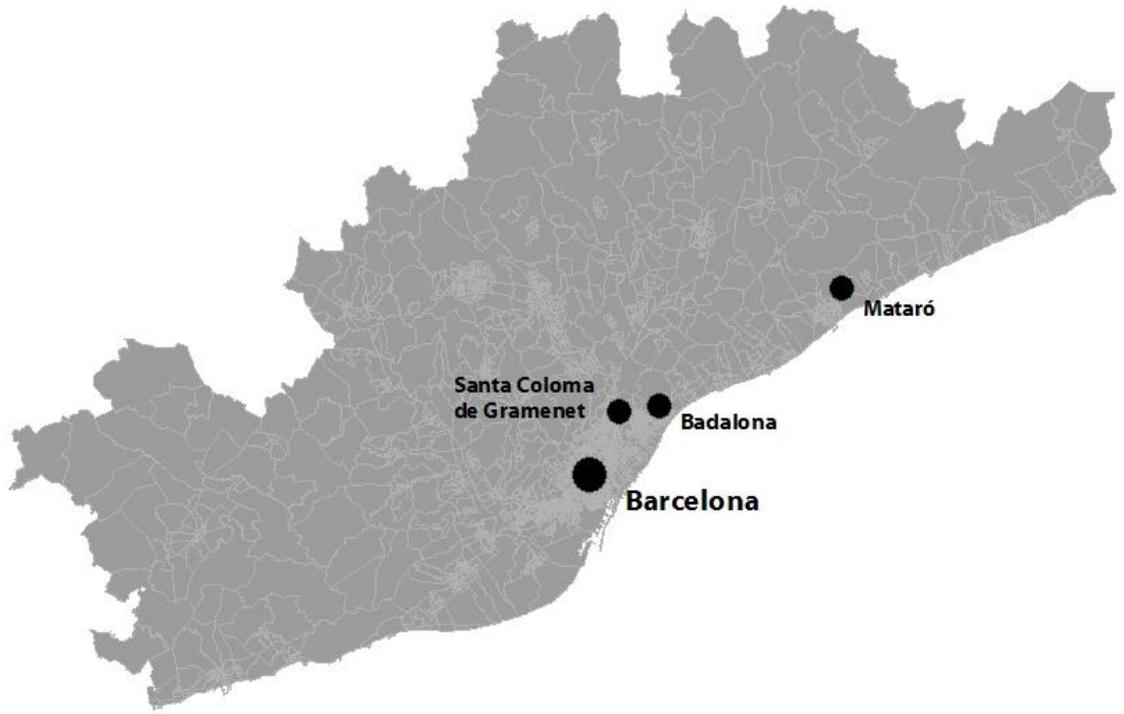
I selected the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid for comparison due to the highly divergent reactions elicited by mosques in region, despite their similarity with respect to a range of demographic, social, and economic indicators.²⁷ Specifically, the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid constitute the two largest industrial centers in Spain, contain several municipalities with populations of over 100,000 inhabitants, have proportionally similar immigrant populations, and are home to the country's largest Muslim communities. Yet opposition to mosques has emerged in 14 municipalities in Barcelona, while it has occurred in just one municipality in Madrid.²⁸

²⁷ The metropolitan area of Barcelona is defined in accordance with the specifications of the *Pla Territorial General de Catalunya*. This is the definition used by the Statistical Institute of Catalonia. The metropolitan area of Madrid is defined in accordance with the Statistical Institute of the Community of Madrid's zoning classification, *NUTS 4*.

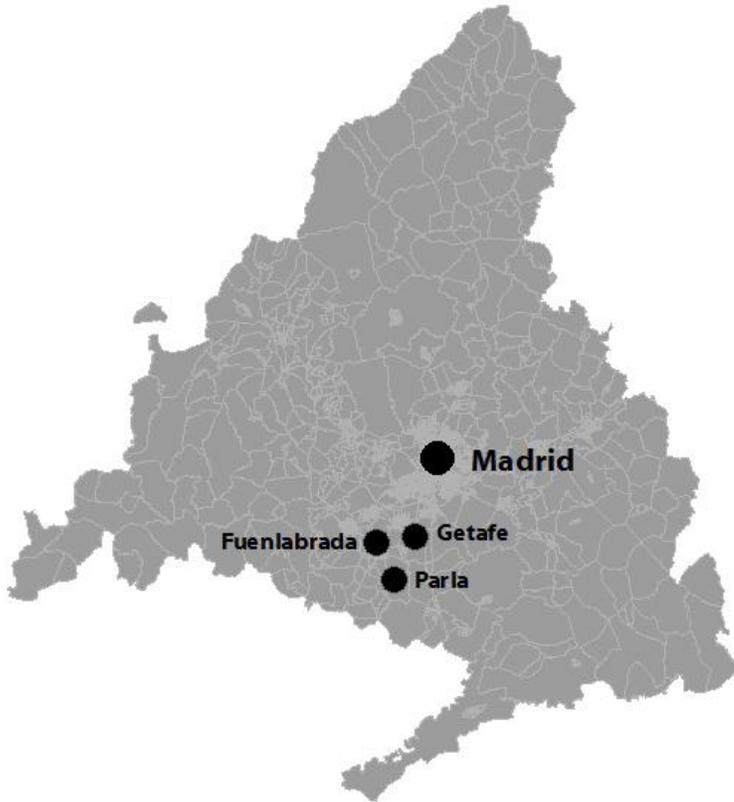
²⁸ Residents of Collado Villalba (Madrid) gathered 2,000 signatures for a petition opposing the establishment of a new mosque in the city in April of 2011, after I had completed my fieldwork for this dissertation.

In Barcelona, I conducted interviews in Badalona, Mataró, and Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Map 1.2), while in Madrid I conducted interviews in Fuenlabrada, Getafe, and Parla (Map 1.3). I selected municipalities in Barcelona so as to obtain a diverse sample of neighborhoods that have been host to mosque opposition. In Badalona, opposition has occurred largely in the most marginal of neighborhoods, in Mataró near the border between one of the poorest neighborhoods and a lower middle-class neighborhood, and in Santa Coloma in a working-class neighborhood of relatively high status within the city. In Madrid, I selected municipalities for their comparability to those selected in Barcelona with respect to the size of their overall and foreign populations, as well as for the large size of their Muslim communities (Table 1.6).²⁹

²⁹ Given that the Muslim population of Barcelona is larger than that of any other metropolitan area in Spain, a perfectly controlled comparison with respect to the size of Muslim communities was not possible. Nevertheless, the cities selected in Madrid are similar to those in Barcelona insofar as they have significant Muslim communities and insufficient space for these communities to pray. Consequently, worshipers frequently have spilled out into the streets in residential areas on Fridays and major holidays. This has generated sporadic individual complaints, but rarely organized opposition of the variety witnessed in Barcelona and elsewhere in Catalonia.



Map 1.2: Location of research sites in the Barcelona metropolitan area.



Map 1.3: Location of research sites in the Madrid metropolitan area.

Table 1.6: Selected characteristics of research sites						
Metropolitan Area	Barcelona			Madrid		
Municipality	Badalona	Mataró	Santa Coloma de Gramenet	Fuenlabrada	Getafe	Parla
Total Population	220,000	123,000	120,000	199,000	169,000	120,000
Foreign Population	15%	17%	22%	14%	16%	27%
Muslim Population	14,000	10,500	8,500	6,000	4,000	8,000
Mosques*	2	3	2	2	2	1

Sources: Compiled by author based on 2010 municipal census data from the National Institute of Statistics, as well as information collected at research sites.

* All mosques in selected research sites are prayer rooms located into apartments, garages, shops, or warehouses.

Between June of 2007 and December of 2009, I conducted 120 semi-structured interviews in Barcelona and Madrid. The data I gathered from interviews enabled me to access the meanings underlying (or precluding) opposition to mosques in each of the municipalities that I studied. I identified initial interviewees through purposive sampling based on their public involvement in mosque disputes or their activity in relevant associations and organizations in areas of focus. I recruited additional interviewees either by means of snowball sampling or in public settings, such as bars, shops, and recreational facilities. Interviewees included members of neighborhood associations and local residents, leaders of Muslim religious and cultural associations, municipal and regional government officials and bureaucrats, intercultural mediators, journalists, and Catholic priests. I conducted all interviews in Spanish and later translated them into English.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I utilized ethnographic observation to develop a fuller sense of inter-ethnic relations and community life in my research sites. I was especially concerned with how residents of different ethnic backgrounds inhabited public and private spaces, and whether actual practices of inhabiting space corresponded with the descriptions that residents provided when interviewed. To this end, I observed how different groups utilized plazas and other public spaces, as well as how patterns of inhabiting space shifted over the course of the day. I also observed mosques and other spaces where Muslims gathered for prayer on Fridays and major holidays so that I could document their visibility in city life and their impact on the daily routines and experiences of those residing in the vicinity. Finally, I attended a series of local celebrations (i.e. religious festivals and historical commemorations) and community forums so that I could access more formal and official narrations of the past and present of community life in my research sites. Local celebrations and community forums were also useful sites for observing the extent to which different individuals and groups in the city came together around overt expressions of community and solidarity. In one of my research sites in Barcelona (Badalona), opposition to a proposed mosque emerged unexpectedly during the course of my fieldwork in 2009. Having the chance to actually observe an episode of contention surrounding a mosque in process and to speak with relevant parties added a layer of richness to the analysis that would not have been possible had I relied solely on residents' recollection of past events.

Summary of chapters

In Chapter II, I draw upon survey data and secondary sources to outline the historical and demographic backdrop for the divergent reactions that mosques have elicited in Catalonia and Madrid. I analyze how attitudes toward Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants have been influenced by the distinct patterns of immigration characteristic of each region. I argue that although negative images of North Africans and Muslims present within the Spanish collective imaginary have been detrimental to the reception of Muslim immigrants throughout the country, such images are not uniform or static, but rather vary in intensity depending on the size and position of Muslims relative to other immigrant groups. Specifically, I show how Catalonia's strong demand for unskilled labor and strategic location as a gateway to France, Belgium, and other Western European countries have made it particularly attractive to francophone North Africans, who remain the most visible immigrant group in the region. This has contributed to the perception of mosques as iconic symbols of Otherness and has reinforced perceptions of North Africans as the primary culprits for the difficulties associated with immigration and ethno-religious diversification. In Madrid, by contrast, the tremendous growth of other immigrant groups, most notably Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans, has complicated notions of Otherness and lessened the tendency among residents to single out and scapegoat North Africans for the problems associated with immigration.

In Chapter III, I examine how reactions to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid have been influenced by the configuration of urban space and local understandings of social privilege in each region. I show how the strong socio-spatial divisions characteristic of industrial and de-industrialized cities where Muslim immigrants have tended to settle in

Catalonia, especially those located in the Barcelona metropolitan area, have led newly-arriving immigrants to concentrate heavily in poor, working-class neighborhoods. This has heightened connections drawn between Islam, immigration, and a range of social problems afflicting socially marginalized communities. It has also led disputes over mosques to become integrated into broader struggles over urban privilege and public recognition. In Madrid, by contrast, intra-municipal divisions and inequalities tend to be much weaker due to the way in which cities in the region have developed over time. This has facilitated a more equal distribution of newly-arriving immigrants across neighborhoods and has led disputes surrounding mosques to remain relatively self-contained and isolated from more general debates related to social justice.

In Chapter IV, I focus on the temporal dimensions of mosque opposition. I do so through an in-depth analysis of anti-mosque and anti-immigrant narratives in Badalona, a large industrial city located just to the northeast of Barcelona where opposition to mosques has been particularly vigorous over the past decade. I show how associations drawn between Islam, immigration, and urban degradation have been expressed through “rupture narratives” that juxtapose a glorified ethnically homogenous past of community and solidarity with a troublesome multicultural present fraught with social conflict and disintegration. I devote particular attention to the mnemonic strategies that working-class residents employ in constructing these narratives, and highlight the pivotal role that they play in solidifying ethno-religious boundaries in the city. I also show how pro-diversity activists and Muslim leaders have attempted to develop more inclusive criteria for local belonging by countering narratives that blame immigrants for the current problems afflicting the city’s poorest neighborhoods.

I conclude by looking at what the divergent reactions to mosques in Catalonia and Madrid say about the future incorporation and integration of North Africans and other Muslim immigrants in each region. I argue that although there has been a high degree of contention surrounding mosques in Catalonia, the disputes that have taken place have compelled Muslims and non-Muslims alike to engage with one another to a much greater extent than in other Spanish regions. Consequently, there has been more cross-ethnic and interreligious dialogue, as well as a more concerted effort to promote intercultural understanding, in Catalonia than in Madrid and elsewhere in Spain in recent years. Although this does not tell us which region will be more conflictive in the future, there are indications that first- and second-generation Muslim immigrants are integrating more successfully into the social and cultural life of Catalonia than Madrid.

Chapter II

Historical and contemporary constructions of Otherness in Catalonia and Madrid

In February of 2002, roughly 200 residents of Viladecans, a Catalan municipality located just to the southwest of Barcelona, gathered to protest the opening of a mosque and the increased presence of drug trafficking by Moroccans in the working-class neighborhood of Sales. The demonstration took place, somewhat ironically, in the Plaza of Diversity, a space whose name reflects past efforts of the neighborhood's residents to increase awareness of the value of diversity and difference during Franco's oppressive dictatorship.³⁰ In addition to demonstrating in the plaza, protesters hung banners from their balconies that read, "No drugs, no mosque" (Image 2.1). A participant interviewed at the time stated, "We don't want *moros* ("Moors") here, they are all delinquents and they destroy the peace of the neighborhood."³¹ Another remarked, "We don't want ghettos, we want them to disperse."³² Following the demonstration, residents initiated a petition in protest of the proposed mosque, with the effect of delaying its opening for two years.

³⁰ Shortly prior to the demonstration, a 70-year-old-man stabbed a Moroccan youth, who was subsequently taken to the hospital. The assailant's actions were critiqued by few, and even celebrated by some in the neighborhood.

³¹ "Los vecinos del Barrio de Sales quieren echar a los inmigrantes." 2007. *El Mundo*, March 1. In its contemporary usage, "*moro*" is a derogatory term for individuals of North African descent.

³² Ferrer, Josep. 2002. "Un barri de Viladecans, revoltat contra la mesquita i les drogues." *Avui*, March 2.

Tensión racial en la plaza de la Diversitat

El apuñalamiento de un marroquí en Viladecans aumenta los recelos entre los habitantes autóctonos y los inmigrantes

MANEL TORRES
Viladecans

La hora de la salida escolar es el mejor momento para apreciar el paisaje humano del barrio Sales de Viladecans. A esa hora, madres autóctonas y madres musulmanas van por las calles con sus hijos pequeños a los que acaban de recoger del colegio. Ante un paisaje así, no es extraño que a la plaza que los vecinos venían reivindicando desde muchos años atrás se le pusiera el nombre de Diversitat.

La plaza se ha convertido en el pulso del barrio. Y estos días el pulso denota tensión entre la comunidad autóctona y los inmigrantes magrebíes que empezaron a asentarse en los ochenta. Una tensión que tiene en el tráfico de droga la excusa para que empezara a aflorar una actitud xenófoba en algunas personas. La manifestación que anteaer congregó a un millar de personas y el apuñalamiento de un joven de 20 años marroquí minutos antes a manos de un jubilado con numerosos



Hay más pancartas en el barrio, sí. En concreto, frente al local que ha comprado la comunidad musulmana para adecuar la nueva mezquita, porque la que tienen ahora, en un piso, es pequeña. Esas pancartas son harto elocuentes: “Drogas no. Mezquita no”.

El alcalde de Viladecans, Jaume Montfort (PSC), promulgó ayer un decreto en el que instó a los vecinos a que retiren las pancartas en las que se asocia droga e islam. De lo contrario, el Ayuntamiento lo pon-

El alcalde denunciará a los vecinos que no retiren las pancartas que asocian el islam y la droga

drá en conocimiento de la fiscalía de la Audiencia para exigir “las responsabilidades penales que correspondan”. Este decreto del alcalde si considera que el altercado tiene un origen racista, ya que demuestra

Image 2.1: A banner hung in protest of a proposed mosque in Viladecans in 2002 (Source: Torres, Manel, 2002. “Tensión racial en la Plaza de la Diversitat.” *La Vanguardia*, March 2).

Episodes of contention surrounding mosques akin to the one described above have been commonplace in Catalonia, particularly in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. As in the case of Viladecans, such episodes have not centered solely on issues pertaining to religious difference and fear of Islamic extremism. Rather, mosques have been connected to a range of social problems, including crime, drugs, and the development of ethnic ghettos, that longstanding residents associate with the presence of immigrants, most notably Moroccans, in their communities.

In this chapter, I argue that the historical construction of North Africans and Muslims as Other in the Spanish imaginary has made them particularly vulnerable to discriminatory attitudes and practices throughout the country. However, the uneven presence and visibility of Moroccan immigrants relative to other immigrant groups in

different Spanish regions has played an important role in generating divergent reactions to Islamic centers of worship. Drawing upon data derived from municipal censuses and social surveys, I argue that the high proportion and visibility of Moroccans relative to other immigrant groups in Catalonia has contributed to the crystallization of linkages drawn between Islam and a series of social problems linked to immigration. This, in turn, has led residents to single out and scapegoat Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants for the problems afflicting their neighborhoods to a greater extent than in Madrid and other Spanish regions where the heightened presence and visibility of other immigrant minorities has added complexity to conceptions of Otherness and mitigated perceptions of Moroccans as the prototypical labor migrant.

To be sure, opposition to mosques cannot be reduced to the relative proportion of Moroccans who inhabit a given neighborhood, city, or region. As I will explain in Chapters III and IV, the configuration of urban space and the social attributes of the communities where mosques have been established in Catalonia are equally essential to consider when explaining why mosques have elicited such strong opposition from local residents. However, the ongoing position of Catalonia as Spain's primary destination for Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants constitutes an important backdrop for understanding why connections between Islam and an array of social problems associated with immigration are so prominent in the region.

Islam's contemporary presence in Catalonia and Madrid

In both Catalonia and Madrid, the contemporary presence of Muslim communities dates back to the 1960s. Given the paucity of demographic data on ethnic and religious

minorities in Spain during this period, it is difficult to surmise the size of each region's initial Muslim populations. However, scholars have noted that a significant proportion of the Muslims residing in both Catalonia and Madrid during the 1960s consisted of students and professionals from the Middle East, many of whom migrated to Spain to take advantage of the low cost of education. Spain also provided a safe haven for political refugees forced to leave their countries as a result of the turmoil present in the Middle East during the 1960s and 1970s (López García et al. 2007; Moreras 1999). Hence, several of the initial Muslim associations in Catalonia and Madrid were created by Middle Eastern students, professionals, and others with a relatively high level of education.

The first Muslim association in mainland Spain, the Muslim Association of Spain (*La Asociación Musulmana de España*), was officially established in Madrid in 1971 by Riay Tatary Bakry, a Syrian physician (López García et al. 2007).³³ As indicated by the association's name, it aspired from the outset to exert not only regional, but also national influence over the development and organization of Islam in Spain. To this end, its leadership later played an active role in forming the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE), one of Spain's two major national Islamic federations (Sánchez Nogales 2004). The Muslim Association of Spain also spearheaded the construction of Madrid's first purpose-built mosque, the Abu Bakr mosque, which was erected in the neighborhood of Estrecho and inaugurated on April 1, 1988 (López García et al. 2007) (Image 2.2).

³³ Although the Muslim Association of Spain was the first association officially established in mainland Spain, another Muslim association had been established in 1968 in Melilla, a Spanish stronghold in North Africa (López García et al. 2007).



Image 2.2: The Abu Bakr mosque in Madrid.

Catalonia's first prayer rooms were created in 1974. One was established by the "Bayt al-Thaqafa Association for Friendship with Arab Peoples," an association headed by Teresa Losada, a well-known scholar of Arab Studies. The association facilitated a space for Muslims to gather and pray in Sant Vicenç dels Horts, a small city just to the west of Barcelona, and later moved its headquarters to Barcelona's Gothic quarter. Another prayer room was established the same year by a delegation of Middle Eastern students from Madrid who had traveled to Barcelona to initiate the creation of an Islamic center in the neighborhood of La Segrera. Along with a small prayer room in the neighborhood of Sants, which was established in 1977, the Islamic center served the religious and cultural needs of the modest Muslim community residing in Barcelona during the 1970s. In addition to providing a space for prayer, it supplied a range of other

services, such as marriage certificates, *halal* food certifications, and a library (Moreras 1999).

Although students and professionals from the Middle East played an important role in developing Islam's initial organizational and institutional infrastructure in Spain, their presence proved to be relatively temporary, as most either returned to their home countries or went elsewhere upon completing their studies or finding other employment opportunities. Consequently, their numbers dwindled rapidly relative to Spain's growing Moroccan population, especially as Spain transitioned from a net exporter to a net importer of immigrants during the 1980s and 1990s due to improvements in the state of its national economy.

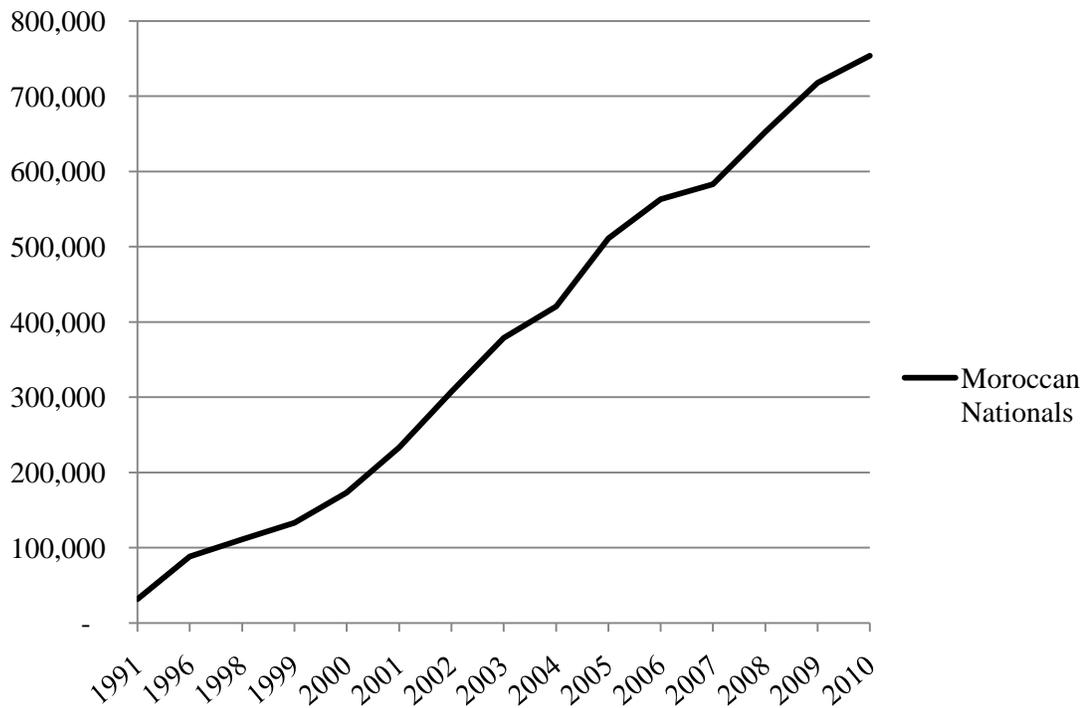


Figure 2.1: Evolution of Spain's Moroccan population (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 1991 national census and 1996 - 2010 municipal census data).

Several factors contributed to the rising rate of immigration from Morocco to Spain during the 1980s and 1990s. For one, Spain's economy grew at a much more rapid pace than that of Morocco, particularly after its entry into the European Union in 1985. This heightened the economic disparities between the two countries and created added incentive for Moroccans to cross the border and partake in the opportunities offered by Spain's burgeoning economy. In addition, Spain's colonial presence in Northern Morocco during the late-18th and early-19th centuries had familiarized a large number of Moroccans with Spanish language and culture. Finally, significant population growth in Morocco coupled with harsh economic realities, especially in rural areas, placed added pressure on many of its inhabitants to seek employment abroad during this period (Refass 2005).

The historical construction of North Africans as Other in the Spanish collective imaginary

Upon arriving to Spain, Moroccans suffered a high level of discrimination. Public opinion surveys conducted during the 1990s and early 2000s showed that Moroccans were consistently rated as the least favorable immigrant group in Spanish society. This is, in part, due to the fact that Moroccans constituted the vast majority of the first wave of contemporary foreign immigrants to Spain and consequently were more visible than other immigrant groups, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. Negative attitudes toward Moroccans in Spain, however, are also deeply rooted in Spanish history (Moreno Fuentes 2005; Zapata Barrero 2008a).

Martín Corrales (2002) has written the most extensive account of the production of Moroccans as Other in the Spanish collective imaginary. In his seminal book, *The*

Image of the Maghrebian in Spain (La Imagen del Magrebí en España), he traces how North Africans and Muslims have been variously portrayed during different historical periods and moments in Spanish history.³⁴ Beginning with the 16th century, Corrales shows how images of the Moors as barbaric, cruel, heartless, and hyper-sexual were mobilized to justify Spanish incursions into North Africa following the fall of *Al-Andalus*.³⁵ These images gained renewed currency during the late-19th and early-20th centuries due to a series of conflicts between Spain and Morocco, including the Spanish-Moroccan War (1859-1860) and three wars in Morocco's Rif region (1893-1894, 1909-1910, and 1920-1926), over Spanish territories in North Africa. Negative portrayals of North Africans and Muslims were also central to the construction of orientalist discourses employed to legitimize Spain's colonial presence in Northern Morocco (1912-1956) and the Western Sahara (1884-1975) (Tofiño-Quesada 2003). The support given to Franco by Moroccan troops whom he recruited during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) additionally contributed to the negative image of Moroccans in the Spanish collective imaginary.

Portrayals of North Africans in Spain have not been uniformly negative or free from contestation. Images of the 'good *moro*' have also been prevalent within Spanish discourse, both past and present (Martín Corrales 2002). These images, however, have tended to be equally essentializing and paternalistic, commonly portraying the 'good *moro*' as overly earnest and simple-minded. Moreover, in singling out certain individuals or groups within the broader collective of North Africans as "good," such images often

³⁴ The Maghreb is a region of North Africa that includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania, as well as the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

³⁵ Corrales highlights how many of these images were part of the ideological arsenal developed over the course of the Spanish 'Reconquest.'

have had the effect of implicitly reinforcing the idea that others are not to be trusted (cf. Shryock 2010).³⁶ To give an example, several of those with whom I spoke in Mataró (Barcelona) praised Moroccans of Amazigh (Berber) descent for being peaceful and demonstrating a desire to partake in the social life of the community. In doing so, however, they implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) portrayed other Moroccans as conflictive and unwilling to integrate.

Perceptions of North Africans as conflictive have both contributed to and been reinforced by several intense episodes of contention surrounding immigration in recent years. In July of 1999, a series of fights between North African and Spanish youth in Can'Anglada, a working-class neighborhood in the Catalan city of Terrassa, sparked major riots against the presence of Moroccans and other immigrants from the Maghreb in the city. Large numbers of residents took to the streets on successive nights holding signs and yelling slogans denigrating North Africans. Those participating in the riots vandalized property belonging to Moroccans and attempted to damage the neighborhood's mosque, but were prevented from doing so by the police. Two North Africans were injured during the frenzy, one of whom was left in critical condition after being beaten and stabbed several times with a sharp object. Although several arrests were made, a climate of fear pervaded the neighborhood after the protests, leading many North Africans to seek housing elsewhere in the city (Lacomba 2005; SOS Racismo 2000).

³⁶ In an editorial in *El País*, Martín Corrales brings attention to how Western Sahara's struggle for independence has been represented as a conflict between the good *moro* (the Saharan) and the bad *moro* (the Moroccan). See Martín Corrales, Eloy. 2002. "La xenofobia histórica hacia el vecino marroquí." *El País*, July 28.

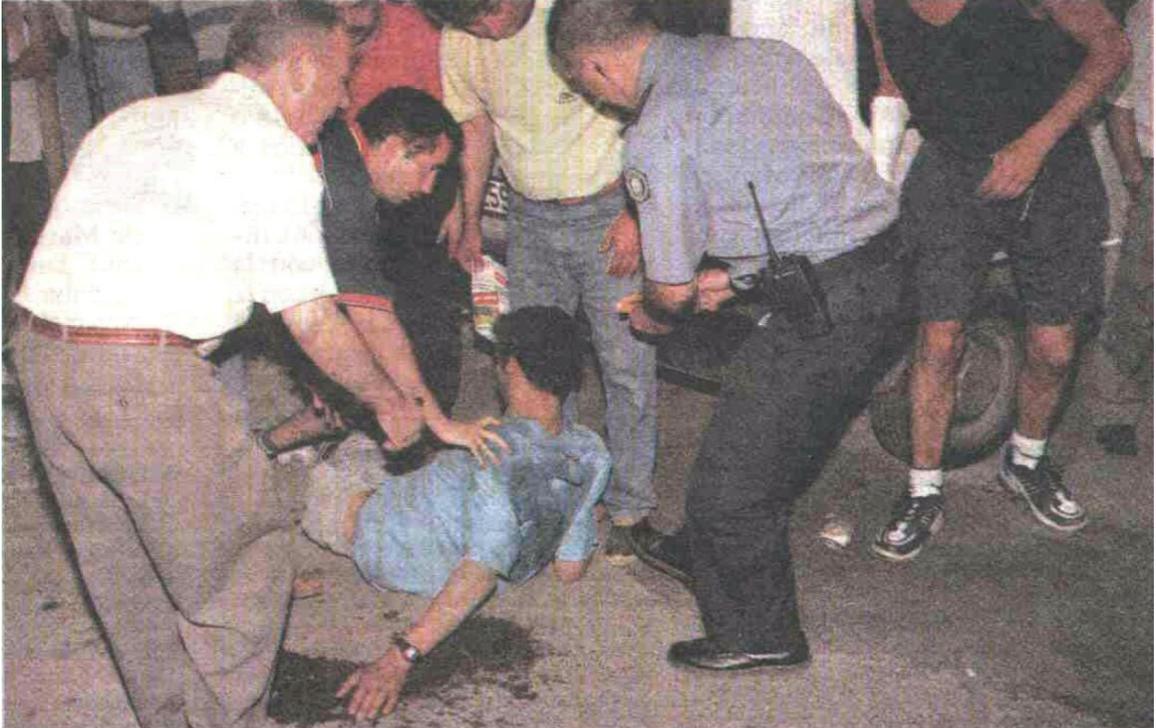


Image 2.3: A Moroccan stabbed during the riots that took place in Terrassa in 1999 (Source: Rodríguez, Francesca. 1999. "Crispación y violencia racista en Terrassa." *La Vanguardia*, July 15).

In February of the following year, a major conflict between Spanish residents and Moroccan immigrants erupted in El Ejido, an agricultural town in Almería (Andalusia), after a Spanish woman was murdered by a mentally ill Moroccan man. During the days following the murder, groups of local residents armed with knives, clubs, stones, and an assortment of other weapons roamed the streets of the city and destroyed ethnic bars, restaurants, and call centers. They also burned the city's mosque and vandalized cars and other property belonging to Moroccan immigrants. Some traveled to nearby shantytowns where a number of immigrants lived and burned what few possessions they had. Despite the fact that Moroccans were the clear victims of the riots, 25 Moroccans were arrested, compared to just 17 Spaniards (Zapata Barrero 2003).



Image 2.4: In 2000, local residents of El Ejido burned homes and cars belonging to Moroccans, and barricaded the highway in protest of their presence in the city (Source: “Máxima tensión en El Ejido pese a la ocupación policial.” 2000. *La Vanguardia*, February 8).

According to Antonio Izquierdo (2003), the events of El Ejido played a key role in pushing political elites and business owners to seek ways of becoming less reliant upon Moroccan labor. Through a series of bilateral agreements with countries from Latin America and Eastern Europe, as well as more informal recruitment practices, Moroccan workers increasingly have been replaced by other immigrant groups, particularly since the onset of the 21st century (Zapata Barrero 2008b). The biases that exist against Moroccan immigrants in Spain are reflected in the outcomes of the most recent regularization programs that the Spanish government launched in 2000 and 2001 in an effort to bring immigrants in irregular legal situations ‘out of the shadows.’ Although a significant number of Moroccans benefitted from these programs, their applications had a much lower rate of success than those of other groups, most notably Latin Americans.

For example, just 51% of applications submitted by Moroccans were approved during the regularization program of 2000, compared to 77% of applications submitted by Ecuadorians and Colombians, the other two main beneficiaries of the program. Similarly, just 56% of applications submitted by Moroccans were approved during the regularization program of 2001, compared to 82% of applications submitted by Ecuadorians, 79% of applications submitted by Colombians, and 81% of applications submitted by Romanians (Martínez Buján 2003). These discrepancies in approval rates have been widely attributed to the preference of Spanish public authorities and business owners for Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans over Moroccan workers.

Moroccans are also at a disadvantage when it comes to acquiring Spanish citizenship. Latin Americans, other post-colonial migrants (i.e. Filipinos and Equatorial Guineans), and Sephardic Jews may obtain Spanish citizenship after residing legally in the country for just two years due to their historical connection to Spanish society. Moroccans, by contrast, must reside legally in the country for 10 years before obtaining Spanish citizenship, despite the fact that Spain colonized parts of Morocco and, as in the case of Sephardic Jews, many Moroccans and other North Africans have ancestors who were expelled or forced to convert during the Spanish Inquisition. In fact, in 2006, the president of the Islamic Council of Spain (*Junta Islámica de España*), Mansur Escudero, attempted to bring attention to the inconsistencies of Spain's policies governing the acquisition of citizenship by calling upon the state to provide privileged access to citizenship to those who could prove that they were descendants of *moriscos* – Muslims who were forced to convert to Christianity during the Inquisition. The United Left Party

Izquierda Unida) later brought the proposal to the Andalusian Parliament, but it did not receive sufficient political support and was eventually dropped from consideration.

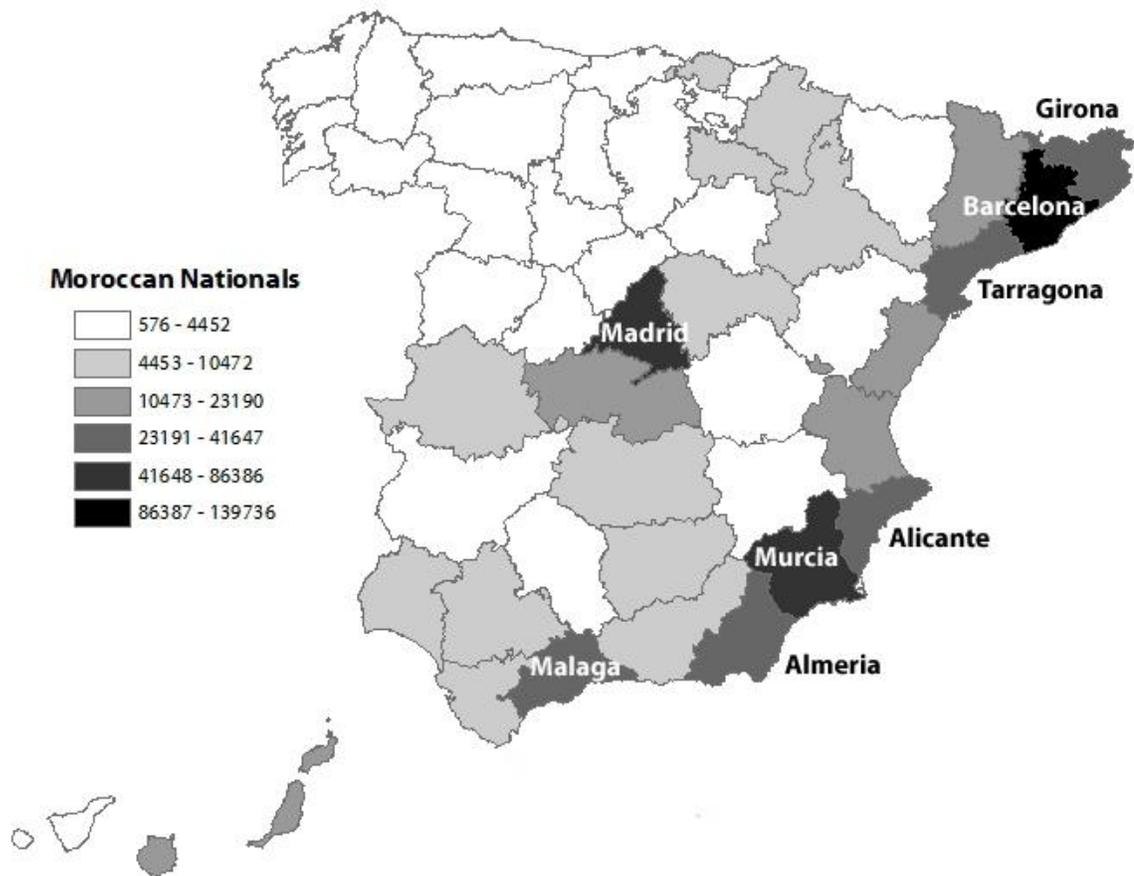
As a result of the fact that most Moroccans who reside in Spain lack Spanish citizenship, they cannot vote in municipal, regional, or national elections. Recent legislation was passed allowing immigrants from countries with which Spain has established reciprocity agreements to vote in the municipal elections of 2011.³⁷ However, since no agreement exists with Morocco, the vast majority of Moroccans remain without political voice. Hence, although the state has officially recognized Islam as occupying a special place within Spanish society and established a series of rights and privileges for Muslim communities in theory, Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants lack the political power necessary to ensure that these rights and privileges are protected and respected in practice. In Arendt's (1973 [1951]) terms, Muslim immigrants lack the "right to have rights" (p. 294). That is, they lack most basic of rights, namely the right to citizenship and inclusion within the political community, which is a prerequisite for the full realization of other social and cultural rights (Somers 2008).

Differences in the presence and perception of Moroccans across Spain

Although immigrants of Moroccan origin are present throughout Spain, they have tended to concentrate in specific regions of the country. Map 2.1 shows that the three Spanish provinces with the largest Moroccan populations are Barcelona (139,736), Madrid (86,386), and Murcia (68,925), though there are also significant Moroccan

³⁷ The majority of immigrants who benefit from this legislation are from Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, and Paraguay.

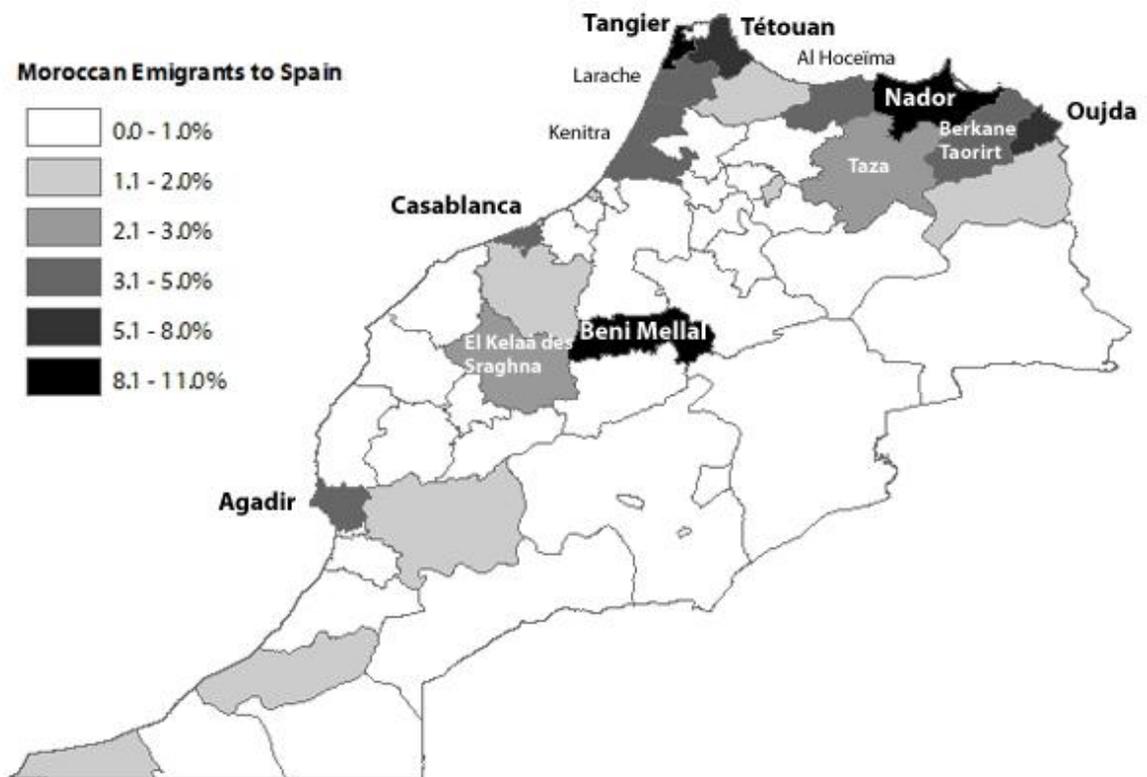
populations in several provinces of Andalusia, most notably Almeria and Malaga, as well as in Alicante (Valencia) and other provinces of Catalonia and Valencia.



Map 2.1: Distribution of Moroccan nationals across Spanish provinces (Source: Compiled by author based on 2010 municipal census data from the National Institute of Statistics).

As is the case in most migration contexts, specific points of origin in Morocco and destination in Spain have become connected as a result of a series of historical and social factors, such as the timing of migration, the workings of transnational networks, and processes of family reunification. The earliest wave of Moroccan immigrants to Spain came principally from Northern Morocco, most notably the Jebala and Rif regions, which were formerly under Spanish colonial rule (López García et al. 2009). The Jebala

region, whose main provinces are Tangier, Tétouan, Larache, and Chefchaouen, has been a major supplier of immigrants to Catalonia, Madrid, and parts of Andalusia. The Rif region, which is located just to the east of Jebala, has also been a launching point for immigration to Catalonia and Madrid. About 25% of Moroccan immigrants in Barcelona are from Nador, and roughly 12% of those residing in Madrid come from the neighboring province of Al Hoceima (López García 2009).



Map 2.2: Points of origin of Moroccan emigrants to Spain (Source: Compiled by author based on data published by López García et al. (2009). The data derive from information collected from emigrants registered with Spain's Moroccan consulates in 2008).

Since the 1990s, Moroccan immigrants to Spain have come from an increasingly diverse array of towns and cities, many of which are located in the Atlantic and interior plains, and the far eastern Oriental region. These areas have been heavy suppliers of

immigrants to agricultural regions in Spain, such as Murcia, Alicante (Valencia), and Almeria (Andalusia). The provinces of Beni Mellal and Oujda in particular have become focal points of emigration to Spain's southeastern coastal region and other more recent areas of immigrant reception, such as Burgos (López García 2009).

Unfortunately, few studies have been conducted on the factors that have shaped migration patterns between Spain and Morocco, and little is known about how the profile of Moroccan immigrants in Spain varies depending on their points of origin. Some have put forth evidence suggesting that immigrants from older and more urban points of origin, such as Tangier, Tétouan, and Casablanca, have been more engaged in civic and associational life than immigrants from newer and more rural points of origin (López García et al. 2009). It is likely, moreover, that immigrants to agricultural regions in Spain, such as Almeria, Murcia, and Alicante, come from a more rural background than those who reside in and around large metropolises like Barcelona and Madrid.

While more studies are needed to decipher how the characteristics of Moroccan communities in Spain differ as a function of their points of origin, existing studies do highlight how the demographic characteristics of Moroccan immigrants vary slightly in accordance with the economic niches that they occupy in their points of destination. For instance, in rural provinces of Spain, such as Almeria (Andalusia) and Murcia, the demand for agricultural laborers continues to favor the recruitment of male workers. Although the number of Moroccan women in these provinces has risen significantly since the onset of the 21st century due to processes of family reunification, the gender balance in agricultural areas of Spain remains skewed. By contrast, the balance between Moroccan men and women tends to be more equal in more urban provinces, such as

Barcelona, Madrid, and Málaga (Andalusia), where there is a greater number of opportunities for employment in the service sector (López García et al. 2009). Nevertheless, the gender balance of Moroccan immigrants remains slightly skewed even in more urbanized provinces, largely as a consequence of the high demand for male construction and industrial workers.

Despite the fact that Moroccans in Catalonia and Madrid hold similar jobs and are of comparable class background, recent studies indicate that residents of Catalonia have a more negative view of Moroccans than residents of Madrid. As part of the 2009 CIS survey on attitudes toward immigration, respondents were asked to identify an immigrant group that they “dislike the most or have the least sympathy for.” The following table compares answers given by respondents from Catalonia, Madrid, and other Spanish regions:

Table 2.1: Least preferred immigrant groups in Catalonia, Madrid, and the rest of Spain			
	Catalonia N = 435	Madrid N = 366	Rest of Spain N = 2,030
Moroccans, other North African nationalities, Arabs, <i>moros</i> , or Muslims	37.0%	19.1%	18.8%
Africans, Sub-Saharan, Senegalese, Nigerians, or blacks	0.9%	2.2%	1.6%
Latin Americans, Ecuadorians, Argentines, Peruvians, Colombians, or other Latin American nationalities	6.7%	10.4%	4.8%
Eastern Europeans, Romanians, Bulgarians, or other Eastern European nationalities	11.0%	11.7%	20.8%
Asians, Chinese, or other Asian nationalities	3.2%	2.7%	0.9%
No group	33.8%	49.5%	46.1%
Other	7.4%	4.4%	6.9%

Source: CIS. 2009. Study #2817: Attitudes toward immigration III (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración III*).

As shown by Table 2.1, North Africans and Muslims were found to be the least favorable immigrant group in both Catalonia and Madrid. However, there were significant differences between the two regions, as 37% of Catalan respondents identified North Africans or Muslims as the immigrant group that they disliked the most, compared to just 19% of residents from Madrid and other Spanish regions. In addition, nearly 50% of respondents from Madrid and 46% of respondents from the rest of Spain refused to identify any specific group as the least favorable, compared to 34% of respondents from Catalonia. This suggests that residents of Madrid and the rest of Spain are less willing, or

find it more difficult, than residents of Catalonia to single out any particular immigrant group as especially problematic.

Table 2.2 shows how those who identified North Africans or Muslims as the immigrant group that they disliked the most tended to utilize ethnic (i.e. Moroccan or *moro*), as opposed to religious (i.e. Muslim), categories throughout Spain. This highlights the continued salience of ethnic categories in matters concerning immigration, despite the increased politicization of Islam over the past decade.

Table 2.2: Categories utilized by respondents who disliked North Africans or Muslims more than other immigrant groups in Catalonia and Madrid			
	Catalonia N = 160	Madrid N = 69	Rest of Spain N = 378
Moroccans or other North African nationalities	56.3%	40.6%	53.7%
<i>Moros</i>	30.0%	39.1%	27.0%
Arabs	5.6%	8.7%	11.4%
Muslims	8.1%	11.6%	7.9%

Source: CIS. 2009. Attitudes toward immigration III (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración III*).

The fact that North Africans and Muslims are viewed more negatively in Catalonia than in Madrid is surprising, given that Madrid is the region that suffered a direct attack by Islamic extremists in 2004. Moreover, two recent studies by Morales et al. (2008; 2010) have found that Moroccans are actually more socially integrated and civically active in Barcelona, Catalonia's capital city, than in Madrid. One of the studies finds that Moroccans in Barcelona are six times more likely than Moroccans in Madrid to

be affiliated with civic associations. It also shows that while a number of Moroccans in Barcelona participate in cultural and athletic organizations, as well as labor unions, Moroccans in Madrid have a relatively low rate of participation in nearly all types of social and cultural associations. The study additionally finds that Moroccans in Barcelona tend to have relatively diverse social networks that include immigrants and natives alike, whereas Moroccans in Madrid generally interact solely with co-ethnics. The authors conclude that Moroccans in Madrid run a serious risk of “social isolation” (Morales et al. 2008, p. 128).

Interestingly, the very same study that documents higher levels of integration and civic participation among Moroccans in Barcelona than in Madrid also finds that Moroccans in Barcelona perceive themselves to be more discriminated against than Moroccans in Madrid. This perception is supported by the additional finding that Spaniards in Madrid are slightly more accepting of Moroccans than are their counterparts in Barcelona (Morales et al. 2008, pp. 137-139).³⁸ Hence, although Moroccans appear to be more integrated and involved in civic life in Barcelona than in Madrid, they paradoxically appear to face a greater level of discrimination. The extent to which the findings from the capital cities of Barcelona and Madrid are generalizable to other municipalities in Catalonia and Madrid is an open question. However, they suggest that levels of social contact and integration among Moroccan immigrants do not in and of themselves explain differences in social attitudes and practices toward Moroccans.

³⁸ It is unlikely, moreover, that this difference is attributable to the religiosity of Moroccans in the two areas, as the study finds that 58% of Moroccans in Barcelona identify as atheists or non-practicing Muslims, compared to 38% in Madrid.

The production of iconic Otherness in Catalonia and Madrid

Explaining why Moroccans are more likely to be singled out in Catalonia than in Madrid as the most problematic of immigrant groups, I argue, requires an understanding of the relative position that they occupy within the multicultural mosaic of each region. Whereas in Madrid Moroccans have been eclipsed in number by other immigrant groups, most notably Ecuadorians and Romanians, they have remained the most numerous foreign collective in Catalonia. In order to understand this trend, as well as how it has influenced attitudes toward Moroccans and physical markers of their presence, it is necessary to outline the migration histories of each region.

Despite the fact that Andalusia and other Spanish regions are much closer in distance to Morocco than Catalonia, Catalonia historically has been the most popular destination for Moroccan immigrants to Spain. The original appeal of Catalonia to Moroccans derived from its proximity to the French border. During the 1960s, a number of Moroccans and other francophone North Africans used Catalonia as a provisional stopping point before settling more permanently in France or Belgium (Moreno Fuentes 2005). In addition, a series of economic downturns in France and other Western European countries during the late-1960s and early-1970s forced many Moroccan immigrants to give up their work permits and to seek employment elsewhere. Many sought temporary refuge in Catalonia with the hope of eventually returning to the countries where they formerly had been employed.

When it became clear that border policies would remain restrictive in Northern and Western Europe for some time, a number of Moroccans who initially had intended to stay only temporarily in Catalonia ended up deciding to reside in the region in a more

permanent capacity (López García 2005a; Moreras 2005). The economic vibrancy of Catalonia relative to other Spanish regions, along with processes of family reunification and the influence of social networks, subsequently contributed to the steady growth of the region's Moroccan population. This growth was further promoted by the establishment of a series of policies and institutions aimed at fortifying the economic, political, and social ties between Catalonia and Morocco. Jordi Pujol, the president of Catalonia between 1980 and 2003, worked closely with the Moroccan government to facilitate the flow of capital and goods between the two regions. Under Pujol's leadership, the Generalitat (Catalonia's regional government) also developed agreements and institutions to facilitate the recruitment of Moroccan workers to fill the labor demands present in the region. In 2001, for instance, the Generalitat set up an office in Tangier with the express purpose of training and contracting Moroccan workers for employment in Catalonia (Aubarell 2005).

Although Catalonia has always been the principal destination for Moroccans in mainland Spain, Madrid has also been a popular destination. Until 1991, official data detailing the number of Moroccans residing in Spain was highly unreliable because such a high proportion lacked legal documentation. This changed when the government launched a program to regularize the legal status of Moroccans and other labor migrants in 1991. Shortly thereafter, studies revealed that fully 22% of Moroccans in Spain resided in Madrid, which was second only to Catalonia, where 35% of Moroccans resided at the time (López García 2005a). However, while the Moroccan population of Catalonia grew annually by an average of 38% between 1991 and 2001, the Moroccan population of Madrid grew annually by an average of 22%. This trend has continued through the first

decade of the 21st century, as the Moroccan population of Catalonia grew annually by an average of 34% between 2001 and 2009, while the Moroccan population of Madrid grew annually by an average of 26% during this same period, heightening the disparity in the number of Moroccans in the two regions.

According to Lora-Tamayo D'Ocón (2005), the main reason that Madrid is less appealing to Moroccans than Catalonia relates to the predominance of the service sector in the region. About 84% of immigrants in Madrid work in the service sector. Domestic work in particular is in high demand in Madrid and has attracted a large number of female workers from Latin America. Latin American domestic workers have a competitive advantage over Moroccan domestic workers due to their facility with the Spanish language and the perception among many Spaniards that they are more 'trustworthy' to have in the home (Martínez Buján 2003). Preference for non-Moroccan immigrant workers in Madrid extends to other sectors as well, most notably construction, as reflected by the fact that Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans increasingly have taken construction jobs that formerly would have been filled by Moroccans. Some have argued that this has resulted, in part, from regional and local policies and practices that have favored the replacement of North African workers with laborers from Latin America and Eastern Europe (López García 2005b).

While Madrid continues to have one of Spain's largest Moroccan populations as a result of its high demand for unskilled labor, particularly in industry, construction, and services, other immigrant groups, most notably Romanians and Ecuadorians, have grown at a much faster pace than Moroccans since the onset of the 21st century (Figure 2.2).

Hence, although Madrid's Moroccan population has increased in absolute terms over the past decade, it has lost ground to other immigrant groups in relative terms.

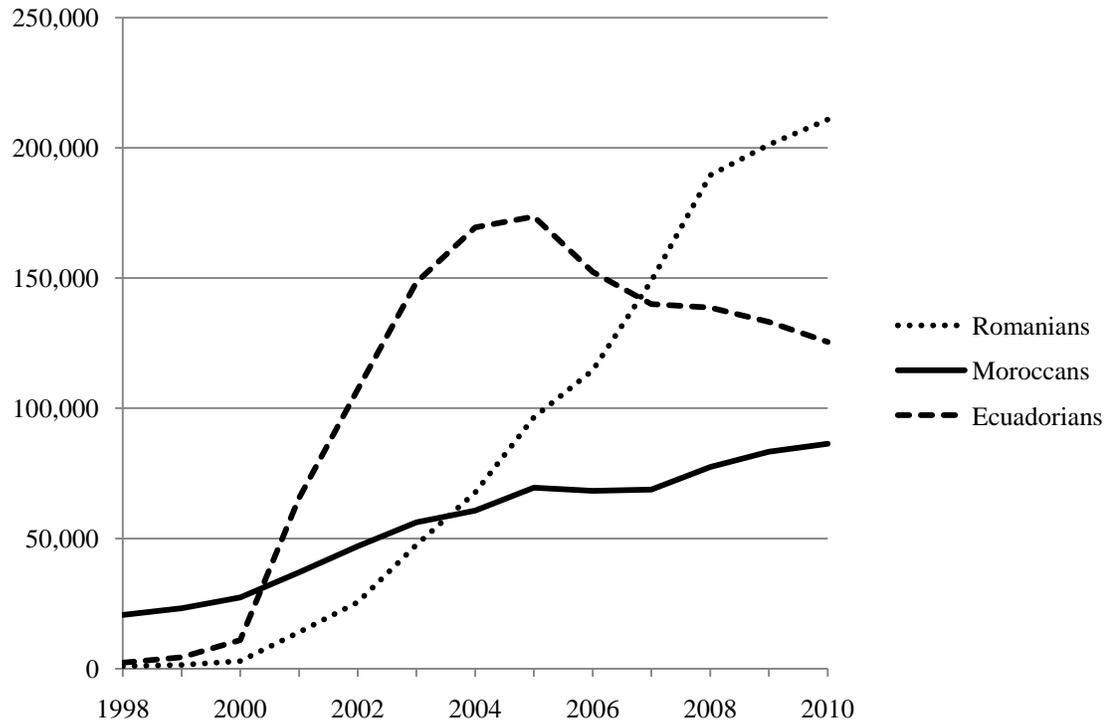


Figure 2.2: Recent evolution of Madrid's three largest immigrant groups (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2010 municipal census).

As a result of the lower proportion of Moroccans relative to other immigrant populations in Madrid, Moroccans are not viewed as the prototypical labor migrant to the extent that they are in Catalonia. To be sure, Romanians, Ecuadorians, and other foreign populations have increased in number in Catalonia as well, particularly since the late 1990s. However, Moroccans remain the most numerous immigrant group in the region (Figure 2.3).

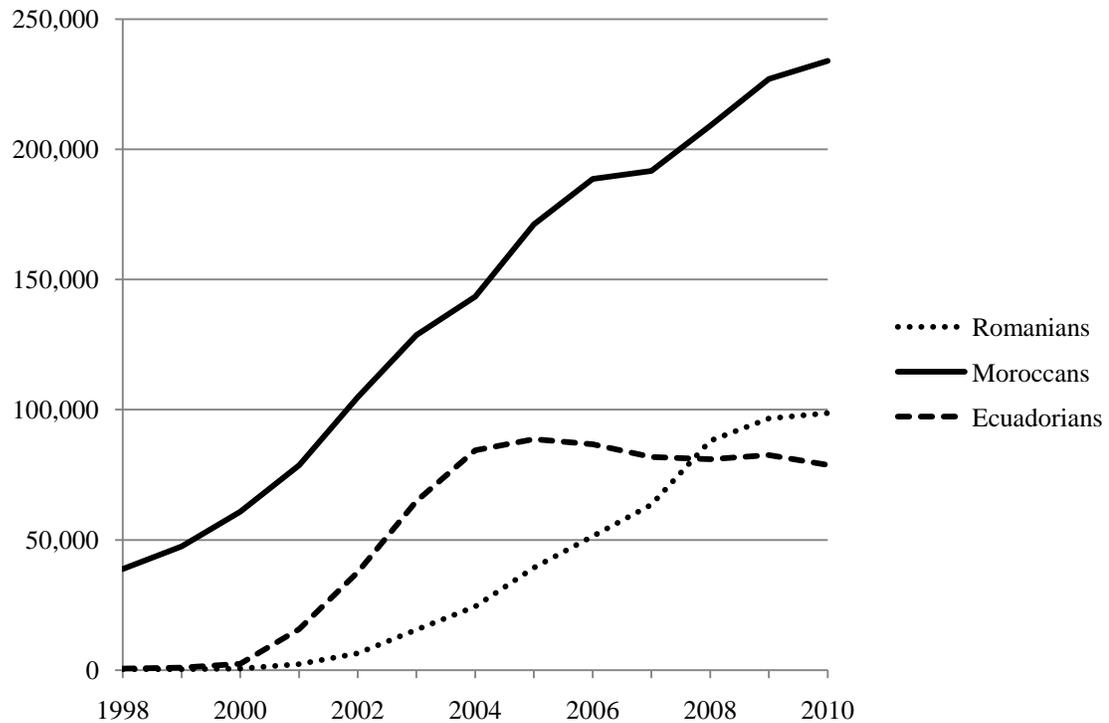


Figure 2.3: Recent evolution of Catalonia’s three largest immigrant groups (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2010 municipal census).

In addition, although the foreign population of Catalonia has become significantly more diverse since the late 1990s, Latin Americans and other newly-arriving immigrant groups to the region only recently have begun to disperse to cities outside the Barcelona area. Moroccans, by contrast, have had a significant presence in municipalities throughout Catalonia for some time (Bayona i Carrasco 2008; López García et al. 2009). Hence, despite the fact that census data indicate that there are actually more foreign nationals from Latin America (390,000) than from North Africa (245,000) on aggregate in Catalonia, a recent survey finds that 55% of Catalans identify “Maghrebians” or “Arabs” as the largest immigrant group in the region, while just 23% identify Latin

Americans as the largest immigrant group.³⁹ This (mis)perception likely has been influenced by other factors as well, such as how North Africans and Latin Americans are distributed within cities and the extent to which their presence blends in or contrasts with the presence of those native to the region. The key point, however, is that North Africans continue to be perceived as the most numerous immigrant group in Catalonia.

In Madrid, by contrast, North Africans are increasingly thought of as one among several ethnic minorities that comprise the region's emergent multicultural landscape. As part of the survey on immigration, respondents were asked to answer the following question: "When talking about immigrants who live in Spain, whom do you think about most immediately?" They were asked to write up to two answers. The following table summarizes the first answer given by respondents in Catalonia, Madrid, and the rest of Spain:

³⁹ Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió. 2010. "Percepció dels catalanes i catalanes sobre la immigració." REO 638. Generalitat de Catalunya.

Table 2.3: Groups most immediately associated with immigration in Catalonia, Madrid, and the rest of Spain			
	Catalonia N = 434	Madrid N = 366	Rest of Spain N = 2,029
Moroccans, other North African nationalities, Arabs, <i>moros</i> , or Muslims	45.4%	11.2%	21.5%
Africans, Sub-Saharan, Senegalese, Nigerians, or blacks	8.1%	7.1%	15.7%
Latin Americans, Ecuadorians, Argentines, Peruvians, Colombians, or other Latin American nationalities	21.7%	34.4%	21.5%
Eastern Europeans, Romanians, Bulgarians, or other Eastern European nationalities	3.7%	8.5%	15.2%
Asians, Chinese, or other Asian nationalities	3.2%	1.6%	1.0%
Other ⁴⁰	18.0%	37.2%	25%

Source: CIS. 2009. Study #2817: Attitudes toward immigration III (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración III*).

As shown by Table 2.3, residents of Catalonia were much more likely than residents of Madrid to draw immediate associations between immigration, on the one hand, and North Africans and Muslims, on the other ($p < .001$).

As a result of the continued perception of Moroccans as the prototypical immigrant group in Catalonia, mosques in the region have become iconic symbols not only of religious difference, but also of immigration and “foreignness” more generally.

⁴⁰ Since the question did not specify that respondents should identify a foreign nationality or ethnicity, a relatively large proportion of respondents associated immigration with other social groupings (i.e. gangs and criminals).

As in the case of Viladecans mentioned at the outset of this chapter, longstanding residents in Catalonia commonly associate mosques with an assortment of social problems (i.e. crime, drugs, and the formation of ghettos) afflicting their neighborhoods. They attribute these problems, above all, to the presence of Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants, as they are the most visible minority group in the region. Given that mosques represent the durable presence of Muslim immigrants in the settings where they are established, they have become a focal point of resident discontent with the difficulties that they associate with foreign immigration. Consider, for instance, the remarks of Mohammed Halhoul, a member of the Islamic Cultural Council of Catalonia who has significant experience mediating conflicts surrounding mosques in the region. Reflecting upon his experiences, he states:

Of course when people connect immigration, Islam, and sometimes other social issues in a neighborhood [or] a city, this can be a factor that somewhat complicates the presence of a prayer room, no? It may complicate it. And so when a community wants to open a prayer room, it is necessary to follow certain steps. It depends on the area where you are, how the local atmosphere is, how the social environment is. Because if there are social conflicts, of course, it is possible that people will treat the mosque or the prayer room as nothing more than a “scapegoat” (*cabeza de turco*) as they call it – in other words, as a pretext for a conflict that already existed, like conflict related to marginalization, to areas where drugs are sold, to areas where there is poverty... In these areas, a problem with protest against a prayer room might emerge very quickly. By contrast, in

areas where people live normally, where all segments of society are present... there aren't [problems]. If a prayer room is created, people don't think about it – they don't care because there aren't conflicts. There aren't problems.

Halhouli's comments bring attention to how anti-mosque protests in Catalonia often serve as a pretext for residents to voice broader concerns related to the impact of immigration on the quality and image of their communities. He astutely observes that anti-mosque protests are especially likely to emerge when connections are drawn between mosques, immigration, and social problems affecting localized contexts. The powerful presence of such connections in Catalonia, I have argued, must be understood in light of the continued perception of Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants as the region's iconic Others.

In Madrid, by contrast, the tremendous growth of Latin American and Eastern European immigrant populations has added complexity to residents' understandings of Otherness. Mosques increasingly constitute one among many symbols of ethnic and religious diversity. Consequently, they are less likely to be singled out by longstanding residents as the central symbols of the ethnicization of their neighborhoods. A particularly salient example of how this plays out on the ground comes from Getafe (Madrid), where the main mosque of the city, a prayer room on Doctor Barraquer St. in the neighborhood of Las Margaritas, is located in close proximity to a number of other religious structures that cater to immigrant populations. Reflecting on how local residents have reacted to the presence of the prayer room in the neighborhood, Arturo, a 31-year-old resident who lives very near to the mosque, states:

In the beginning, I don't know if people thought much about what it was. I think that in the beginning, moreover, there was a center of worship for the gypsies, a Latin church... I don't know what it's called. There is a Christian church. There is a church where the black Nigerians go – I'm not sure what nationality it is. There are like five, six different Rites in two streets. So it was like "one more." It was not very worrisome. But yes, it's the one that has grown the most and that the most people attend.

As illustrated by Arturo's comments, the presence of a host of other religious centers catering to immigrant groups in Las Margaritas has precluded residents from identifying the mosque as the main marker of ethnic diversity in the neighborhood. Given the increased presence of non-Muslim immigrants in Madrid, mosques do not present themselves as obvious targets for residents to express their unease with the transformations brought about by immigration and ethnic diversification.

The transposability of ethnic and religious categories in Catalonia

Although Moroccans still far outnumber other Muslim minorities in Catalonia, the category "Muslim" is no longer synonymous with the term "Moroccan" in the region. There are now over 35,000 Pakistanis residing in Catalonia, most of whom live in the cities of Barcelona and Badalona. There are also over 20,000 Senegalese and nearly 17,000 Gambians, many of whom reside in the county of Maresme along the Mediterranean coast. The presence of these groups is likely to increase significantly in

the coming years as a result of family reunification and the workings of social networks. The diversification of Catalonia's Muslim population is part of a broader trend across Europe toward "super-diversity," or diversity characterized by "an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants" (Vertovec 2007, p. 1024).

It remains to be seen how the increasingly diverse composition of Catalonia's Muslim population will influence the reception of mosques, and attitudes toward Muslims more generally. There is some evidence suggesting that the negative images of Moroccans in Spain have had a detrimental impact on attitudes toward newer Muslim immigrants to the region as well, especially Pakistanis and other South Asians. Although many Spaniards distinguish between North African and South Asian immigrants, ethnic confluences are quite common. Monnet (2001) highlights the propensity of residents of Catalonia to conflate the ethnicities of North Africans and South Asians in a study that she conducted of ethnic slurs in Barcelona. Her study centers on how people use the categories *moro*, *sudaca* (a derogatory term for Latin Americans), and *guiri* (a term that generally refers to Westerners, mostly tourists). She writes:

[U]pon deciding to investigate the term "*guiri*" in more depth, and asking my respondents for the definition of this term, I often found myself with the following response: "It is a foreigner." In this case, I asked if any foreigner was a "*guiri*" and to be more specific, I questioned whether Pakistanis or Dominicans fell under the category "*guiri*." Immediately they answered in the negative, explaining that they were "*moros*" and "*sudacas*."

In my own interviews, I similarly found that residents in the Barcelona area commonly grouped Pakistanis together with immigrants from the Maghreb or “Arab” countries, often referring to both as “*moros*.” As a result, Pakistanis and other South Asians find themselves having to contend with stereotypes of North Africans that have a long history in Spain.

These stereotypes have been detrimental not only to Muslim immigrants from South Asia, but also to other South Asian immigrants, most notably Sikhs, who are sometimes confused with Muslims. A particularly illustrative example comes from the neighborhood of Fondo in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Catalonia), where residents mobilized against the establishment of a Sikh temple in 2008. Several hung banners from their balconies stating, “No to the center of worship. Nor a mosque?” (*No al centro de culto. Ni ¿mezquita?*) (Image 2.5). Local residents also initiated a petition campaign and gathered roughly 2,000 signatures in protest of the Sikh temple. Eventually, the leaders of the Sikh community were forced to accept an alternative location for their temple in a park in Can Zam, a relatively isolated area in the northwestern part of the city.⁴¹

⁴¹ Martínez, Isabel. 2009. “La comunitat sikh de Santa Coloma accepta anar a resar a Can Zam.” *El Punt*, July 27.



Image 2.5: A banner protesting a Sikh temple in the neighborhood of Fondo (Santa Coloma de Gramenet) (Source: Martínez, Isabel. 2008. “Els veïns del Fondo posen pancartes contra l’oratori sikh.” *El Punt*, June 26).

Hence, although Moroccans are now part of a much more ethnically and religiously diverse population of immigrants in Catalonia, the negative images of North Africans and Muslims in the region continue to contribute to expressions of hostility toward mosques and other physical symbols of immigrant presence, even at times when the immigrants in question are not Muslim. This may change as immigrants of other religious backgrounds grow in number and help to dilute the immediate connections drawn between mosques, immigration, and urban degradation. As I will explain further in Chapter III, however, severing such connections has been made all the more difficult by

the heavy concentration of Muslim immigrants in Catalonia's most marginalized neighborhoods.

Conclusion

Social theorists have highlighted how the categories and ideational frameworks utilized to interpret novel phenomena are never constructed anew, but rather derive from shared histories and established understandings (Fine 2010; Sahlins 1981; Strauss 1978). Publicly available images and categorizations constitute key components of the cultural repertoires that people draw upon to make sense of diversity and difference, and to construct symbolic boundaries between self and Other (Lamont 2000). In the case of Spain, I have shown how the historical construction of North Africans and Muslims as Other in the Spanish collective imaginary has shaped current interpretations of, and reactions to, mosques and the populations they serve. Constructions of Otherness, however, are not static and vary in intensity, depending on the particular figuration of relations present in the settings in which they are operative (Elias and Scotson 1965; Emirbayer 1997; Lamont 2000). In some instances, changing social relations and patterns of interaction may contribute to the crystallization and intensification of deeply-entrenched prejudices and stereotypes, while in others they may have the effect of relativizing or mitigating historical constructions of Otherness.

The fact that Moroccans constituted the vast majority of working-class, foreign labor migrants who arrived to Spain during the 1980s and 1990s reinforced longstanding representations of North Africans and Muslims as Other in the country's collective imaginary. These representations were exacerbated by official policies and practices that

excluded Moroccans from the political community and perpetuated their precarious legal and economic status (Calavita 2005). The increasing diversification of Spain's immigrant population since the onset of the 21st century, however, has begun to add complexity to notions of Otherness in the country. Indeed, while 66% of Spaniards associated foreign immigration most immediately with the presence of Moroccans or other North Africans in 2000, this number declined to 36% by 2009.⁴²

Nevertheless, as shown in this chapter, the extent to which the increasing diversification of Spain's immigrant population has relieved the intense scrutiny faced by Moroccans has not been uniform across the country, but rather has varied from region to region. Catalonia's continued role as the principal destination in Spain for Moroccan immigrants has perpetuated views of mosques and other visible markers of their presence as iconic symbols of Otherness in the region. In Madrid, by contrast, the proportional decline of Moroccans relative to other immigrant groups, most notably Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans, has altered public perceptions of Otherness. While negative stereotypes of Moroccans are still very much alive in the region, the difficulties associated with immigration (i.e. crime, drugs, and social conflict) are not connected only, or even primarily, to the presence of Moroccans, but rather are linked to the presence of a diverse array of ethnic minorities. As a result, Moroccans in Madrid are less frequently scapegoated for problems associated with immigration than Moroccans in Catalonia. Moreover, mosques in Madrid are increasingly perceived as one among many symbols of ethnic and religious diversity, and hence are less likely to be singled out as iconic symbols of Otherness.

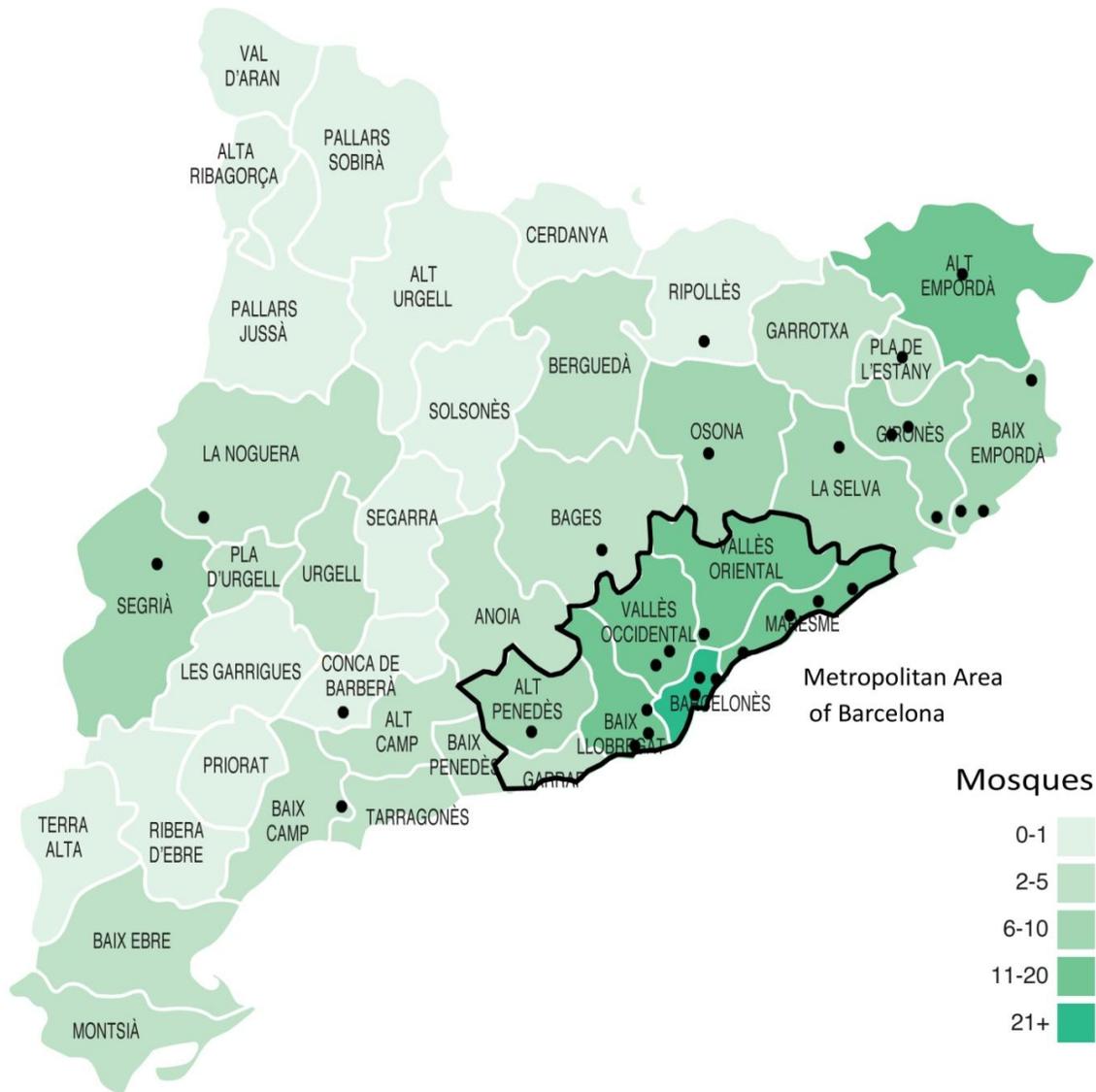
⁴² An additional 24% of respondents in 2000 associated immigration with Africans in general (see CIS. 2000. Study #2383: Barometer, February 2000 (*Barómetro febrero 2000*)).

To be sure, Moroccans and others of North African nationality are still identified as the least preferred immigrant group in Madrid, which highlights how attitudes toward immigrants do not simply reflect relative group size. However, the proportion of residents in Madrid who identify North Africans as their least preferred immigrant group is much lower than in Catalonia, where Moroccans have a stronger and more visible presence relative to immigrants of other foreign nationalities. This suggests that although negative images of North Africans and Muslims in the Spanish collective imaginary continue to shape attitudes toward Moroccans and other Muslim immigrants throughout Spain, the influence of these images has been mitigated by distinctive patterns of migration in different regions of the country.

Chapter III

Urban privilege and neighborhood defense: Space, status, and opposition to mosques

In the previous chapter, I showed how the negative images of North Africans and Muslims in the Spanish imaginary, as well as the high visibility of North African immigrants relative to other immigrant groups in Catalonia, help to explain why mosques have been particularly susceptible to popular protest in the region. However, a number of questions remain unanswered. For instance, Moroccans constitute a comparably large proportion of foreign immigrants in other regions of Spain, such as Andalusia, Murcia, and Extremadura, but yet opposition to mosques has been much less prevalent in these regions than in Catalonia. In addition, although Moroccans have a smaller presence in Madrid than in Catalonia, there are still several neighborhoods in the Madrid area where the number of Moroccans surpasses the number of other immigrant groups. Why then has popular opposition to mosques been so infrequent even in these neighborhoods? Within Catalonia, moreover, contention over mosques has not occurred evenly throughout the region, but rather has been most prevalent and intense in working-class neighborhoods in historically industrial cities, especially those that are located in the Barcelona metropolitan area (Map 3.1). What is it about these cities in particular that has led mosques to elicit such hostility from local residents?



Map 3.1: Location of municipalities host to mosque opposition in Catalonia (Sources: The list of municipalities that have been host to mosque opposition was compiled by the author based on a review of Spanish media and press coverage, as well as SOS Racismo's annual reports on racism in Spain; the map containing the number of mosques per county (*comarca*) in Catalonia was first elaborated by Joan Estruch et al. (2006) and later updated by the Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Generalitat in March of 2010).

As alluded to in the previous chapter, those whom I interviewed in Barcelona commonly voiced concerns that the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods might have the effect of heightening social disorder, crime, drug dealing, and other problems that they perceived as a threat to the quality of life and image of their

communities. In Madrid, by contrast, residents' complaints regarding mosques revolved almost exclusively around practical issues generated by large gatherings of worshipers (i.e. overcrowding, noise, and traffic) and were rarely connected to broader social problems or processes of urban decay and degradation. In analyzing the sources of this difference, it is useful to draw upon recent work conducted by social scientists on the social production of neighborhood disrepute and the influence of social context on perceptions of urban disorder.

Urban scholars in both the US and in Europe have found that the stigma suffered by racial and ethnic minorities often extends to the neighborhoods where they are most heavily concentrated through a process that some have called "ecological contamination" (Hagan 1994; Smith 1986; Werthman and Pilivian 1967) and others "territorial stigmatization" (Wacquant 2007). Neighborhoods that develop poor reputations have difficulty attracting the human and economic capital necessary to promote their growth and development. In this sense, stigma of place is not only a consequence of racial and ethnic inequalities, but also a force that contributes to their reproduction over time.

The influence of a neighborhood's racial or ethnic composition on its reputation is evident in recent studies that aim to illuminate the social underpinnings of perceptions of disorder and crime. Until the late-1990s, social scientists tended to assume that perceptions of disorder and crime flowed rather straightforwardly from objective indicators, such as the amount of trash, drug paraphernalia, and broken glass in the streets, or the prevalence of loitering, public drunkenness, muggings, and other forms of deviant behavior. A series of recent studies, however, have challenged this assumption by bringing attention to the important role played by social context in shaping perceptions of

disorder and crime. Sampson and Raudenbush (2004), for instance, utilize systematic social observation to show how the racial composition of neighborhoods in Chicago influences residents' evaluations of disorder over and above the influence of objective indicators of disorder. Similarly, Quillian and Pager (2001) highlight how residents' perceptions of crime are heightened in neighborhoods with large numbers of young black men, even after controlling for actual crime rates. Such perceptions, they argue, likely play an important role in driving white flight and processes of racial segregation.

Flight, however, is only one possible response to concerns that racial or ethnic diversification will engender higher levels disorder, crime, and related problems. Residents also commonly engage in practices of neighborhood defense that aim to protect their "turf" from the encroachment of stigmatized minorities. Studies of what Suttles (1972) has called "defended neighborhoods" have found that practices of exclusivity toward outsider groups are most common and intense in neighborhoods where residents: 1) have a strong sense of loyalty and attachment to their communities; 2) feel they are joined in a common plight, whether or not it is of their choosing; 3) have limited possibilities for geographic mobility; and 4) are generally active in civic and community organizations (Buell 1980; Kefalas 2003; Rieder 1985; Wilson and Taub 2006).⁴³

Although these studies have contributed to our understanding of the features internal to neighborhoods that lead residents to engage in practices of neighborhood defense, they have tended to under-theorize how such practices are influenced by the connections that neighborhoods bear to the broader urban landscapes in which they are situated. In his original theorization of defended neighborhoods, Suttles (1972) places

⁴³ Suttles (1972) defines a "defended neighborhood" as a "residential group which seals itself off through the efforts of delinquent gangs, by restrictive covenants, by sharp boundaries, or by a forbidding reputation (p. 21).

significant emphasis on the relational dimension of their constitution. He argues that the loyalty that residents of defended neighborhoods exhibit toward their communities, and their sense of being joined with their neighbors in a common plight, develop largely as a consequence of external pressures and relations that demand community cohesion and cooperation. A common external pressure that triggers practices of neighborhood defense, he writes, is the perceived threat of ‘invasion’ by outsider groups. This pressure, he argues, is likely to be greatest in contexts characterized by strong socio-spatial divisions that correspond with racial, ethnic, or class differences. In such contexts, residents feel compelled to guard their turf so as to maintain symbolic and physical separation from neighboring areas and their corresponding populations.

Building on Suttles, I argue that practices of exclusivity toward stigmatized minorities and physical markers of their presence are often linked to more general efforts by longstanding residents to protect the quality and image of their neighborhoods in the face of perceived external threat. The degree to which residents feel compelled to take action to defend their neighborhoods against the encroachment of minority groups depends critically on the relations that their neighborhoods bear to their surrounding areas. Although stigmatized racial or ethnic minorities are likely to be viewed with suspicion and to encounter a degree of hostility wherever they settle, their presence has the greatest potential to trigger coordinated practices of neighborhood defense in contexts characterized by strong socio-spatial divisions and a high degree of racial or ethnic segregation. In such contexts, the heavy concentration of stigmatized minorities in narrowly-circumscribed areas heightens their visibility, intensifies contestations over

public space and resources, and reinforces associations drawn between diversity and urban marginality.

Most conclusions drawn about the constitution of defended neighborhoods have derived from case studies of transitional neighborhoods located in highly segregated contexts in the US. Without comparative cases that look at contexts with distinct urban geographies, however, it is difficult to gain insight into the precise ways in which socio-spatial divisions influence how longstanding residents interpret and respond to the entry of stigmatized minorities into their neighborhoods. In this chapter, I help to fill this gap by analyzing reactions to mosques in the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid, two regions where historically industrial cities are characterized by very distinct configurations of urban space.

Understanding the hostile reactions elicited by mosques in Barcelona, I argue, requires being attentive to the pronounced socio-spatial divisions typical of historically industrial cities where Muslim immigrants have tended to settle in the region. These divisions have led Muslims and other immigrant groups to concentrate heavily in peripheral neighborhoods where housing is most affordable. The heavy concentration of immigrants in these neighborhoods has heightened their visibility, intensified contestations over public space, and generated concerns about the development of ethnic ghettos. Since mosques are concrete symbols of the presence and permanence of Muslim immigrants, they have become a focal point of contestation.

In Madrid, by contrast, more mediated socio-spatial divisions have facilitated a more equal distribution of newly-arriving immigrant populations. As a result, associations between diversity and urban marginality are less robust, and residents are not

as fearful of the conversion of their neighborhoods into ethnic ghettos. This is central for explaining why residents of Madrid are less prone to drawing associations between the presence of mosques and the degradation, stigmatization, and ghettoization of their neighborhoods.

Opposition to mosques in Catalonia: A brief timeline of events

Prior to outlining how the configuration of urban space in historically industrial cities in Catalonia has influenced popular reactions to mosques, it is useful to provide a brief timeline of the history of opposition to mosques in the region. The first episode of contention surrounding a prayer room in Catalonia took place in 1990 in Vic, a city located in the northern part of the province of Barcelona. In May of that year, 100 residents signed a petition opposing the establishment of a mosque on Sant Pere Street, where many immigrants in the city lived at the time. Opponents of the mosques interviewed by local media complained about the increasing presence of prostitution and drugs in the area, the unsuitability of the acquired space for housing a mosque, and the cultural differences that existed between the native born and Moroccans living in the neighborhood.⁴⁴ Although the intensity of opposition in Vic paled in comparison to the instances of mosque opposition that would occur in the decade to come, the complaints that surfaced illustrated how the unease of residents did not revolve solely around the religious symbolism of the proposed mosque, but also around more general concerns regarding social problems associated with immigration.

⁴⁴ Erra, Miquel. 1990. "El carrer Sant Pere de Vic firma contra la construcció de la mesquita." *El 9 Nou*, May 18: 7; Erra, Miquel. 1990. "Un carrer polèmic." *El 9 Nou*, May 18: 7.

In the years that followed, sporadic mosque disputes occurred in a few other municipalities in the province of Barcelona. In 1995, 200 residents of Canet de Mar signed a petition opposing a mosque in the city (SOS Racismo 1995). In 1997, a mosque was closed in a relatively affluent neighborhood of Alella for failing to comply with basic safety requirements, although the local Muslim community attributed the closing to pressure from residents in the area. That same year, 1,500 residents of Premià de Mar signed a petition in opposition to the establishment of a mosque in the city (SOS Racismo 1998). The tension in Premià de Mar was the first major conflict surrounding a mosque in Catalonia, and in Spain more generally, and would later escalate significantly in 2001.

Conflict surrounding mosques did not become commonplace, however, until the onset of the 21st century. Given that the proliferation of conflicts over mosques in Catalonia began during roughly the same period as the attacks of September 11th, 2001 in the US, it would be tempting to attribute the increased prevalence and intensity of such conflicts to heightened fears of Islamic extremism. However, although such fears likely exacerbated tensions surrounding mosques in the region, anti-mosque campaigns actually became more frequent and intense *prior* to the attacks September 11th. Protests against mosques in Banyoles (1999), Granollers (2000, 2001), Lleida (2001), Mataró (2001), Premià de Mar (2001), and Reus (2000) all commenced before September 11th, 2001. They were soon followed by additional anti-mosque protests in Torroella de Montgrí (2001), Badalona (2002), Figueres (2002), and Viladecans (2002). In many instances, these protests were ‘successful,’ insofar as residents prevented the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods.

The temporal proximity of many of the campaigns that took place during this period suggests that they may not have been completely independent from one another. It may be the case, for example, that the ‘success’ of opposition campaigns in some municipalities served as a model for residents living in other municipalities (Morera 2009). The fierce opposition that took place in Premià de Mar between 2001 and 2003 received intense media coverage, which likely increased awareness of the issue in other municipalities in Catalonia. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the high level of mosque opposition in Catalonia is reducible to social mimicking, as the idea to launch opposition campaigns had to have resonated with the existing beliefs and attitudes of residents in order for it to have seemed like an appealing course of action. In addition, the conflict over the proposed mosque in Premià de Mar was covered by all of Spain’s major newspapers, and hence residents of other regions were not completely unaware of the tension surrounding mosques in Catalonia.



Image 3.1: Residents protesting a proposed mosque in Premià de Mar (Source: “Racismo ya está aquí.” 2002. *La Vanguardia*, May 26).

Migration and urbanization in Barcelona

As mentioned above, episodes of contention surrounding mosques in Catalonia have been most prevalent and intense in historically industrial cities in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. These cities are commonly characterized by pronounced divisions between peripheral Spanish-speaking neighborhoods inhabited primarily by working-class internal Spanish migrants and their offspring, on the one hand, and more affluent central neighborhoods composed of either longstanding residents whose roots in Catalonia extend for generations or internal migrants who have been able to elevate their social status and economic standing over time. Whereas central neighborhoods are relatively well-accommodated, host to an assortment of upscale commercial enterprises, and inhabited by middle- and upper-middle-class residents, peripheral neighborhoods are often severely lacking in municipal services and inhabited almost exclusively by the working class. As Candel (1965) writes in his pioneering work on internal migration to Catalonia, the categorization of such neighborhoods as peripheral derives not only from their spatial location relative to city centers, but also from the low economic and social status of their inhabitants.

The divisions between central and peripheral neighborhoods typical of municipalities in Barcelona are traceable to the area's development through successive waves of migration. Migration to Barcelona historically has been driven primarily by its strong industrial sector. While most regions of Spain did not industrialize until the 20th century, Barcelona underwent significant industrialization during the 19th century. The demand for labor generated by its industries has attracted migrants from rural areas of Catalonia and other regions of Spain since the late 1800s (Recaño and Solana 1998). The

largest wave of internal Spanish migration to the region began during the 1950s, when a new philosophy of economic development rooted in greater openness to the outside world enabled Spain to take advantage of foreign investment and tourism, producing a tremendous economic boom commonly known as the “Spanish miracle” (Harrison 1985). The infusion of capital to the country during the decades that followed generated significant industrial development in particular regions, most notably Catalonia, Madrid, Valencia, and the Basque Country. The concentration of economic growth in these regions led them to receive a large in-migration of workers from poorer and more rural parts of Spain.

The entry of internal migrants to Catalonia during this period came to be known colloquially as the “pacific invasion” (Giner 1980). Spanish migrants from Andalusia, Extremadura, Murcia, and other regions that were distant geographically, culturally, and linguistically were viewed as “foreign invaders” who threatened the established way of life in Catalonia. Upon arriving to Barcelona, Spanish migrants faced a significant degree of discrimination and spatial segregation (Candel 1965; Esteva Fabregat 1973). Their difficulties integrating into urban life resulted, in part, from the broader context of national struggle taking place under Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975). In an effort to centralize Spain, Franco banned the use of Catalan in public life and discouraged its everyday usage through propaganda campaigns. The rapid entry of internal, Spanish-speaking migrants to Catalonia was perceived by many as part of the general assault upon the region’s language and culture (Colomer 1986). Consequently, economic barriers to social and geographic mobility within the city were reinforced by cultural barriers linked to regional identity.

Arguably more important than the exclusivity of native residents, however, were a host of urban factors that limited the integration of internal migrants into the cities in which they settled. By the time of the major boom in migration that took place between the late-1950s and mid-1970s, many city centers in the Barcelona metropolitan area were already well-developed, densely populated, and expensive, largely due to the transformations brought about by prior waves of rural-to-urban migration.⁴⁵ In combination with a general lack of urban planning and regulation, as well as rampant speculation by corrupt Franquist officials, this led to the relegation of internal migrants to marginalized peripheral neighborhoods composed of shanties and other types of seriously deficient “infra-housing” (Costa et al. 2003).

Although improvements were made to poorer neighborhoods following Spain’s transition to democracy in 1978, significant disparities have remained between central and peripheral neighborhoods in the Barcelona area. This has led to the persistence of large discrepancies in the cost of housing across urban neighborhoods. These discrepancies, in turn, have led newly-arriving foreign immigrants, most of whom are working-class, to concentrate heavily in delimited areas, generally in peripheral neighborhoods that historically have been home to internal Spanish migrants. Indeed, a recent study demonstrates that the concentration of foreign immigrants in delimited areas reaches more extreme levels in Barcelona, especially in cities that have been host to mosque opposition, than in other metropolitan areas with large Muslim populations, such as Madrid and Valencia (López Redondo and Rey Carneiro 2008). Similarly, a study by Colectivo IOÉ (2005) shows that 26% of immigrants in Catalonia live in buildings in

⁴⁵ In addition to the jobs generated by Barcelona’s strong industrial production, earlier migrants to the area had been attracted by employment opportunities afforded by the World Fairs of 1888 and 1929, as well as the construction of Barcelona’s metropolitan train system in the 1920s.

which more than half of the residents are of foreign origin, compared to just 17% in Madrid and 13% in Valencia. With respect to Muslim immigrants in particular, Martori and Hoberg (2008) find that immigrants from Morocco and Pakistan are among the most segregated groups in Catalonia.

Ethnic concentration and territorial stigmatization

The heavy concentration of Muslims and other foreign immigrants in specific neighborhoods in the Barcelona area has generated concerns about the formation of what residents commonly call “ghettos.” The perception that immigrants have ‘colonized’ certain neighborhoods is reflected in local terms and expressions used to describe neighborhoods with large immigrant populations. The most well-known example comes from the capital city of Barcelona itself, where the name “Ravalistan” is used to describe the city’s Raval neighborhood, which hosts the area’s largest Pakistani community.⁴⁶ But examples may also be found in other municipalities in the area, such as Mataró, where the working-class neighborhood of Rocafonda is commonly called “Rocamora,” due to its large population of North African immigrants.⁴⁷ As Josep Luis, a 76-year-old residing in Rocafonda, explains:

[I]n the rest of the city of Mataró, instead of being “Rocafonda,” you will see that it is called “Rocamora”... It is a play on the words Rocafonda / Rocamora because we have a very high number of people from the Maghreb, as we do of people from whichever culture, eh? It doesn’t matter whether you’re from a low-

⁴⁶ Residents opposed the establishment of a mosque in the Raval neighborhood in 2004.

⁴⁷ Opposition to a mosque in Rocafonda forced the Muslim community in the area to search for another space to locate its mosque in 2001.

[status] culture or a middle-[status] one – regardless, they call us “*moros*” and they call us “Rocamora.” We are trying... to look for ways and manners to get... people from outside our neighborhood to come here and to realize that, as the saying goes, “The lion is not as fierce as he is portrayed.” That is, it is not, by any stretch of the imagination, so ugly, so unsafe, so...

As illustrated by Josep Luis’ remarks, the negative image of Rocafonda derives largely from its large population of immigrants, particularly those from Morocco. The frustration felt by longstanding residents of Rocafonda with the poor reputation of their neighborhood is shared by ethnic minorities, who are cognizant of the fact that their presence is a source of this reputation. Reflecting on the differences between Rocafonda and more central neighborhoods of the city, Houda, a 20-year-old whose parents are from Morocco, states:

Let’s say that here [in Rocafonda] there is more variety and in the center there are only natives who are from here, and that’s it. In truth, if you go outside Rocafonda / El Palau,⁴⁸ you see that the opinion of everybody else is, “Ah! Well we don’t count that area as part of Mataró.” It’s like a ghetto has been forming... The [level of] integration isn’t good, which doesn’t help. But the people from the center, for example, don’t help either because they have a very negative view of this neighborhood. It’s a shame.

⁴⁸ El Palau is sometimes viewed as an extension of Rocafonda due to the fact that the two neighborhoods border one another and each have large immigrant populations.

The remarks of both Josep Luis and Houda highlight how residents of Rocafonda (and El Palau) view those who reside in more central neighborhoods of the city as complicit in the ongoing construction of Rocafonda's poor reputation. The high level of immigration to Rocafonda has contributed to perceptions among residents outside the neighborhood that it is a locus of poverty, crime, and other forms of urban marginality. This, in turn, has heightened the salience of symbolic boundaries that separate Rocafonda and its residents from more affluent areas of Mataró. The common perception that there are "two Matarós," one that is affluent and predominantly native, and the other that is poor and largely immigrant, is well-illustrated by the remarks of Juan, a 53-year-old teacher who was raised in Rocafonda but later moved to the center of Mataró when he was 28. He states:

In ten years, [Rocafonda] has changed in a spectacular way. If you came ten years ago and again now, you wouldn't recognize it. The social composition – the immigration that has come has been unimaginable – in number, in diversity, in everything. And so, how can I describe it – I'm not sure how to describe it. I know the streets, I know the buildings, but I don't know the people... When I go to Rocafonda, for me it's a different neighborhood. And so what I'm sure of is that they are different worlds... Because there exists here, for example, the Mataró of upper middle classes and of the working class... When you speak about Rocafonda -- the people that previously arrived through [internal] immigration and live in Rocafonda – they feel a little like they've lost out or that they are

[there] because they don't have any other recourse... What I know for certain is that, for me, it is a totally different world.

Like Rocafonda, many of the neighborhoods in the Barcelona area that were originally constructed for internal Spanish migrants and now have become home to relatively large foreign immigrant populations suffer territorial stigmatization. According to Wacquant, certain places come to be known as “urban hellholes” rampant with “violence, vice, and dereliction.” A stigma of place is consequently superimposed on residents already stigmatized for their class, ethnic, or immigrant status. In an effort to evade such stigma, residents attempt to separate themselves symbolically from others living in the vicinity by engaging in practices of “lateral denigration and mutual distancing,” which undermine possibilities for communal solidarity (Wacquant 2007, pp. 67-68). The stigma suffered by neighborhoods with large immigrant populations in Mataró is similarly present in Badalona, where immigrants have concentrated heavily in the city's southern peripheral neighborhoods. As a longstanding resident and scholar of Badalona writes of these areas:

Residence in these neighborhoods, especially in certain streets of La Pau, La Salut or other neighborhoods like Sant Roc, where one finds Roma and Moroccan populations, is stigmatizing. Living in these areas is associated with scarcity of income and moral deviance, and this has ramifications for all aspects of existence, whether in the most informal of conversations with acquaintances or in more formal settings (negative credentials upon applying for a job in the workplace;

dealings with public institutions, such as social services or the police). Inhabitants often try to attenuate the *suffering* that results from the associations held by those who live in other areas of the city with phrases like, “I am not like them,” or “I live in my house with the doors turned in,” expressions that are loaded with very strong symbolic meaning... (Requena Hidalgo 2003, p. 10, emphasis in original).

Requena Hidalgo’s observations highlight how residents of neighborhoods whose stigma has increased with rising levels of immigration attempt to combat their loss of personal standing by distancing themselves symbolically and socially from immigrants and other minorities who live alongside them. As I will explain at greater length in Chapter IV, such practices have the effect of precluding possibilities for inter-ethnic solidarity and cohesion. However, rather than perceiving their own actions as a factor that contributes to the lack of cohesion in their neighborhoods, longstanding residents generally blame the absence of cohesion exclusively on the insularity and unwillingness of newly-arriving immigrants to “integrate.”

Perceptions of ethnicization and ghettoization in diversifying neighborhoods

Those whom I interviewed in the Barcelona area commonly cited a series of specific transformations to their neighborhoods that they associated with immigration and the conversion of their neighborhoods into ethnic “ghettos,” including the flight of native-born Spaniards to more affluent neighborhoods, the replacement of Spanish businesses with ethnic enterprises, and the colonization of plazas and other public spaces by immigrant populations. The exodus of Spanish residents was perceived by many as a

direct consequence of immigration and the desire of longstanding residents to avoid having to live alongside minority groups. Antonio M., the president of the neighborhood association of La Pau, a working-class neighborhood in Badalona where resident opposition led to the closing of a mosque in 2005, states:

[H]ere we were all Spaniards. We were from Andalusia, Extremadura... And as a result of the immigration that has occurred, 95% of the people in this neighborhood now emigrate. Now the people in this neighborhood have found themselves in the midst of so much immigration that those who built their houses with their own hands – the houses in all these neighborhoods were built by the people themselves – and they worked hard, everyone together – and now of course, when they see that four or five Pakistanis, Chinese, Moroccans or Arabs install themselves in an apartment complex, they begin leaving. They start selling their houses... They are selling their apartments for half their value so they can go to another place that doesn't have as much immigration as there is here... Because of course, [these neighborhoods] are ghettos – some come and then they bring another and another and another, and so they become ghettos.

Although Antonio and others residing in peripheral neighborhoods like La Pau may exaggerate the extent to which processes of ethnic succession are taking place, their perceptions are not completely divorced from reality. In La Pau, for instance, municipal census data indicates that the number of Spanish nationals declined by 18% from 3,919 to 3,219 between 2004 and 2009, while the number of foreign nationals grew by 73% from

1,041 to 1,799.⁴⁹ This suggests that a significant number of longstanding residents have elected to relocate to neighborhoods of higher standing in an effort to escape the difficulties that they associate with immigration and ethnic diversification. Many who remain in the neighborhood do so either because they do not have the means to relocate or because, like Antonio, they bear strong sentimental attachments to the community. The fact that they feel tied to the neighborhood, whether it be for economic or emotional reasons, has contributed to their strong desire to protect it against processes of decay and degradation associated with immigration.

In addition to lamenting the flight of Spanish residents, respondents in the Barcelona area commonly voiced discontent with the exodus of Spanish businesses from their neighborhoods. For example, Xavier, a 33-year-old resident of Artigas, a neighborhood in Badalona where residents opposed a mosque in 2009, states:

The problem is that the commercial center of the neighborhood has been lost. Because if there are 70 businesses in the neighborhood, 25 of which are call centers, 20 kwik-e-marts, and 20 bars, where do you buy shoes, where do you buy clothes? There isn't anywhere! Everything is the same. What the hell do you have here? If all you can eat is shwarma...

In a similar vein, Silvia, a 34-year-old resident of Rocafonda (Mataró), remarks:

[Rocafonda] has changed a lot, a lot. Before people lived really well, really peacefully. You could be relaxed in the street. And now, all the businesses are

⁴⁹ See the Instituto Nacional de Estadística's website (Accessible at: <http://www.ine.es>).

theirs – butcher shops, barber shops, everything. If you want to buy something, you have to go outside. Any gift you want – shoes, clothes – you have three stores. And the delinquency – everything has changed so much, everything, everything. In a matter of 10 years, they have become a majority – immigrants -- above all, Moroccans. But there are also Chinese, South Americans, and others. But above all, Moroccans.

Like Silvia, long-time residents whom I interviewed in diversifying neighborhoods in the Barcelona area commonly perceived stores, bars, and shops run by immigrants as foreign impositions. Several mistakenly believed that immigrant businesses were given preferential treatment by the government in the form of economic subsidies and exemptions from laws regulating hours of operation. Many expressed concern that clusters of ethnic enterprises hindered the entry of more ‘respectable’ businesses that catered to the tastes of the native born and had the potential to improve future prospects for community development. Although residents clearly benefited from the lower prices, new products, and extended hours offered by businesses run by immigrants, few explicitly recognized these benefits.

The intense opposition that mosques have encountered in the Barcelona area must be understood in light of the more general anxieties that residents have regarding the ethnicization and ghettoization of their neighborhoods. Mosques are perceived by many as symbolic of the actual or potential transformation of their neighborhoods into nuclei of immigrant concentration. Not only do they signify the durable presence of Muslim immigrants, but they are also viewed as ‘magnets’ that attract more immigrants to a given

area and actively contribute to the development of ethnic ghettos. Consider, for instance, the remarks of Juan, a 56-year-old resident and active member of the Neighborhood Association of Sant Roc (Badalona):

[Muslims] would come from everywhere. There wouldn't only be people from here, but rather they would come from Santa Coloma, from Montgat, from the neighborhoods here in Sant Adrià -- they would come from everywhere -- it would be a place of reunion for them. For them it's a symbol, and so they'd come from all the other places.

Comparable views were expressed by residents in Mataró, where social and economic divisions across neighborhoods are similarly pronounced. Reflecting on the possibility of having a mosque in the neighborhood of El Palau, which is located alongside Rocafonda, Purificación, a 64-year-old resident who signed a petition opposing a mosque on the fringe of the neighborhood in 2001 states:

If they put a mosque here, we will be crowded to the maximum... This is a small neighborhood and the moment they place a mosque here, all the Muslims would come here from all of Mataró and from Mataró's surroundings.

Roser, a 50-year-old resident of the same neighborhood, adds, "This is already a ghetto... For people from the outside, this is a ghetto. Just imagine if there was a mosque here."

According to newspaper reports, concerns about the formation of ghettos have been associated with the presence of mosques in a number of other Catalan cities as well, including Banyoles, Igualada, Lleida, Premià de Mar, Reus, Sant Feliu de Guíxols, and Viladecans. It is important to note, however, that although residents often refer to their neighborhoods as “ghettos,” these neighborhoods are quite distinct from traditional racial or ethnic ghettos found in the US. That is, they are not ethnically homogenous, the majority of residents are still native to Spain, and they remain functionally tied to more affluent neighborhoods.⁵⁰ Indeed, it is precisely because these neighborhoods are still populated primarily by the native born and benefit from a decent level of urban infrastructure and amenities that they have taken on the features of defended neighborhoods, including sharp boundary definition and defense, and practices of exclusivity toward those perceived as outsiders (Suttles 1972).

Struggles over social justice and public recognition

Through the course of my interviews, I found that when respondents expressed concern about the conversion of their neighborhoods into “ghettos,” they referred not only to the increased presence of immigrants, but also to the general degradation of public space and the absence of adequate municipal services. Although they blamed these problems, in part, on the incivility of immigrants, they also voiced a significant degree of discontent with their local governments for “abandoning” their neighborhoods and failing to address the challenges generated by the large-scale arrival of immigrant populations.

⁵⁰ Here, I draw on Wacquant (2008), who defines the term “ghetto” as “a homogeneous social formation, bearing a unitary cultural identity, endowed with an advanced organizational autonomy and institutional duplication, based on a dichotomous cleavage between races (i.e., fictively biologized ethnic categories) officially recognized by the state” (p. 160).

Reflecting on the conditions present in Sant Roc and Artigas (Badalona), José María, a vocal opponent of the establishment of a mosque in Artigas, states:

You've seen how deteriorated the neighborhood is. It lacks trees, it lacks benches, there is trash everywhere, there are rats bigger than this table, they don't clean the trash bins. They want this to be a ghetto... Why don't they bring all this to the center – these (immigrant) shops... Why don't they place them there, in the center of Badalona? They say they belong here. [There] they don't give them permits, but here they do. Here they don't check the permits or anything. So what happens – do they think we're stupid or what? We pay taxes just as they do! Everyone pays, everyone pays!

José María's comments highlight the important role that the comparative reference point of Badalona's affluent center plays in shaping how residents of the periphery make sense of the transformations taking place in their neighborhoods. Many perceive the heavy clustering of immigrants in their neighborhoods as a product of conscious decisions by political elites to keep immigrants out of more affluent neighborhoods.

The skepticism with which residents of poor neighborhoods in the Barcelona area view their local governments has contributed to their unease with the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods, as they lack confidence in public authorities to manage the difficulties that mosques might generate. This is evident in the following comments by Angel, the former president of the Neighborhood Association of Artigas:

The city government has said to us in various meetings with Camino de la Paz,⁵¹ the [association] establishing the prayer room, that at the moment when conflicts arise – when conflicts are generated with residents – it would proceed with closing down the prayer room. But here we don't believe it. Me personally and many from the association do not believe it because conflicts are being generated here with residents in bars, [local] establishments, etc. We've asked that... the city government act, and it has not acted. And so if it doesn't act with regard to certain things, why would it act with regard to others, especially those at the level of centers of worship, which generate a lot of conflict.

Later in the interview, after detailing the difficulties immigration has generated in the neighborhood, Angel adds:

We said to the city government, "Listen, do something, and do something for real – enforce [municipal] ordinances because this cannot be." So in that meeting, and in a very subtle way on the side, to me alone they said, "The thing is that we have to put those people somewhere." Man, of course you have to put them somewhere, but not in my neighborhood! Let's distribute them across neighborhoods. In other words, they came to me to say that here [the immigrants] were okay, and that they weren't going to do anything so long as immigration was four and a half kilometers from the center of the city.

⁵¹ Camino de la Paz (*Minhaj-ul-Quran*) is an international NGO that was founded in Lahore, Pakistan in 1980. It has expanded to over 80 countries and is one of the more prominent Pakistani associations in the Barcelona area.

Angel's remarks speak to the social justice dimension of debates surrounding mosques and other issues pertaining to immigration. Like José María, he feels that Badalona's city government has failed to take the interests and concerns of residents living in peripheral neighborhoods seriously. In his view, so long as the problems associated with immigration do not influence those who live in the center of the city, public authorities do not feel the need to address them.

Although feelings of frustration with public authorities for failing to address the challenges presented by increased immigration may be particularly pronounced in peripheral neighborhoods in Badalona, similar sentiments are expressed in other historically industrial cities in Barcelona as well. Several of those whom I interviewed in Rocafonda (Mataró), for instance, also complained, albeit with less vigor and passion than in Badalona, about feeling abandoned or underserved by their local government. The differences in the intensity of residents' discontent with their local governments in Badalona and Mataró likely have resulted from a variety of factors, including the responsiveness of public authorities to residents' concerns and the different degrees of inequality across neighborhoods in each city. In both cities, however, the relatively pronounced differences in the demography, built environment, and condition of public spaces across neighborhoods have made local governments particularly susceptible to accusations of neglect and abandonment. This is essential for understanding why residents in Badalona, Mataró, and other cities in the Barcelona area have been prone to connecting disputes surrounding mosques to broader struggles related to social justice and public recognition.

Urban privilege and neighborhood defense

Not all opposition to mosques has occurred in the most marginal of neighborhoods, or in neighborhoods with a large proportion of foreign residents. In some cases, Muslim communities have attempted to establish mosques in middle-class neighborhoods or in working-class neighborhoods of higher status, often at the behest of city governments trying to evade mosque conflict and ethnic clustering by ceding land in neighborhoods with smaller immigrant populations. Nevertheless, opposition has emerged in many of these neighborhoods as well. In explaining why mosques have encountered opposition in these neighborhoods, it is once again essential to highlight the important role played by the configuration of urban space and local conceptions of privilege and marginality.

Residents of more affluent neighborhoods in historically industrial cities in Barcelona are aware of the negative image that poorer neighborhoods have acquired as a result of being perceived as focal points of immigrant concentration, and they desire to avoid sharing the same fate. For this reason, some of the most intense mosque opposition campaigns have been initiated in relatively well-off neighborhoods. This is, in part, because residents of these neighborhoods have more privileges to defend. They worry, for instance, that property values might decline as more immigrants move to the area, or that crime and drugs might enter their neighborhoods from poorer areas along with the populations served by mosques.

Santa Coloma de Gramenet

A particularly salient example of opposition in a higher status neighborhood comes from Santa Coloma de Gramenet, a city located just to the north of Barcelona where one of the most intense mosque conflicts in Catalonia to date surfaced in 2004. Santa Coloma has roughly 120,000 inhabitants, nearly 22% of whom are immigrants. As in other cities in the Barcelona area, the immigrant population of Santa Coloma has concentrated heavily in specific neighborhoods, particularly those in the eastern part of the city. The neighborhood with the greatest proportion of immigrants is Fondo, where foreign nationals constitute 45% of all residents.⁵² The divisions characteristic of the city are captured well in a recent article in *El Periódico*, entitled “Santa Coloma is not the Bronx.”⁵³ The article states:

To be sure, it is not the perfect city, but nor is it as bad as it is portrayed. A picture of modern-day Santa Coloma requires dividing its panorama into distinct areas. It is not the same to speak of its center as [it is to speak of] its peripheral neighborhoods. The vision of a resident from Plaça de la Vila (a centrally-located plaza) has nothing to do with that of a person living in Fondo. But that diversity has always been a signpost of identity in Santa Coloma, which was a destination for many immigrants from Andalusia and Extremadura in the 60s and 70s.

⁵² Ajuntament de Santa Coloma de Gramenet. “Anuari estadístic 2009”: <http://www.grame.net/fileadmin/Files/Ciutat/estadistiques/anuari2009/Anuaricomplet2009.pdf> . Accessed 12 December 2010. The largest immigrant groups in the city are of Chinese (6,200), Moroccan (4,500), and Ecuadorian (3,133) origin.

⁵³ Paniagua, Raúl. 2009. “Santa Coloma no es el Bronx.” *El Periódico*. October 29.

Until 2004, Santa Coloma had one small mosque located in El Raval, a neighborhood with a relatively large Moroccan population just to the southeast of Fondo. This mosque was grossly inadequate to accommodate the city's rapidly growing Muslim population, particularly during major holidays. Consequently, with the support of the city government and a number of local entities, one of the Muslim communities in the city acquired an apartment on Anselm del Riu Street in the neighborhood of Singuerlín, which it planned to use as a mosque during the month of Ramadan in October of 2004.⁵⁴

On October 18th, shortly after the mosque had become operational, about 100 residents gathered on Anselm del Riu Street, shouting insults and using noisemakers to disrupt evening prayers. Over the next couple weeks, resident protests escalated and necessitated police intervention to prevent the outbreak of violence between anti-mosque demonstrators, pro-mosque demonstrators, and members of the Muslim community.⁵⁵ After fifteen days of protest, the Muslim community and those protesting the mosque reached an agreement that the mosque would remain open until the end of Ramadan, but would then be moved provisionally to a modular building in a park (Can Zam) located in the northwestern part of the city.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ L'obertura temporal d'una mesquita enfronta veïns de Santa Coloma. 2004. *El Punt*, October 19.

⁵⁵ Muñoz, Sara. 2004. "Els veïns de Santa Coloma anuncien que no aturaran les protestes fins que tanqui la mesquita." *El Punt*, October 27.

⁵⁶ "Acord a Santa Coloma per traslladar la mesquita a uns mòduls prefabricats a Can Zam." 2004. *El Punt*, November 4.



Image 3.2: Residents protesting the mosque on Anslem del Riu Street in Singuerlín (Source: Aranda, A. and G. Cruz (directors). 2005. “¡Mezquita No!” Spain: A Contraluz Films and Tururut Art Infogràfic).

The intensity of the conflict that took place in Singuerlín is reflected in the remarks of Taoufik Cheddadi, the imam of the mosque at the time:

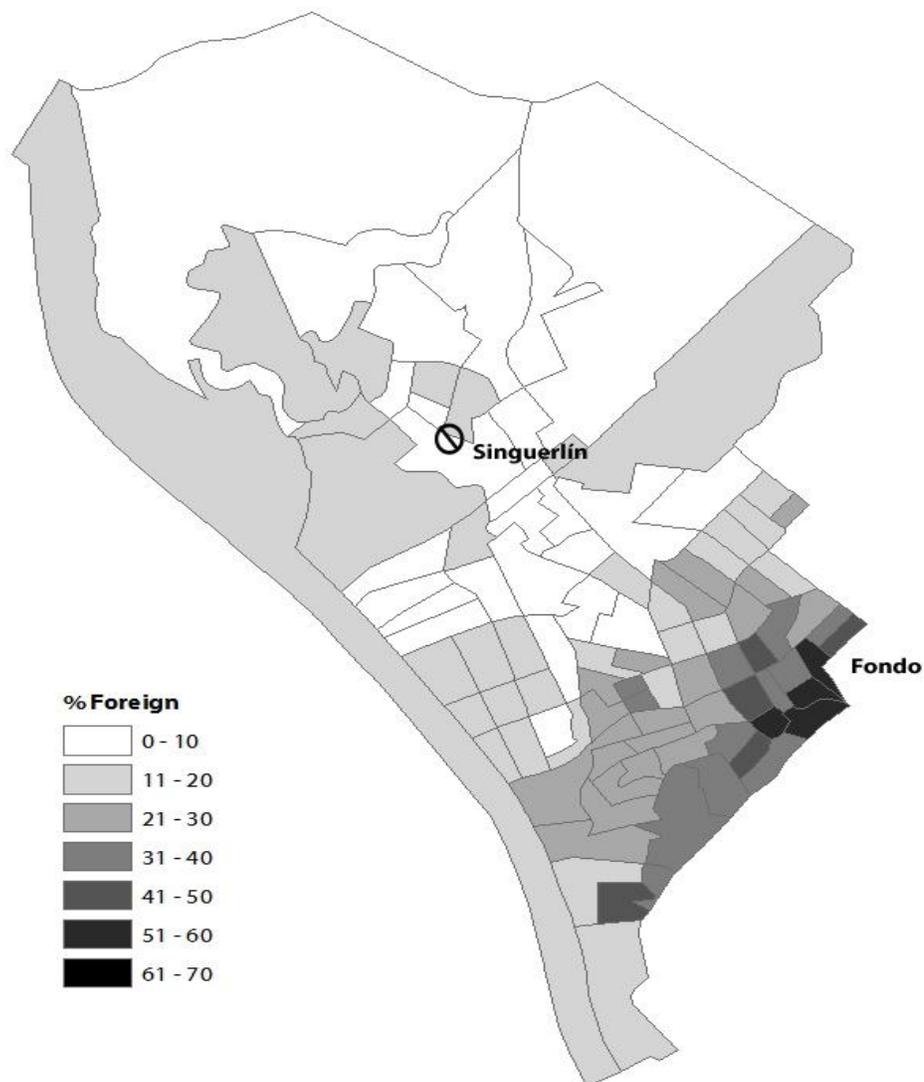
You saw the film, right?⁵⁷ We had the protection of the Mossos (police)... This is the Holy Inquisition of the 16th century – truly. And we would go out with police protection because if there wasn't, they would hit us. And the extreme right came – Nazis with baseball bats and such things. The flag with Franco's black eagle.

These things really happened.

⁵⁷ A film entitled “¡Mezquita No!” (A Contraluz Films and Tururut Art Infogràfic), which was directed by Alberto Aranda. and Guillermo Cruz, presents a powerful visual rendering of the events that took place in Santa Coloma in 2004.

What accounts for the intense conflict that occurred in Singuerlín? Why were residents so hostile to the presence of a mosque in their neighborhood? Although the participation of elements of the far right added fuel to the fire, a closer look at discourses advanced by those protesting the mosque reveals that the conflict revolved primarily around the threat that residents of Singuerlín perceived the mosque to pose to the quality and character of their neighborhood. Understanding why the mosque was perceived as such a threat requires an analysis of the basic features of the neighborhood and how it is situated socially and spatially within Santa Coloma.

Singuerlín is located in the northern part of Santa Coloma and is inhabited mainly by working-class Spanish migrants who have been able to elevate their economic and social status over time. The relatively high price of housing in Singuerlín, along with its distance from the commercial center of the city, has made it unappealing to foreign immigrants, who make up under 10% of the neighborhood's total population (Map 3.2).



Map 3.2: Distribution of foreign nationals across census tracts in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2008 municipal census data).

Residents of Singuerlín whom I interviewed commonly portrayed the neighborhood as peaceful, familial, and well-cared-for. In advancing this image of Singuerlín, residents often contrasted it with Fondo and other neighborhoods where they perceived immigration to have generated high levels of disorder and degradation. For example, Cristóbal, a 51-year-old whom I met at the neighborhood’s civic center, states:

You know what the story is in Santa Coloma? I suppose that it's like over there in the United States. Cities are divided into different areas, some of which are the most centrally-located. For various reasons, they have better parks, better services... and Singuerlín I think is one of the best neighborhoods of Santa Coloma, aside from the area behind City Hall that leads into Europe Park. And of course, what I don't see as nice in Santa Coloma are the areas of Can Mariner and Fondo. They are places with very tight streets, few parks, a lot of noise, a lot of crowding of people. Singuerlín... – for what it's worth – has space. There is more harmony, the streets aren't so packed like Milá i Fontanals, Liszt St., and Wagner St. (in Fondo). The ugliest neighborhood in Santa Coloma, and my mother still lives there, is Arrabal. Arrabal is supremely ugly -- a lot of immigration from abroad.

Like Cristóbal, residents whom I interviewed often connected the high quality of life in Singuerlín to the shared history and culture of its inhabitants. Several looked upon more ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the city with disdain, identifying immigration as a primary source of social disintegration and disorder.

Residents of Singuerlín are also relatively activist in orientation and perceive struggle as a necessary means of attaining their goals. As in other neighborhoods composed of internal Spanish migrants, this sentiment is attributable, at least in part, to the strong neglect faced under Franco's dictatorship. The proactive role that residents have played in the development of Singuerlín is reflected in the remarks of Juan Diego, the president of the local neighborhood association:

Facilities have arrived because the people have fought. If they hadn't fought, there would be no facilities... It is lamentable. I trusted that when democracy arrived, all this would not have to happen – there wouldn't be demonstrations, politicians would build facilities – but I see that this is not the case. Everything must occur through struggle... And democracy should not be like this. I don't want to live like a “*Maharaja*” (high king) or be gifted anything, but I am paying my taxes and I have the right to have them build me a health clinic, a day care center, a school.

The seeds of the conflict that occurred in 2004 lie in the presence of an activist group of residents who feared that the establishment of a mosque in their neighborhood might generate many of the same problems (i.e. crime and drugs) commonly associated with Fondo and other neighborhoods in the city with large immigrant populations. Their concerns about the mosque derived less from their actual experiences of diversity in Singuerlín than from their perception of the negative impact of immigration on other areas of the city. As Carlos, a native of Santa Coloma, astutely observes:

In 2004, Santa Coloma was 17%, no 15% immigrant. The neighborhood of Singuerlín, where this [conflict] occurred, was just 6%. And so it was an issue of perceptions. It was an issue of perception – the location of that facility (the mosque) sent a very clear message: “Your neighborhood is going to become like that neighborhood – that neighborhood where you don't like to go because the people aren't like you. Your apartments are going to decline in value. Your status

will decline.” But it was a perception because the objective reality was that [Singuerlín] was just 6% [immigrant].

The discourses advanced by those who demonstrated against the mosque highlighted the powerful role played by the negative images associated with Fondo in generating concerns about immigration and ethnic diversification. Many attending the demonstrations carried pre-printed signs stating, “No mosque in Singuerlín. Residents, support the neighborhood. We do not want another Fondo” (Image 3.3).



Image 3.3: Pre-printed sign carried by residents protesting the mosque in Singuerlín (Source: Aranda, A. and G. Cruz (directors). 2005. “¡Mezquita No!” Spain: A Contraluz Films and Tururut Art Infogràfic).

Jaume, an intercultural mediator who played an active role mediating the dispute recalls:

One of the greatest worries that [those in] Singuerlín had was that they did not want – these are their words, eh – they did not want to resemble Fondo. [The mosque] would have the effect of bringing more immigration... And one of the preoccupations was precisely that – that they did not want Singuerlín to be converted into a Fondo – viewing Fondo as something bad, no? Or with negativity, which does not have to be the case.

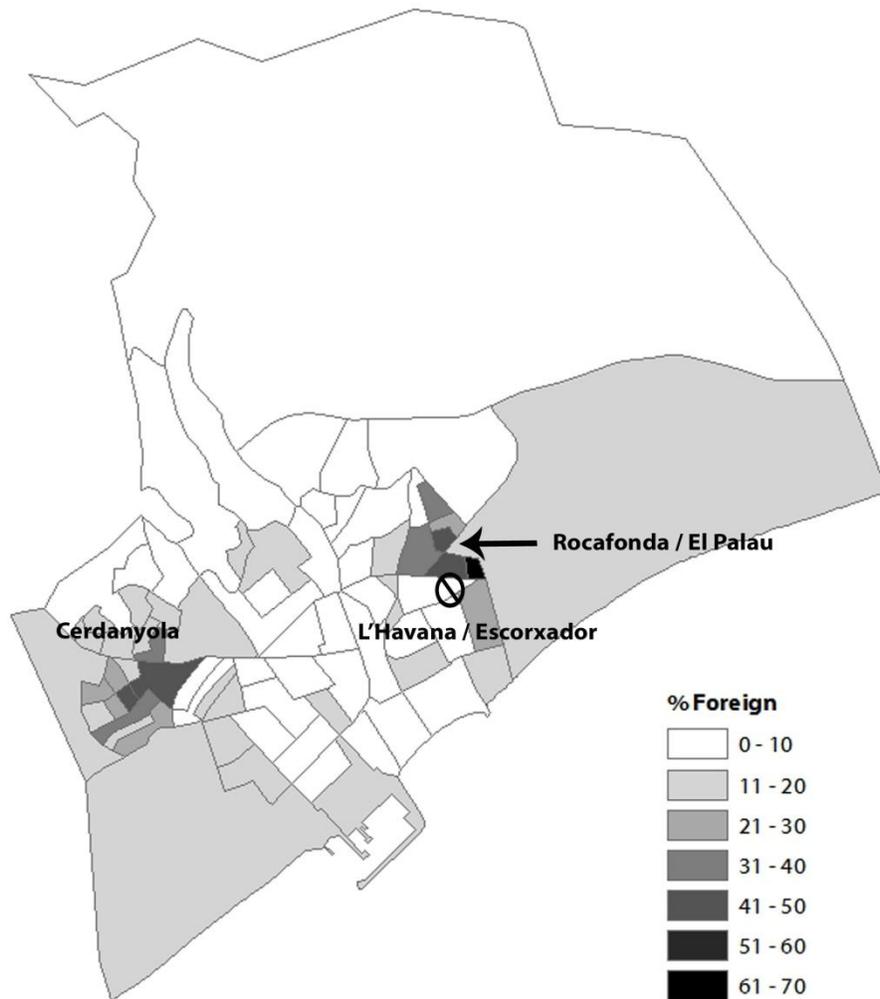
As illustrated by Jaume's remarks, having the stigmatized neighborhood of Fondo as a reference point for the perils of immigration was central to the hostility demonstrated by residents toward the proposed mosque in Singuerlín. As in the case of Badalona, the mosque was perceived as a potential magnet that would attract large numbers of immigrants to the neighborhood, generating many of the problems that people associated with Fondo and other poorer neighborhoods of the city. Resisting the mosque was hence part of a broader effort to maintain the boundaries that separated and protected Singuerlín from poorer and more diverse neighborhoods.

Mataró

A very similar set of issues motivated local residents to oppose a proposed mosque in Mataró in 2001. Mataró is a city of 123,000 residents located in the county of Maresme, to the northeast of Barcelona along the Mediterranean Coast. Foreign nationals make up 17% of the city's total population, but have tended to concentrate in the

peripheral neighborhoods of El Palau / Escorxador (33% immigrant), Rocafonda (33% immigrant), and Cerdanyola (22% immigrant).⁵⁸ In 2001, pressure from residents to close a mosque in Rocafonda, a neighborhood with one of the largest immigrant populations in the city, led the local Muslim community to seek space for a mosque in a nearby area with very few immigrants. The mosque was to be located on Herrera St. at the border of L'Havana and Escorxador, two relatively high status neighborhoods in the city. The building designated for the mosque was located just outside the limits of El Palau and Rocafonda, which are known for their large immigrant populations (Map 3.3).

⁵⁸ These data come from a report entitled "Population Study" (*Estudi de la Població*) that was published in 2010 by Mataró's city government. The study treats El Palau and Escorxador as a single neighborhood, and thus underestimates the proportion of El Palau's population that is composed of immigrants. In actuality, immigrants make up between 50% and 60% of its total population.



Map 3.3: Distribution of foreign nationals across census tracts in Mataró (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2008 municipal census data).

Upon learning of the Muslim community’s plans in March of 2001, 200 residents of L’Havana and Escorxador assembled and selected ten residents to head a commission against the establishment of the mosque in the neighborhood (Image 3.4).⁵⁹ Some complained that the space reserved for the mosque should instead be used for a pre-school, a park, or a soccer field, and that the city government’s support for the proposal

⁵⁹ “Veïns de Mataró s’oposen a la construcció d’una mesquita al seu barri.” 2001. *Avui*, March 20.

reflected its failure to prioritize the needs of the neighborhood.⁶⁰ Others expressed fear that social problems associated with El Palau and Rocafonda, such as crime and drugs, would enter the area along with those attending the mosque. Juan, who was present in Mataró at the time of the conflict, recalls:

...[T]he neighborhood of El Palau and Rocafonda is a species of enclosure with a border that is more or less delimited. When it was proposed that the mosque be placed a little further out, where they were anticipating the establishment of a series of apartments that, although not of high standing, were very well-valued because they were near the beach – this then was a *casus belli*. It was a manner of saying “We won’t tolerate it”... Placing the mosque there meant a spilling over of the neighborhood El Palau / Rocafonda, which people already had more or less labeled.

As in the case of the neighborhood of Singuerlín in Santa Coloma, residents of L’Havana and Escorxador feared that the establishment of a mosque in the area might blur the boundaries that separated their neighborhoods from the stigmatized neighborhoods of El Palau and Rocafonda. To them, the proposed mosque signified the expansion of an emergent ghetto that threatened the privileges that accompanied residence in a ‘peaceful’ neighborhood. Opposing the mosque was perceived by residents as an effective way to shield their neighborhoods from the dangers associated with the large-scale entry of foreign immigrants, most notably Moroccans, to Mataró at the time.

⁶⁰ “Creix l’oposició veïnal contra el pla per fer una mesquita a Mataró.” 2001. *Avui*, March 21.



Image 3.4: Residents gathering in protest of the proposed mosque in L'Havana / Escorxador (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2008 municipal census data).

A little over a month after forming the anti-mosque commission, residents presented over 7,000 signatures to the city government in protest of the proposed mosque.⁶¹ In the face of such strong popular opposition, the Muslim community abandoned its project to establish a mosque in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, the existing mosque in Rocafonda continued to elicit complaints from local residents, forcing the Muslim community to continue its search for an alternative location. A year later, the Muslim community and the city government decided to re-locate the mosque to an industrial park called “Mata-Rocafonda” in the eastern outskirts of the city. The mosque was to be established on the ground floor of the Red Cross’ headquarters in a space that

⁶¹ “Vecinos de Mataró recogen 7.000 firmas en contra de la construcción de una mezquita.” 2001. *El País*, May 1.

was 400 m² in size. Despite some resistance from business leaders working in the industrial park, the Muslim community succeeded in obtaining a ten-year lease for the space, which continues to function as one of the primary mosques in Mataró at present.⁶²

Although the complaints voiced by residents in higher status neighborhoods, such as Singuerlín and L'Havana / Escorxador, regarding mosques are different than the complaints raised by residents in the most marginal of neighborhoods, both are tied to the power of mosques to catalyze struggles over urban privilege. Those residing in marginalized neighborhoods oppose mosques as part of a broader effort to elevate the status of their neighborhoods relative to more affluent neighborhoods, or at least to prevent further marginalization and stigmatization. Those who reside in higher status areas, by contrast, oppose mosques as part of a broader effort to protect against the stigma and problems suffered by marginalized neighborhoods. In both cases, residents look beyond the boundaries of their own neighborhoods to assess their social position and to evaluate the potential impact of mosques and the populations they serve on the quality and image of their communities.

A point of comparison: The case of Madrid

On the surface, historically industrial cities in Madrid's metropolitan area appear very similar to those located in Barcelona. They have comparable population sizes, are inhabited largely by internal Spanish migrants, and have a strong legacy of local activism and community participation. Moreover, mosques in Madrid have generated many of the same practical difficulties (i.e. problems related to overcrowding, noise, traffic, and parking) that residents commonly complain about in Barcelona. However, in contrast to

⁶² "Musulmanes de Mataró trasladan su mezquita a un polígono." 2002. *El Periódico*, March 21.

municipalities in Barcelona, disputes surrounding mosques in Madrid have remained relatively self-contained, and have not been connected to broader struggles over urban privilege and public recognition. This, I argue, is largely due to the distinct socio-spatial development of historically industrial cities in Madrid, as compared to those in Barcelona.

In contrast to Barcelona's metropolitan area, which began to develop during the 19th century, Madrid's metropolitan area was essentially nonexistent until the second half of the 20th century. For it was not until then that major industrial development came to the region. Hence, whereas the population of Barcelona's surrounding area already had grown to nearly 700,000 inhabitants by 1950, what would later become Madrid's metropolitan area had a combined population of less than 150,000 at this time (Figure 3.1).

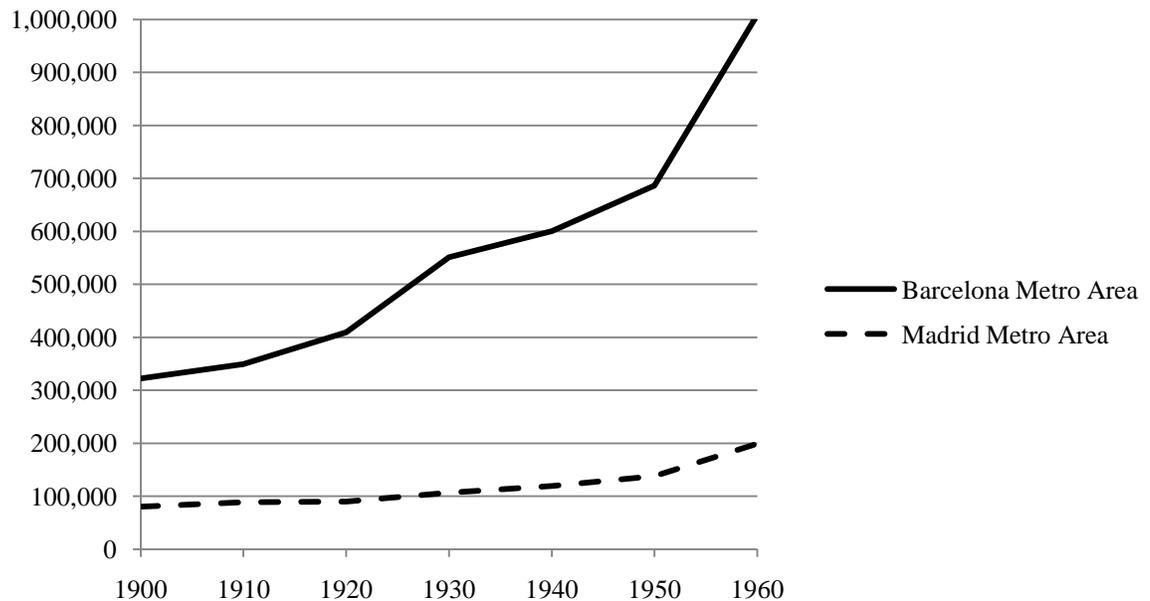


Figure 3.1: Evolution of the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid (1900 - 1960) (Source: Compiled by author based on data from the National Institute of Statistics and the Catalan Institute of Statistics).

* The municipalities of Barcelona and Madrid are not included in this figure.

The emergence of industrial production in Madrid was preceded by several key developments that took place between the late-19th and mid-20th century. For one, the enhancement and expansion of Spain's transportation network, particularly its train system, enabled Madrid to make up for its dearth of natural resources by importing raw materials from other regions of the country. Secondly, as Spain's political capital and the central headquarters of Franco's dictatorship, Madrid benefitted from heavy public investment and a series of programs aimed at promoting its economic development. However, the strong protectionist policies under Franco's regime limited the capital necessary for Madrid's industrial sector to realize its full potential until the late-1950s, when a change in Franco's political and economic philosophy led to an influx of foreign investment to the region. Madrid's budding industrial sector was particularly attractive to investors due to its strong potential for growth. Consequently, it received over a third of the foreign investments that went to Spanish industry between the early-1960s and mid-1970s (Méndez Gutiérrez del Valle 1995).

With the emergence of large-scale industrial production in Madrid came the creation of a series of "dormitory suburbs," primarily to the south and east of the city (Becker Zuazua 2007; López de Lucio 1998). Large apartment complexes of relatively low quality were erected to house the high number of labor migrants entering the area to fulfill the strong demand for labor. Municipalities in Madrid's "inner metropolitan ring," such as Getafe and Leganés, began to experience major population booms in the 1960s, while municipalities in its "outer ring," such as Fuenlabrada and Parla, did not experience major population booms until the early 1970s (Rodríguez Jiménez and Gómez-Escalonilla 2008). Rather than developing piecemeal, as did cities in Barcelona through

successive waves of migration, municipalities in Madrid ballooned in size and grew rapidly into cities within the span of a couple decades (Figure 3.2).

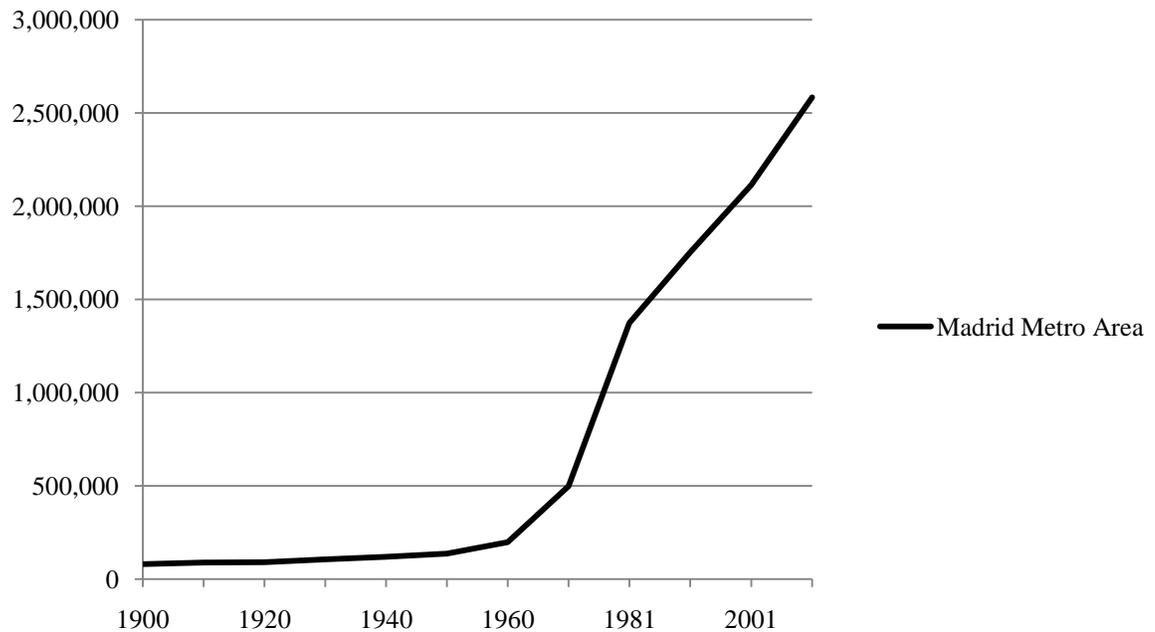


Figure 3.2: Evolution of the metropolitan area of Madrid (1900 - 2008) (Source: Compiled by author based on data from the National Institute of Statistics).

* The municipality of Madrid is not included in this figure.

Given this more compressed time frame, most neighborhoods were constructed in a similar manner and hosted comparable proportions of internal migrant populations, resulting in a greater degree of intra-municipal social and economic equality. Moreover, most internal migrants to Madrid either circulated within the same region or came from contiguous regions (Bier 1980). This, along with the absence of a strong regional identity and distinct language in Madrid, facilitated the acceptance and incorporation of internal migrants into the social life of the communities where they settled. Consequently, unlike in Catalonia, where Spaniards who were born outside the region are still called

“migrants” or “immigrants,” such categories are reserved exclusively for the foreign born in Madrid.

Still today, industrial cities in the Madrid metropolitan area typically display relatively weak divisions along socioeconomic lines. The municipalities that host the area’s largest immigrant communities, with the exception of the capital city of Madrid itself, are inhabited predominantly by working-class Spaniards, most of whom are internal migrants or the children of migrants. Consequently, notions of urban privilege and intra-municipal rivalries are much more mediated than they are Barcelona. The weaker sense of urban privilege among residents in Madrid’s metropolitan area is reflected in local narratives that speak to the absence of pronounced intra-municipal inequalities. For instance, in describing class divisions in Fuenlabrada, a city with just under 200,000 inhabitants and one of Madrid’s largest Muslim populations, Juan Carlos, a 49-year-old resident, states:

Well, like I said before, I don’t see very significant differences between one area and another, no?... To be honest, I believe that there aren’t very significant differences. I believe that... there is half of the population that is working-class and [half] a little above, a little below. I believe that the population in general is within that range. No, I wouldn’t consider there to be an area where people with a lot of money concentrate. I don’t believe so.

As a result of the greater level of intra-municipal equality in Madrid, there is less discrepancy in the cost of housing than in Barcelona, which in turn has enabled newly-

arriving foreign immigrant populations to settle more evenly across neighborhoods. As in most large cities, immigrant populations tend to concentrate more so in some neighborhoods than in others, but disparities in the proportion of immigrants residing in different neighborhoods is much less pronounced in Madrid than in Barcelona. The more equal distribution of foreign immigrants within cities, in turn, has mitigated the identification of specific areas as “immigrant neighborhoods” or “ethnic ghettos.” Certain neighborhoods in the capital city of Madrid itself provide an exception to this rule, as the city of Madrid exhibits higher levels of segregation than the cities in its surrounding area. Even still, the city of Madrid has just three census tracts that are over 50% foreign in composition, compared to 20 in Barcelona, despite the fact that Madrid has roughly twice as many residents and the same overall proportion of immigrants. Moreover, Barcelona has five census tracts in which 60% or more of the population is foreign with a peak of 83%, while the maximum in Madrid is 56%.⁶³

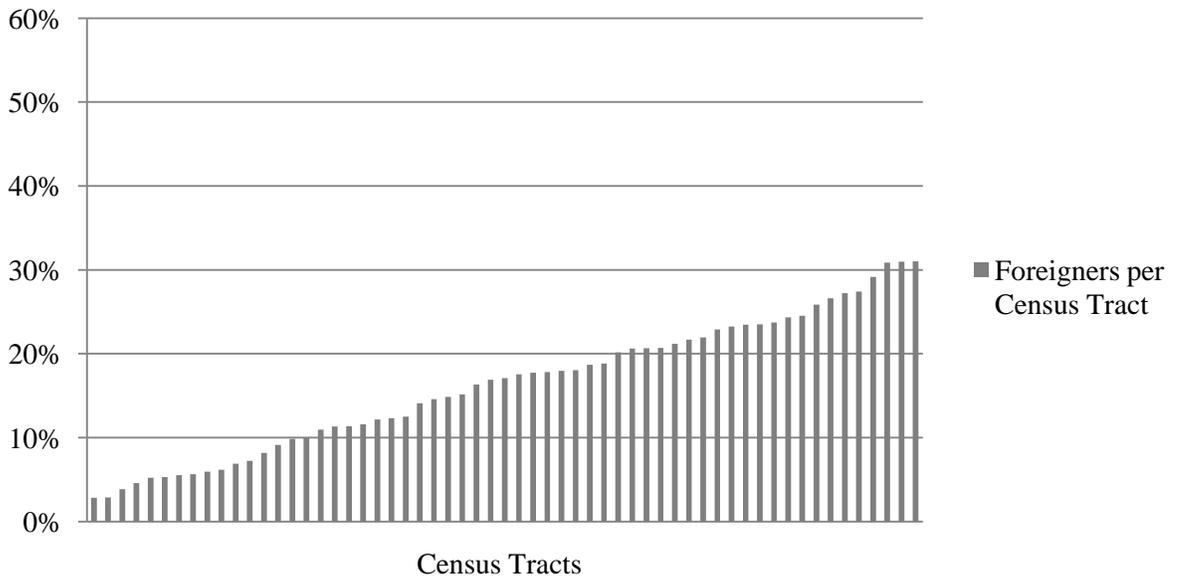
The differences between Barcelona and Madrid are especially pronounced when we move outside the capital cities themselves to the major cities in their metropolitan areas. Despite the fact that large and medium-sized cities in Madrid have attracted large immigrant populations over that past 15 years, not a single one possesses a census tract that reaches 50% immigrant in composition. By contrast, five of the Barcelona metropolitan area’s eight largest cities possess census tracts that are over 50% foreign, and in some cities, there are tracts that reach 60% or 70%. With respect to mosque opposition and other types of conflict involving immigrant groups, the most intense cases have taken place precisely in the cities that exhibit the highest levels of immigrant

⁶³ These data come from 2008 municipal census data accessible through the National Institute of Statistics.

concentration and spatial segregation, including Badalona, Terrassa, Mataró, and Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Figure 3.3).

Template

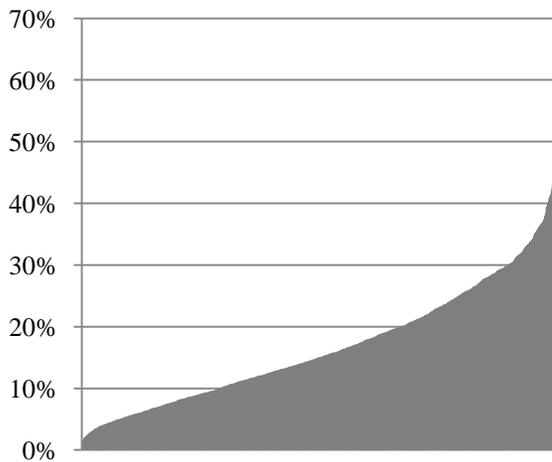
***Name of Municipality
(Total Population / % of Foreign Nationality)**



*Site of mosque opposition

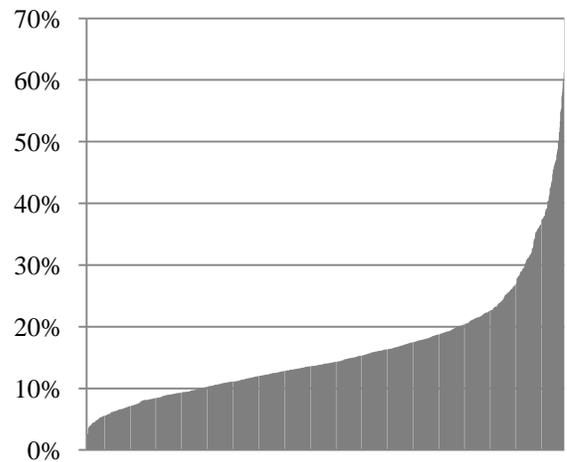
Madrid

**Madrid
(3.2 Million / 17%)**

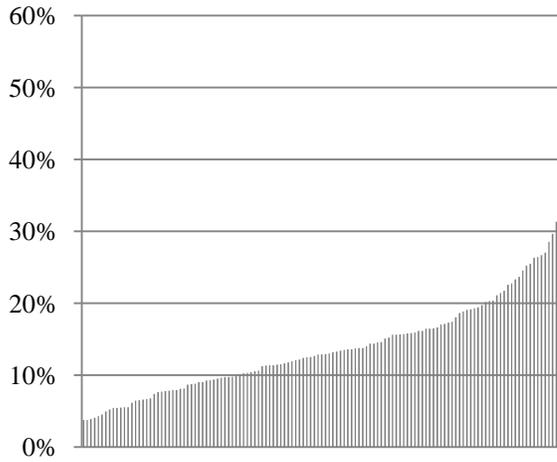


Barcelona

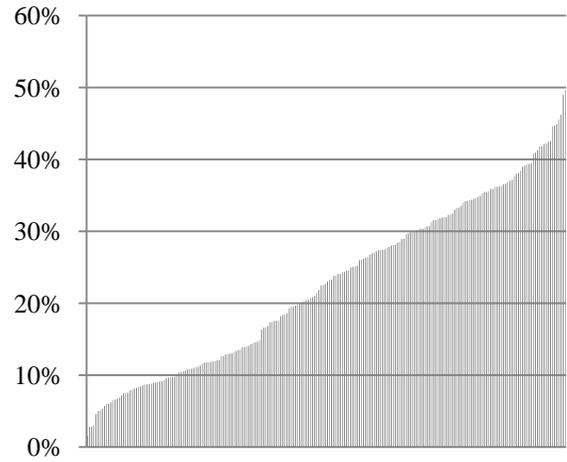
***Barcelona
(1.6 million / 17%)**



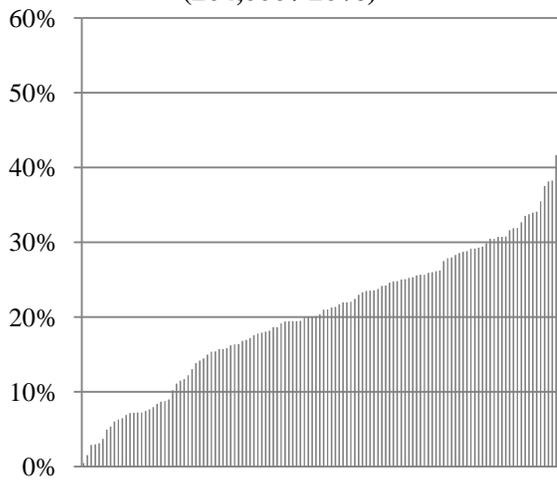
Móstoles
(206,000 / 13%)



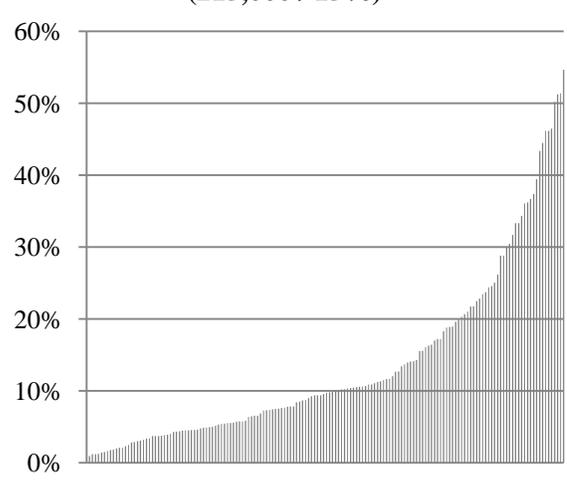
L'Hospitalet de Llobregat
(245,000 / 21%)



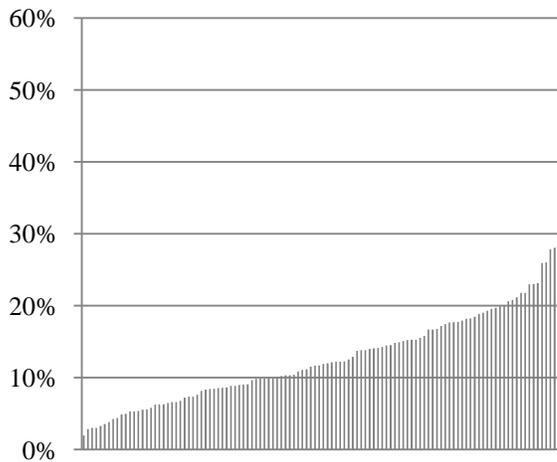
Alcalá de Henares
(204,000 / 20%)



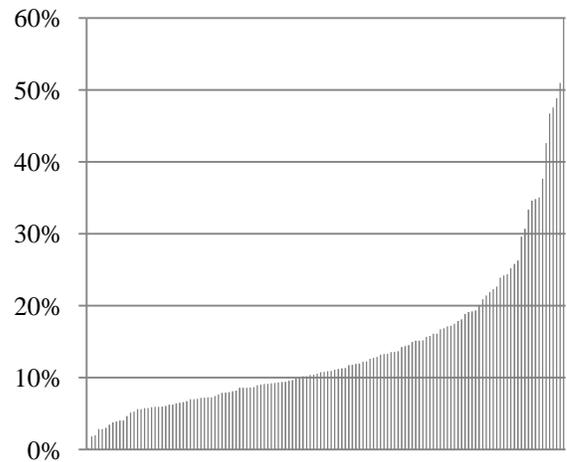
***Badalona**
(215,000 / 15%)



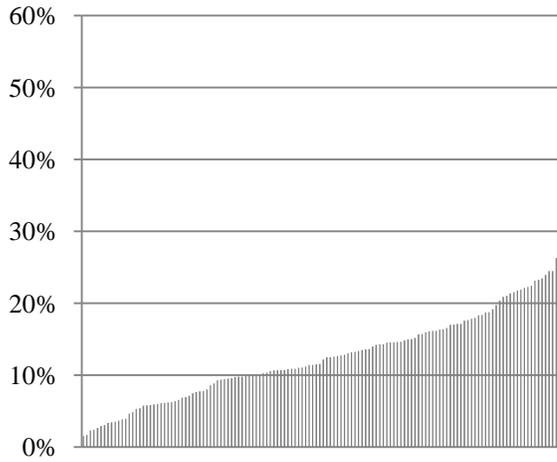
Fuenlabrada
(195,000 / 12%)



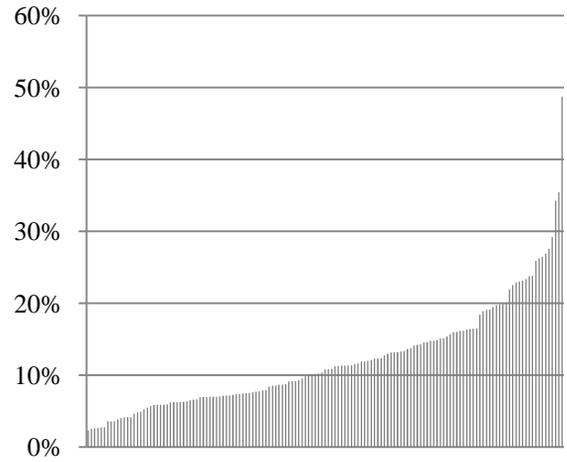
Terrassa
(206,000 / 14%)



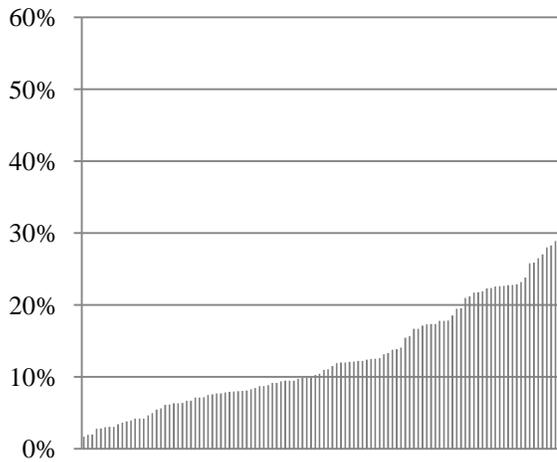
Leganés
(184,000 / 12%)



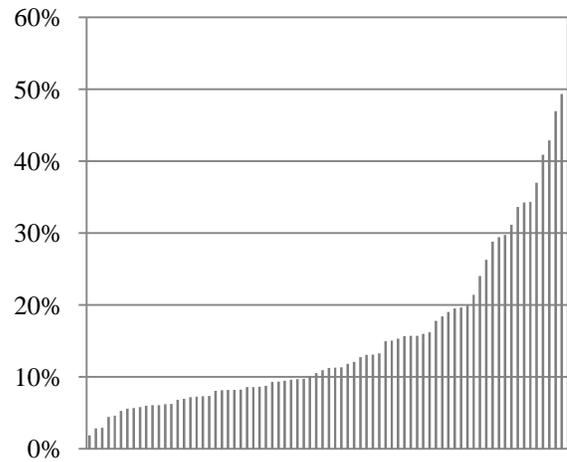
Sabadell
(204,000 / 12%)



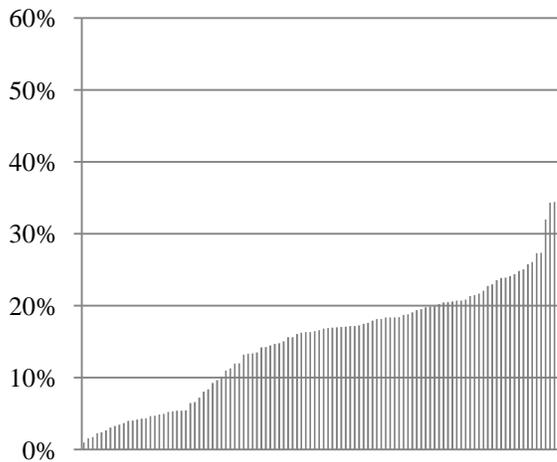
Alcorcón
(168,000 / 12%)



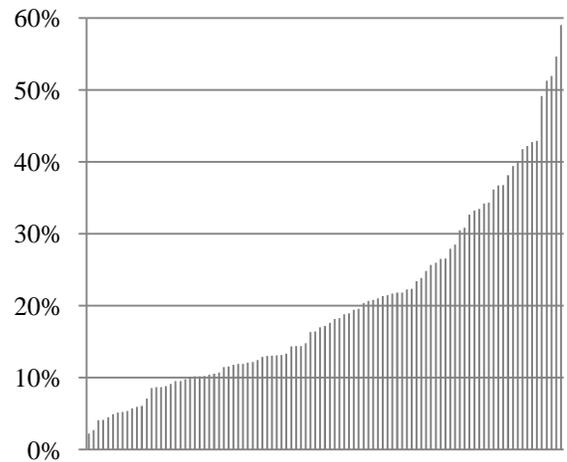
***Mataró**
(120,000 / 16%)



Getafe
(164,000 / 14%)



***Santa Coloma de Gramenet**
(117,000 / 19%)



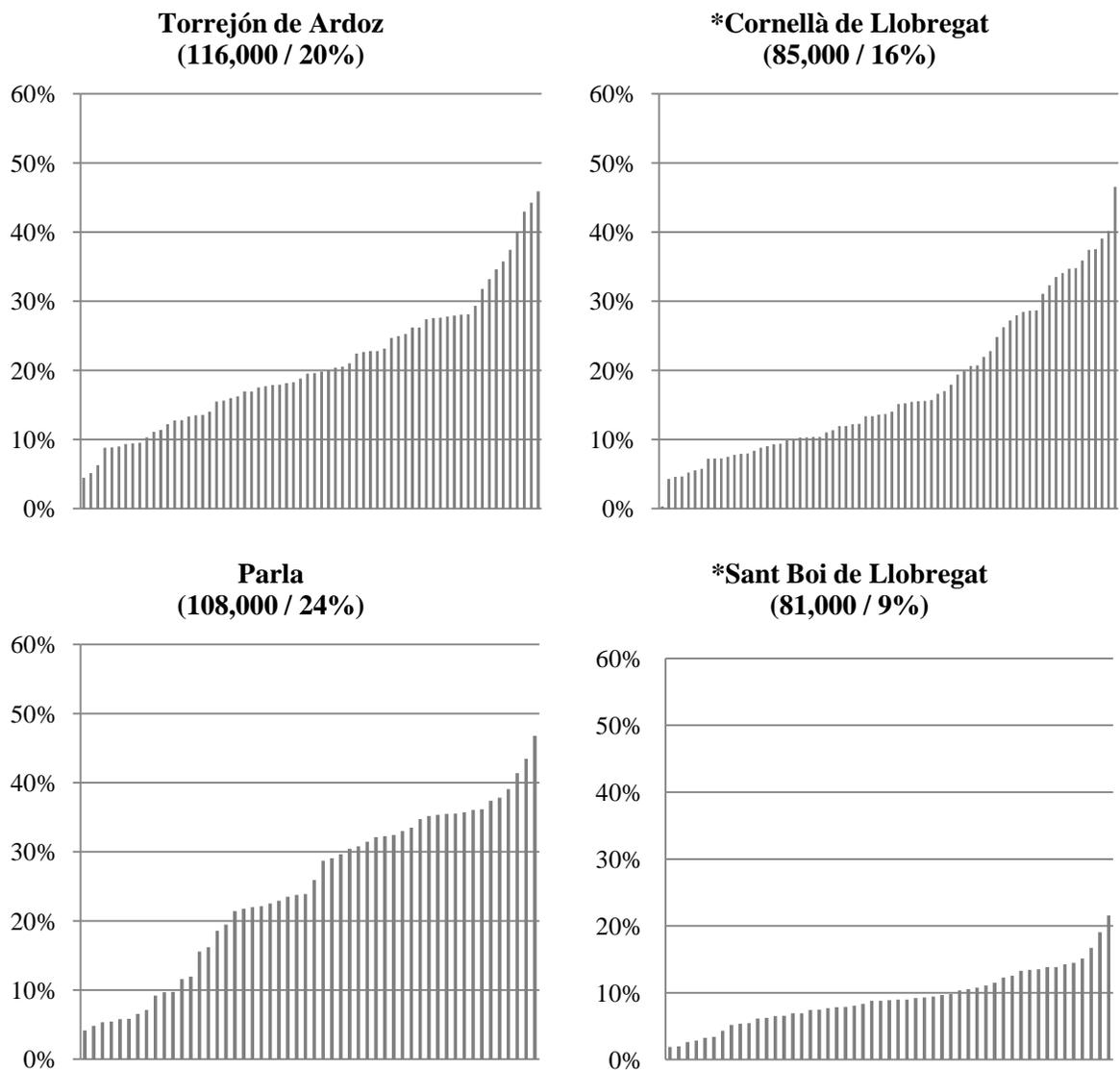


Figure 3.3: Distribution of foreign populations in Madrid and Barcelona's nine largest municipalities (Source: Compiled by author based on 2008 municipal census data from the National Institute of Statistics).

Dispersed diversity and the reception of mosques in Madrid

Given the more equal distribution of immigrants across neighborhoods in the Madrid area, few residents fear that immigration will exacerbate extant intra-municipal divisions or engender ethnic ghettos, despite the fact that the overall level of immigration is similar in proportion to that in Barcelona. The case of Parla provides a particularly

illustrative example of how reactions to immigration have been influenced by broader patterns of urban development. Parla is a city of 108,000 inhabitants located to south of the municipality of Madrid. With approximately 8,000 Muslims, most of whom are Moroccan immigrants, Parla is home to Madrid's second largest Muslim population. Despite the Muslim community's size, however, there is just one small basement prayer room located in the neighborhood of La Ermita (Image 3.5).



Image 3.5: The small prayer room serving Parla's Muslim community.

The dearth of space for Muslims to pray has led worshipers to spill out into the streets on Fridays and major holidays, generating complaints by some residents who live

in the building where the mosque is located. The president of the local neighborhood association remarks:

Of course we have received some complaints, above all when it is Ramadan or one of their holidays because of course mosques -- they're called mosques but they are not adequate for the... Muslim population here in Parla -- so they have to do it (pray) in the street... Of course cutting off a street, where residents do not have access to their home... It bothered people.

But he adds that the complaints were minimal and always individual. The following excerpt from an interview with Mohsin, the vice-president of the mosque, reinforces this point:

Mohsin: In 2005, 2006, 2007 when we prayed here, we used the sidewalk, the sidewalk in front of the mosque. It is a sidewalk that is three meters wide for the people to pass by. And it's true that when we found ourselves compelled, we utilized it and... we left no more than one meter of passage on the sidewalk. And that bothered the neighbors. And it's true that the neighbors, or at least some neighbors,... have filed complaints with the city government... It is what it is -- it's the reality. We've never wanted to use the sidewalk in this way because... we don't like to be in the street praying. We like to perform our religious activity within our space...

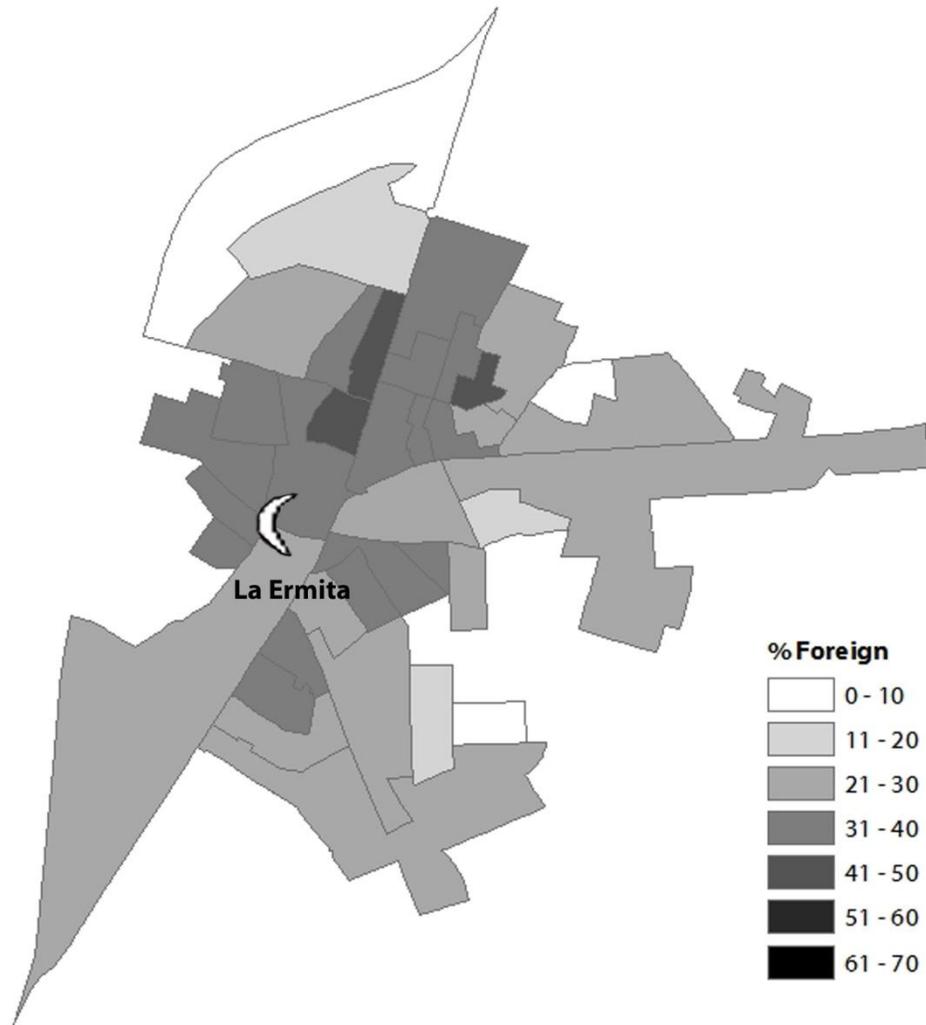
Interviewer: Were the complaints made by... a group of residents who signed a petition or something?

Mohsin: No, they were individual complaints... Moreover, from the same person. We know the rest of the people personally, including the presidents of the resident communities... There are no problems with them, but there is one person in particular – it's always the same one who makes these complaints. I can't say that there aren't people who are against this religious association... including individuals who practice this religion. But I can only understand that the complaints are caused by, or originate from, the use of the sidewalk and not for any other reason.

Given the inadequacy of Parla's mosque for the city's large Muslim community, and the consequent disruptions that prayer gatherings have caused to local residents' weekly routines, it is surprising that the complaints elicited by the mosque have been so few and far between. As Mohsin points out, the complaints that have surfaced have centered primarily on the practical difficulties (i.e. crowding and traffic) generated by large prayer gatherings and have not been linked to broader struggles over urban privilege or public resources.

Explaining the relative absence of conflict surrounding mosques in Parla, I argue, requires being attentive to how the socio-spatial configuration of the city differs from that of historically industrial cities in the Barcelona area. Specifically, foreign immigrants in Parla have not concentrated exclusively in a few tightly bounded neighborhoods in the

city's periphery, but rather have dispersed relatively evenly across neighborhoods (Map 3.4). As a result, local residents worry less about the potential conversion of their neighborhoods into ethnic ghettos.



Map 3.4: Distribution of foreign nationals across census tracts in Parla (Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2005 municipal census data).

As Santos, a city councilor in the district of Parla where the mosque is located, explains:

I do not think there is a particular neighborhood of Parla where people say, “Here are all the immigrants – the rest of the citizens are elsewhere.” No, because there are immigrants all over. Perhaps, as I said, there is a greater concentration in the area of North Boulevard. But there are still people of all types [there]. Maybe instead of having one in an apartment building, there are three, if you understand me... But I don’t believe that we can say there is an “immigrant neighborhood.”

Santos’ comments highlight how the relatively equal distribution of immigrants across neighborhoods in Parla has hindered any particular neighborhood from becoming identified as a focal point of immigrant concentration, despite the fact that Parla has one of Madrid’s largest immigrant populations (La Comunidad de Madrid 2010).⁶⁴ Consequently, immigration has not become a major criterion for differentiating “desirable” from “undesirable” neighborhoods, and there is no neighborhood in which residents feel disproportionately burdened with the challenges that immigration has generated in the city.

To be sure, socio-spatial divisions are not completely absent in municipalities in the Madrid metropolitan area. In several cities, newer and more up-scale urbanizations that cater to wealthier residents have been developed. These urbanizations are most commonly located outside historical city centers and are strictly residential in character. They are generally viewed as ‘islands’ that are somewhat detached from the municipalities to which they technically belong. The inhabitants of these urbanizations,

⁶⁴ 27% of Parla’s overall population is composed of immigrants.

moreover, are often new arrivals to the city and hence do not have longstanding relations or rivalries with residents of more centrally-located neighborhoods. In the city of Getafe, for instance, two relatively new urbanizations, Sector III and North Getafe, have remained essentially untouched by foreign immigration, despite the fact that immigrants make up over 16% of the city's overall population (Map 3.5).



Map 3.5: Distribution of foreign nationals across census tracts in Getafe (Source: Compiled by author based on 2005 municipal census data from the National Institute of Statistics).

Reflecting on the general sentiment of residents of poorer areas of the city toward these urbanizations, Arturo, a 31-year-old resident of Las Margaritas, a neighborhood that is host to the Getafe's largest immigrant population and the Muslim community's primary mosque, states:

Obviously the residential areas Sector III and North Getafe are much more expensive. A house costs a lot more. Obviously there they suffer less immigration – they suffer, or they have less immigration. It's obvious. But there are also fewer people from Getafe who go there. People from here – who have lived their whole lives here – like me... aren't going to go live there. They can't. And so it's Getafe, but not really.

Arturo's comments highlight how, in contrast to Barcelona, the neighborhoods that are viewed as 'outside,' or separated from the core of urban life in Madrid are not the poor, working-class neighborhoods where immigrants tend to settle, but the newer and more affluent urbanizations located in city peripheries. This has helped to attenuate the connections drawn between immigration and processes of urban marginalization and exclusion in the Madrid area.

As a result of the more equal distribution of immigrants across neighborhoods in Parla, Getafe, and other cities in the Madrid metropolitan area, as compared to cities in the Barcelona area, there is generally less concern about certain neighborhoods becoming a locus of immigrant concentration and activity. Indeed, only one resident whom I interviewed in Madrid cited fears about his neighborhood becoming a ghetto, whereas

nearly all residents interviewed in Barcelona's poorer areas described their neighborhoods as ghettos or in danger of becoming ghettos. In addition, residents whom I interviewed in Madrid did not compare the treatment or plight of their neighborhoods to that of other neighborhoods when articulating their complaints regarding immigration, as was commonly the case in Barcelona. The perception was rather that immigration is something that has affected all neighborhoods equally, even in cities like Getafe where new urbanizations have remained relatively untouched by immigration.

Such sentiments are exemplified by the comments of Luti, the owner of a bar located beside the mosque in Las Margaritas (Getafe). He states:

Las Margaritas has changed a lot. It isn't even the shadow of what it used to be...
But that's the way it is, man. All the neighborhoods are the same. I can't say that Las Margaritas is a bad neighborhood because I've lived in Las Margaritas and been very well. But what there was before and what there is now has changed a lot.

Like Luti, residents of Getafe and other municipalities in Madrid commonly voice discomfort with many of the changes that have taken place in their neighborhoods as a result of immigration. However, because they perceive these changes to be more or less universal across neighborhoods, they do not fear that the specific neighborhoods in which they reside will become ethnic ghettos or focal points of immigrant concentration. The idea that a mosque might exacerbate imbalances in the distribution of immigrants or threaten the privileges enjoyed by certain neighborhoods is simply not something that

occurs to residents in the region. Consequently, to the extent that disputes surrounding mosques have occurred, they have remained self-contained and focused on the practical issues (i.e. noise and crowding) generated by large prayer gatherings.

Conclusion

The analysis advanced in this chapter suggests a strong linkage between opposition to mosques in the Barcelona metropolitan area and more general concerns regarding urban degradation, territorial stigmatization, and incipient processes of ghettoization. These concerns, I have argued, are rooted in the socio-spatial development and configuration of historically industrial cities in the region. Specifically, the pronounced intra-municipal inequalities that have emerged through successive waves of migration have led newly-arriving foreign immigrants, many of whom are Muslim, to concentrate heavily in tightly-bounded and narrowly-circumscribed neighborhoods. This, in turn, has led immigration to emerge as a central criterion for differentiating between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ neighborhoods. Since mosques are concrete, visible structures that signify the durable presence of the most visible immigrant group in the region, they have become a major target of local practices of neighborhood defense that aim either to resist further marginalization (in poorer neighborhoods) or to protect existing urban privileges (in more affluent neighborhoods).

In Madrid, by contrast, weaker socio-spatial inequalities and divisions in historically industrial cities have mitigated the ethnicization of specific neighborhoods and have hindered mosque disputes from becoming integrated into broader struggles over urban privilege and public recognition. Although suspicions about what takes place in

mosques and complaints about the practical difficulties they generate are present in Madrid, residents do not view mosques as symbolic of the conversion of their neighborhoods into ethnic ghettos or as harbingers of urban decay and degradation. To be sure, many voice discomfort with the transformations that have accompanied ethnic diversification, but they do not feel that their particular neighborhoods have been unfairly saddled with the challenges generated by immigration, and hence they do not interpret the presence of mosques in their neighborhoods as a matter of social (in)justice.

In bringing attention to the role of socio-spatial divisions in generating hostile reactions to mosques, and immigration more generally, there is a danger that the above analysis may be read as simply stating that more social inequality and spatial segregation translate into a greater likelihood of conflict. However, in order for socio-spatial divisions and inequalities to generate conflict of the sort described in this article, the social distance between distinct neighborhood communities cannot be so great that it has become internalized and accepted as a natural feature of social life. Indeed, it is precisely because residents of poorer neighborhoods in the Barcelona area see themselves as comparable, at least along certain lines, to those who inhabit more affluent neighborhoods that they experience a sense of outrage at having to shoulder a disproportionate share of the burdens that they associate with immigration. Similarly, the fact that more affluent residents must actively struggle to protect their neighborhoods demonstrates the perceived precariousness of their privileged status and the inability of economic barriers alone to prevent the entry of undesired groups, in this case Muslim immigrants. By contrast, in areas where the social distance and functional differentiation between privileged and marginalized neighborhoods is so great that urban inequalities are

internalized and taken-for-granted, intra-municipal rivalries and practices of neighborhood defense are likely to be less pronounced. Put generally, municipalities characterized not only by clear, but also by contested conceptions of privilege are particularly prone to becoming hostile contexts of reception for immigrants and other newly-arriving groups, especially when such groups are of a low social class or a stigmatized ethnic or religious background.

Chapter IV

Memory, community, and opposition to mosques: The case of Badalona

This chapter focuses in-depth on the sources of opposition to mosques in Badalona, a large industrial city in Barcelona where opposition to mosques has been especially intense and enduring. I contend that the high degree of hostility elicited by mosques in Badalona is rooted in powerful associations drawn between Islam, immigration, and a series of social problems that have altered the character of communal life and the quality of cherished public spaces in the city. These associations, I argue, are expressed through local narratives that emphasize a sharp rupture between a glorified ethnically homogeneous past of community and solidarity, and a troublesome multicultural present fraught with social insecurity and disintegration. I place particular emphasis on how the construction of these “rupture narratives” has entailed active memory work that minimizes the significance of prior social cleavages and conflicts, and selectively focuses on disjuncture over continuity with the past.

Scholars have noted that working-class residents in a range of settings seek to distance themselves symbolically from racial and ethnic minorities whom they perceive as a threat to their status and position (Lamont 2000; Wimmer 2008). In doing so, they reap a series of “psychological wages” that help them to maintain a sense of self-worth and dignity, especially during periods of economic duress or social change (Roediger 1991). Periods of transition or hardship often shake people’s sense of security, driving

them to take measures to restore order and stability in their lives (Swidler 1986). For this reason, communities undergoing processes of social transformation commonly invest added importance in the upholding of civic norms and values viewed as essential for the maintenance of order, cohesion, and security (Kefalas 2003; Lamont 2000).

A frequent complaint leveled against immigrants and other newly-arriving minorities in transitional, working-class communities is that they fail to adhere to such norms and values, with the effect of undermining the trust and cohesion that once constituted the bedrock of communal life. When blaming immigrants for the difficulties afflicting their neighborhoods, longstanding residents commonly reference a quasi-mythical past when their communities were ethnically homogenous and displayed exemplary levels of trust, order, and solidarity (Back 1996; Keith 1993; Lamont 2000). In doing so, they embellish aspects of the past that cohere with their narratives, while minimizing those that do not. This memory work is central to the production of “rupture narratives” that identify immigration as the chief cause of social breakdown and decline.

In the analysis that follows, I show how newly-arriving foreign immigrants to Badalona, many of whom are Muslim, are commonly blamed for the loss of trust and physical deterioration of the working-class neighborhoods where they have tended to concentrate. Since mosques are symbolic of the durable presence of the two largest immigrant groups in the city (Moroccans and Pakistanis), they have become a focal point of inter-ethnic conflict. I also show how narratives that blame immigrants for urban decay and degradation have been appropriated, propagated, and legitimized by opportunistic politicians seeking to bolster their appeal among voters in the city. I conclude by

analyzing alternative narratives advanced by pro-diversity activists seeking to promote greater tolerance and a more inclusive notion of local belonging.

The site

Badalona is a city of 220,000 inhabitants located just to the northeast of Barcelona on the Mediterranean coast. Like other large cities in the Barcelona area, Badalona's initial growth was fueled by its strong industrial sector, particularly in the areas of textile production, metal fabrication, and chemical processing. These and other industries have attracted migrant laborers to the city dating back to the end of the 19th century (Villarroya i Font 1999). The largest wave of internal migration to Badalona took place between 1950 and 1981. During this period, the city's population increased by over 350% from just under 63,000 to nearly 228,000 inhabitants, making it the third largest city in Catalonia (Figure 4.1).

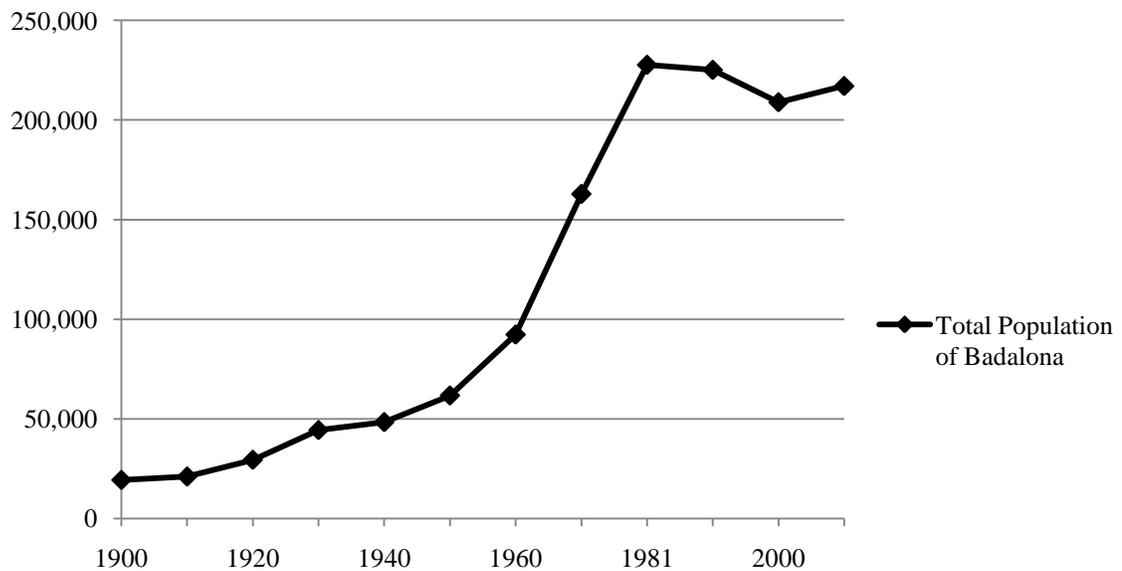
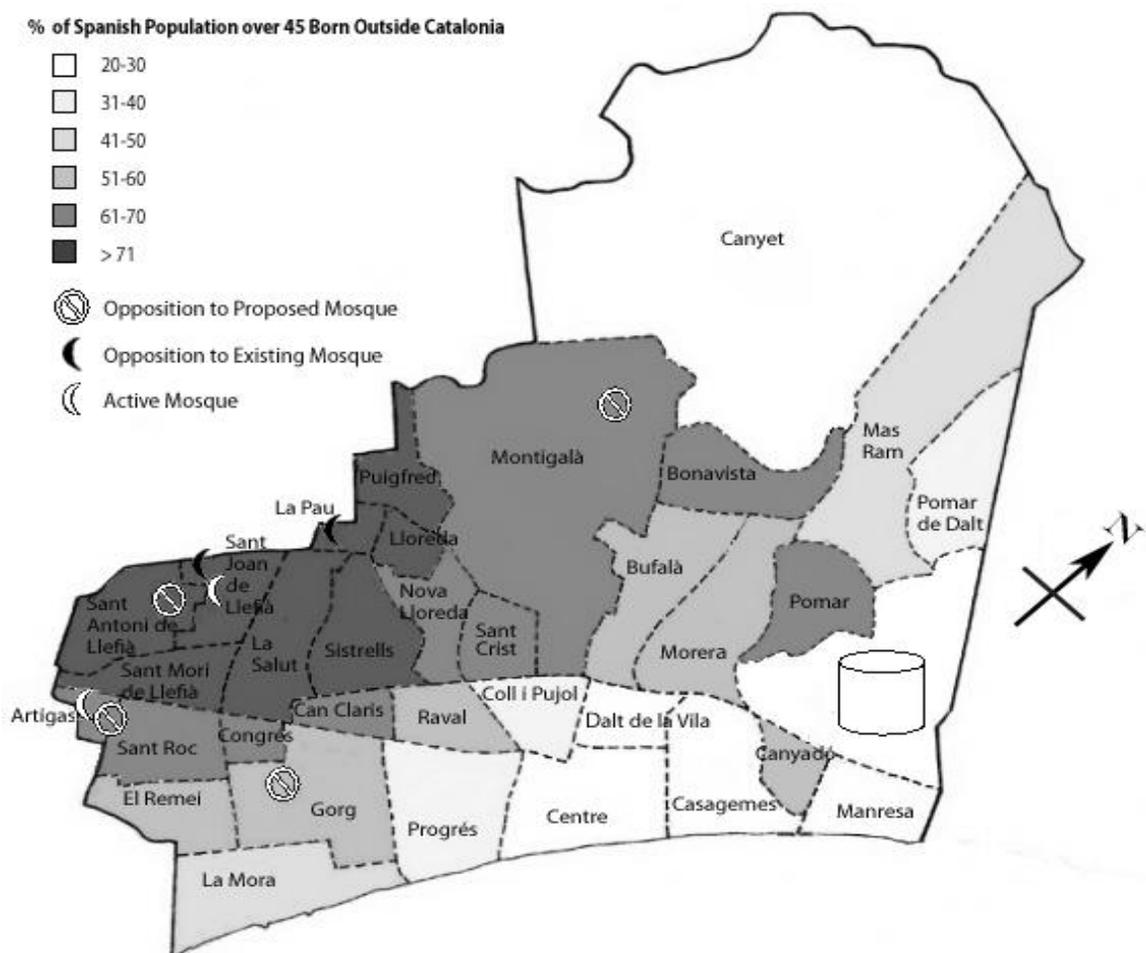


Figure 4.1: Evolution of Badalona's population (Source: Compiled by author based on data from Spain's National Institute of Statistics).

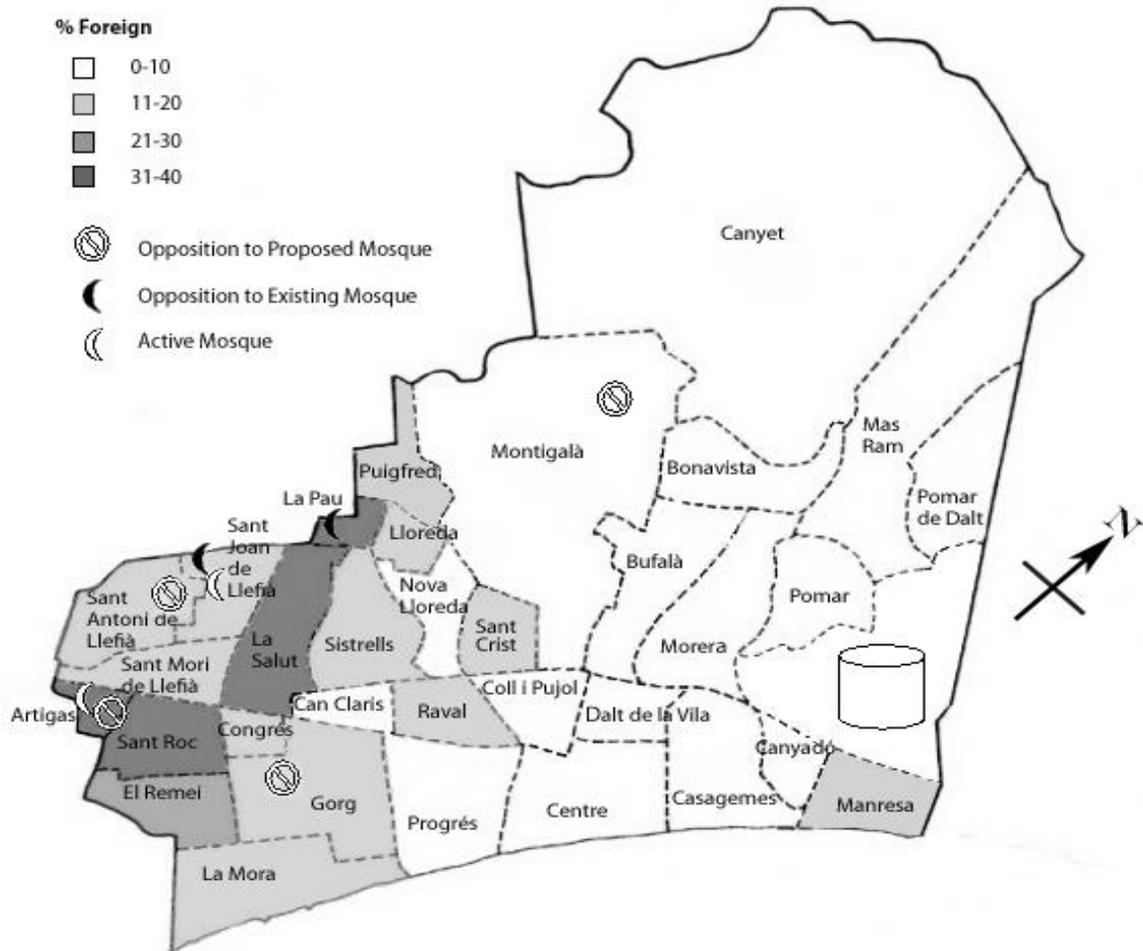
Given that the city's central neighborhoods were already saturated due to prior waves of migration, municipal authorities were forced to hastily construct new housing complexes in peripheral areas that were often topographically ill-suited for residential development (Villarroya i Font 1999). The difficult incorporation of internal Spanish migrants led to the emergence of stark divisions between well-accommodated central Catalan-speaking neighborhoods, on the one hand, and poorer Spanish-speaking peripheral neighborhoods, on the other. These divisions continue to be reflected in the current demographic composition of the city (Map 4.1).



Map 4.1: Distribution of internal migrants across neighborhoods in Badalona (Source: Compiled by author based on data from the 2010 municipal census of Badalona).

Although conditions in peripheral neighborhoods improved with Spain's transition to democracy in 1978, significant disparities have remained across neighborhoods, creating the common perception that there are "two Badalonas," differentiated largely along class, ethnic, and linguistic lines. In recent years, intra-municipal divisions have become more salient due to a large influx of working-class foreign immigrants to poorer neighborhoods of the city. While there were just 3,000 foreign nationals in Badalona in 2001, there are over 34,000 at present. The two most numerous foreign groups are Moroccans (5,600) and Pakistanis (5,600), both of which are predominantly Muslim.⁶⁵ The inequalities that exist within Badalona as a result of its historical development have led foreign immigrants to cluster almost exclusively in the southern part of the city, where housing is most affordable (Map 4.2).

⁶⁵ Ajuntament de Badalona. 2010. "Dades estadístiques i demogràfiques": <http://www.badalona.cat/aj-badalona/ca/ciutat/coneixer-badalona/estadistica> Accessed 2 December 2010.



Map 4.2: Distribution of foreign nationals across neighborhoods in Badalona (Source: Compiled by author based on data from the 2010 municipal census of Badalona).

Opposition to mosques in Badalona

Muslims in Badalona, by and large, have attempted to establish mosques in southern peripheral neighborhoods, where they are most accessible to fellow worshipers. The city's first mosque, the Bilal mosque, was opened in 1991 by a small community of Moroccan immigrants that had acquired a ground-floor apartment in the working-class neighborhood of Sant Joan de Llefià (Image 4.1). A second mosque, Al Furqan, was opened several years later in an apartment in another working-class neighborhood, La Pau, but this mosque was closed by the city government under pressure from local

residents in 2005. This left the Bilal mosque, which is just 120 m² in size, as the only official mosque serving the city’s Muslim population until 2010, when a local Pakistani Association, Camino de la Paz, succeeded in establishing a mosque in a small apartment in the working-class neighborhood of Artigas. Although the Pakistani community was successful in obtaining a license for its mosque, it had to withstand pressure from a coalition called the “Platform of Residents of Artigas and Sant Roc Against the Opening of the Mosque,” which presented a petition with nearly 5,000 signatures to the city government opposing the mosque in 2009.⁶⁶



Image 4.1: The Bilal mosque.

⁶⁶ “Lliuren prop de 5.000 firmes contra l’oratori d’Artigues.” 2009. *El Punt*, April 28.

The recent episode of contention surrounding the mosque in Artigas is one among several instances in which residents have mobilized against mosques in Badalona. In April of 2002, a fire broke out in the Bilal mosque, forcing the city's Muslim community to relocate to a new apartment that it had purchased a few hundred meters away in the neighborhood of Sant Antoni de Llefià. When word of the proposed move spread in July of 2002, 1,000 residents living near the intended destination signed a petition in protest of having a mosque in their neighborhood.⁶⁷ According to the president of the neighborhood association and newspaper accounts written at the time, it was the mosque's "*efecto de llamada*" (effect of calling / attracting) that concerned residents most. That is, residents feared that the establishment of a mosque in their neighborhood would have the effect of attracting more Muslims to the area. Shortly thereafter, rumors were spread that the city government was encouraging the Muslim community to consider the neighborhood of Artigas as an alternative site for the mosque. This prompted residents of Artigas to create a petition opposing the possible relocation of the Bilal mosque to their neighborhood. City officials, however, denied that they had encouraged the establishment of a mosque in Artigas and reassured neighbors that the mosque would remain in Llefià, where indeed it remained.⁶⁸

In September of 2004, the city council proposed to move the Bilal mosque to an industrial complex that would accommodate a larger number of Muslim practitioners in the neighborhood of Montigalà. The Muslim community, however, protested that this location was far from where most Muslims lived and hence inconvenient for

⁶⁷ Campaña contra la apertura de una mezquita en Badalona. (2002). *El Mundo*, July 3.

⁶⁸ Campuzano, Lourdes. 2002. "Veïns d'Artigues, alarmats per un rumor, recullen firmes per evitar que s'hi obri la mesquita." *El Punt*, July 11.

worshippers.⁶⁹ The city council then proposed the working-class neighborhood of Gorg as an alternative destination for a mosque in February of 2005. The proposal urged the consolidation of the city's two mosques, Bilal and Al Furqan, into one large mosque in an industrial warehouse. When word spread of this proposal, residents from Gorg and surrounding neighborhoods began to complain about the potential presence of a mosque in the area.⁷⁰

Later that month, the city closed the Al Furqan mosque in somewhat dramatic fashion with a police raid at 6:00 am, leaving the Bilal mosque as the only prayer room serving the city. The official justification was that the Al Furqan mosque did not have a proper license. But given that the mosque had had the same license for several years prior to being shut down, most attribute this action to increasing pressure to close the mosque from residents living in the vicinity. Shortly thereafter, in March of 2005, it appeared that an agreement between the Muslim community and the city council had been reached to establish a mosque in Gorg. However, residents of Gorg and a nearby neighborhood collected over 2,000 signatures in protest of this agreement, and it never took hold.⁷¹

In August of 2006, the city revived its original proposal to create space for a mosque on public land in Montigalà. Although the Muslim community had rejected this proposal previously, it was now content to go along with the plan, having recognized that finding an alternative space was going to be difficult. Residents from the neighborhood and from surrounding areas, however, established a coalition entitled "No to the Mosque

⁶⁹ Benvenuty, Luis. 2004. "Los musulmanes de Badalona resisten la presión para que oren en la periferia." *La Vanguardia*, October 12.

⁷⁰ Cabello, Manuel. 2005. "Rechazo del plan de una única mezquita en Badalona." *El Periódico*, February 3.

⁷¹ "El PP de Badalona pregunta a la alcaldesa si ha informado a los vecinos del Gorg de la futura ubicación de la mezquita." 2005. *Europa Press*, March 9.

on Public Terrain” in protest of the proposed mosque.⁷² The coalition received organizational and symbolic support from the conservative Popular Party, which has been outspoken in its opposition to the establishment of new mosques in Badalona. In January of 2007, the coalition presented 20,800 signatures to the city government, the most signatures gathered by any anti-mosque campaign in Spain to date. In the face of such strong public pressure, the city ordered that the proposal to establish a mosque in Montigalà be abandoned.⁷³

Why have relations surrounding mosques in Badalona been so rife with tension? What has motivated the multiple anti-mosque campaigns that have been initiated in the city? Why, moreover, have these campaigns been able to mobilize so much public support?

Memory, community, and boundary-making

As explained above, opposition to mosques in Badalona has occurred in spatially peripheral neighborhoods that are inhabited primarily by internal Spanish migrants to Catalonia and their offspring. From an outsider’s perspective, internal Spanish migrants and newly-arriving foreign immigrants to Badalona share a range of experiences that could potentially serve as bridges to intercultural understanding. Both experienced significant social dislocation and material deprivation upon settling in the city. And both had to leave behind many loved ones in deciding to emigrate from their home communities. Indeed, local activists, NGOs, and Muslims leaders seeking to promote

⁷² “Vecinos de Badalona (Barcelona) crean una plataforma contra la construcción de una mezquita en terreno público.” 2006. *Europa Press*, October 25.

⁷³ Presentan 20.800 firmas contra la construcción de una mezquita en Badalona (Barcelona). (2007). *Europa Press*, January 15.

greater tolerance in Badalona have organized a series of community events where invited speakers highlight the common challenges that internal migrants and foreign immigrants have faced during their lifetimes.^{74,75}

When asked whether they saw parallels between themselves and newly-arriving foreign immigrants, internal Spanish migrants whom I interviewed in Badalona commonly answered in the affirmative. However, most quickly moved on to list a number of ways in which they differed from foreign immigrants, including their legal status, work ethic, and willingness to adapt to the norms of the city. They placed particular emphasis on how they have transitioned from being poor peasants who were relatively unrefined and uneducated to modern urbanites who have cultivated an appreciation for the norms and values necessary for the maintenance of dignified and orderly communities. By contrast, they commonly portrayed foreign immigrants as ‘backward,’ ‘primitive,’ and lacking in their desire to learn basic norms of civility. José G., a 65-year-old who migrated to Catalonia from Murcia at a relatively young age to work in the automobile industry, states:

The neighborhood has changed, to put it one way, for the worst. Yes, with respect to customs, it has worsened. Why? Well, it’s very simple. The immigrant – not to

⁷⁴ Just before the Festival of Sacrifice (*Eid al-Adha*) in 2009, for instance, Muslim leaders, UNESCO Catalonia, and the city government organized a community-wide event to explain the holiday and to promote intercultural understanding. Several of the invited speakers were Spaniards who had migrated to Badalona in the past. They were asked to talk about their experiences as migrants, with the goal of highlighting similarities between their experiences and those of newer immigrants to the city.

⁷⁵ In April of 2009, a group of 11 associations came together to form a coalition called “We Are All Badalona” (“*Badalona Som Tots*”), largely in response to the contention surrounding the proposed mosque in Artigas. The aim of the coalition was to promote intercultural understanding through a series of events that bring immigrants and longstanding residents together around shared interests, values, and experiences. The coalition’s manifesto may be viewed at: <http://bdnsomtots.wordpress.com/> Accessed 22 December 2010.

be insulting – on the contrary, I was an immigrant and I support them and if necessary I help them. But the immigrant who arrives – in his country, he doesn't have sufficient means to freshen up, to put it one way. Nor does he have trash collecting, or the presence of – I don't know – showers. Now I shower every day, but when I was a kid I didn't shower either. So I understand it perfectly well. In what way has the neighborhood gotten worse? In the fact that these people who arrive are not accustomed to throwing trash in the can. So what happens? Maybe you find it on the ground. What should be done? Well, cultivate [them].

Like José G., longstanding residents of Badalona often identified immigrants' lack of civility and failure to respect public space as a major source of the decay and degradation of their neighborhoods. In doing so, they frequently contrasted the current physical and social deterioration of their neighborhoods with an idyllic past when everyone in the neighborhood was "Spanish." The tendency of residents to idealize the past is surprising, given that historical accounts of social life in Badalona detail the presence of significant cleavages between those who identified as culturally Catalan, those who identified as culturally Spanish, and those of Roma descent (Carreras i García et al. 2006; Garriga 2003; Villarroya i Font 1999). Past episodes of contention between these groups, along with previous problems with drugs and gangs in peripheral neighborhoods, would seem to negate narratives of an idealized past that existed prior to the arrival of foreign immigrants. When asked about the history of their communities, however, residents of peripheral neighborhoods often minimized prior cleavages and

tensions, and emphasized how immigrants have destroyed the peace and tranquility that existed when everyone respected basic norms and values.

Consider, for example, the comments of Tomás, a 47-year-old Spanish migrant from Extremadura and active participant in the campaign opposing the mosque in Artigas. Reflecting upon what Artigas was like when he first moved to the area, Tomás states:

Even though I had a car, there was a metro... there are buses, San Adrià's market is right nearby. The neighborhood had a good combination – when I arrived here, it was beautiful. It was a peaceful neighborhood. It was lovely, and that's why I decided to stay here.

He moves on to discuss the myriad ways in which the neighborhood has deteriorated, placing most of the blame on foreign immigrants:

[I]t began to worsen with immigration. Because before, if two or three thousand people lived here, we were all from here. Whether Catalan or non-Catalan, we were all from here. We are all more or less clean, we all respect the norms, we don't kick the benches, we don't eat in the street, we don't toss chicken bones in the middle of the plaza, eh? This is about filth and cleanliness... If before they had to replace three garbage cans a month, now they have to replace two hundred garbage cans. If before they had to fix four benches in general, [now] four hundred benches.

Like Tomás, residents of Badalona's poorer neighborhoods commonly minimized the significance of past tensions and differences between residents of different cultural backgrounds, and emphasized their shared Spanish identity and way of life when distancing themselves from newly-arriving immigrants.

Negative attitudes toward foreign immigrants were particularly pronounced among residents of Roma descent. Despite the fact that Roma historically have been the poorest and most discriminated against group in Badalona, they too commonly presented a rather optimistic portrayal of their neighborhoods and their relations with others prior to the arrival of foreign immigrants. For instance, José A., a 65-year old resident of Roma descent, states:

Twenty years ago, we lived the glory. Then, we lived the glory of Sant Roc - gypsies with non-gypsies - we got rid of drugs. Non-gypsies and gypsies [together], we got rid of drugs from here in Sant Roc. When we were young we got rid of all of it.

Although José A. recognizes that his neighborhood was not free of social problems in the past, he references these problems as a means of drawing attention to the "glory" days when shared norms and values enabled residents to join hands in overcoming adversity. He goes on to state:

We used to live the glory here. There was nothing strange. Here we would have weddings outside with chairs. It was wondrous, and now I can't leave my door

open... Now you can't go out. They see you with twenty Euros and they kill you. Out in front there, they took a woman's food cart, eh? They nearly beat a retired relative of ours to death and took his necklace. They took everything from him. There was a young man... they took all his money. They followed him from the bank. They followed him here and took all his money, and poof, he had to leave.

While José and others may, at times, exaggerate the extent to which immigration has increased the level of crime in their neighborhoods, loss of trust and increased insecurity surfaced time and again as central themes in residents' narratives of how their neighborhoods have deteriorated with the arrival of foreign immigrants. The fact that a high proportion of immigrants, particularly those from Pakistan (84%) and to a lesser extent Morocco (56%), are male has contributed to associations between immigration and insecurity. For instance, Xavier, a 33-year-old resident of Artigas, states:

And the type of immigration that has come, above all, from Arab countries... 95% are male and 5% older folks, children, and women. But all the rest are men and what do you want me to say? When I see my girlfriend or mother pass by with twenty-five men in the street who look at them from bottom to top, it's a little discomfoting, first of all for them and second for me.

Later in the conversation with Xavier, it became clear that he was including Pakistanis in his generalizations about immigrants from "Arab" countries. As noted in Chapter II, such conflation are relatively common. Consequently, many of the negative stereotypes

associated with Moroccans in the city have been transferred to the newer Pakistani community.

Transformations of space, social insecurity, and the loss of place

In voicing their concerns about the increased insecurity that has accompanied immigration, residents placed particular emphasis on how they no longer felt comfortable inhabiting city plazas and other spaces that were once integral to their lives due to the ‘colonization’ of these spaces by immigrants. Reflecting on how Moroccan youth have altered the character of the neighborhood of La Pau’s main plaza, Antonio M., the president of the local neighborhood association, states:

While they are there playing [soccer], everything’s fine. But when they leave they break everything. They destroy everything. They break the plaza. They break everything. And they’re the same people whom we’re giving our money. Our taxes go to them, and on top of that they destroy things. And we’ve had many fights and a lot of ruckus here. The police have to come here all the time... And so of course, people who normally passed through [the plaza] at 10 p.m. now no longer pass through – they turn around. We fought hard for the plaza. We worked a lot for that plaza and now we’ve abandoned it.

Antonio M.’s remarks illustrate his strong sense of pride in the work he and his fellow residents put into creating the neighborhood’s central plaza. The plaza’s name, the “Island of Musicians” (*Plaça Illa dels Músics*), as well as its surrounding streets (Mozart,

Wagner, Liszt, and Mendelssohn), reflect the original aspirations of La Pau's residents, nearly all of whom were Spanish migrants, to create a harmonious and peaceful neighborhood.⁷⁶ Yet ironically it has become one of the most conflictive neighborhoods in Badalona. The perception among long-time residents that the public spaces they and their parents once fought so hard to establish and improve over time have been taken over by foreigners lies at the heart of their reactionary attitudes toward newly-arriving immigrants and physical markers of their presence.

In observing social life in city plazas located in diversifying neighborhoods, I found that the Spanish-born still spend time in plazas, particularly during daytime hours. However, their presence dwindles toward the evening, which coincides with most popular time of day for immigrants to congregate and socialize in city plazas. In some neighborhoods, immigrants and longstanding residents have developed an implicit agreement about which plazas are for the foreign-born and which plazas are for the Spanish, contributing to the perception that certain city spaces have been taken over by ethnic minorities.

The tendency of immigrants, particularly those from Morocco, Pakistan, and Ecuador, to socialize in public spaces has been influenced, in part, by cultural norms brought with them from their countries of origin. Spaniards, it should be noted, have an equally strong norm of spending time in plazas and other public spaces for purposes of leisure and socialization. Indeed, it is precisely because open city spaces have traditionally been so integral to communal life in Badalona and other Spanish cities that

⁷⁶ The name of the neighborhood, "La Pau" ("La Paz" in Spanish), means "Peace" in Catalan. Its original name was "Barriada Bauret," but this was changed to "Fondo," and later to "La Pau" as a result of popular demand following Spain's transition to democracy (Molina 1994).

longstanding residents find the strong presence of immigrants in these spaces so threatening.

The heavy utilization of city plazas by foreign immigrants also has been influenced by the difficult housing situation that many face.⁷⁷ Poorer immigrants often have no recourse other than to live with family and friends in cramped apartments with few amenities and poor ventilation, making plazas and other open public spaces an especially attractive option for spending their leisure time. In Spain, overcrowded apartments are colloquially referred to as “*pisos patera*,” or “boat apartments,” an expression that likens cramped apartments (*pisos*) inhabited by immigrants to the overcrowded boats (*pateras*) in which Africans arrive illegally to Spain. *Pisos patera* were perceived to be such a significant problem in Artigas that the local neighborhood association took it upon itself to carry out a study of these apartments in 2005 so as to place more pressure on the city government to enforce housing regulations. The study found 79 such apartments – a highly significant number, considering that the neighborhood is composed of just 1,630 total residences spread over 12 city blocks.

Although the study was not scientifically rigorous in its definition of what counted as a *piso patera*, both its findings and the fact that it was conducted in the first place highlight how resident discontent with immigration centers not only on transformations of plazas and other public spaces, but also on the impact that immigration has had on the private space of the home. Specifically, residents complain that the constant comings and goings of those who live in *pisos patera*, as well as the noise and

⁷⁷ These difficulties are linked to the tremendous escalation in housing prices in Badalona, and in Spain more generally, which took place as a consequence of Spain’s recent real-estate boom. This boom (which turned out to be a bubble) at once attracted many immigrants to work in the construction sector and complicated their ability to find affordable housing once in the country.

plumbing issues generated by such apartments, make it impossible for them to find peace and comfort in their own homes. In response to the complaints voiced with regard to *pisos patera* in Badalona, the city government arranged for the urban police to conduct a study of the matter in 2006. The police detected 176 over-occupied apartments, most of which were located in Artigas and La Salut, though a significant number were found in nearby neighborhoods, such as Sant Roc, La Pau, and Llefià, as well.⁷⁸ This has led to a number of evictions, but residents are still adamant that the city government has not done enough to address the issue.⁷⁹

Mosques as symbols and agents of urban change

The high degree of opposition elicited by mosques in Badalona must be understood in light of residents' broader concerns regarding the impact that immigration has had on the quality of communal life and the condition of cherished public spaces in the city. Given that the two largest immigrant groups in Badalona are Muslim, powerful associations have emerged between mosques, immigration, and processes of urban decay and degradation. The strong role that such associations have played in generating opposition to mosques is evident in the manifesto of the coalition that was recently formed to oppose the Pakistani community's mosque in Artigas. The manifesto opens by stating:

⁷⁸ Benvenuty, Luis. 2007. "Badalona detectó el año pasado 176 pisos patera." *La Vanguardia*, January 23.

⁷⁹ The poor housing conditions in peripheral neighborhoods of Badalona, it should be noted, are common to several municipalities in Catalonia. Indeed, a recent study conducted by Catalonia's regional government concludes that there are 129 housing clusters in the region where residents live under sub-standard housing conditions, two thirds of which are in the province of Barcelona. See: Pellicer, Luis. 2009. "Cataluña tiene 129 barrios con viviendas insalubres." *El Pais*, July 9.

We the residents of Artigas and Sant Roc denounce the state of degradation, lack of security and coexistence (*convivencia*) that we have in our neighborhoods. The disinterest and neglect of the city government in controlling the state of the area -- over-occupied apartments, businesses without license, occupation of public and private spaces with a complete lack of compliance with city rules and [norms of] coexistence by groups of people of different ethnicities -- has provoked an over-occupation of space that makes it impossible to live and work in normality and to coexist.

Fights in the streets, plazas, and bars in the area are a daily occurrence. The deterioration of street fixtures and filth are continual. Our children can no longer play in the plazas and playgrounds, which are being used by groups with aims that are foreign to their intended use... We demand from the city government a constant regulation of public spaces, which today are owned by certain ethnicities that make coexistence impossible. We demand oversight of private spaces and compliance with the [civic] ordinance and civic norms.⁸⁰ Because the present situation is forcing many residents to leave if they can and, for those who can't, to suffer true hell in their neighborhood, our city and our country.

⁸⁰ The civic ordinance referenced here was a measure passed by the city government in 2008 in response to complaints by residents about immigrants' lack of respect for basic civic norms. The ordinance imposes economic sanctions on residents for "uncivil behavior," which includes everything from littering to shaking out rugs from the balcony to feeding pigeons and stray cats (see García, Jesús. 2008. "Badalona multará a los vecinos que sean incívicos en su vivienda." *El País*, October 2).

As illustrated by the manifesto, those opposed to the mosque in Artigas express particular concern with how immigration has influenced the quality of public and private spaces in their neighborhoods. The emphasis placed by the authors on how public spaces are now “owned by certain ethnicities” whose presence brings “filth” and “deterioration” to the area highlights their feeling that their neighborhoods have been ‘colonized’ and ‘polluted’ by immigrant groups. They perceive the battle they are waging against the mosque as part of a broader struggle to save their neighborhoods from being converted into a “true hell.” With respect to the mosque in particular, the manifesto states:

For all of that, we the residents of Sant Roc and Artigas do not estimate that the opening of a mosque in our neighborhood is acceptable, in these moments, for [the sake of] coexistence and for [the sake of] impeding our conversion into a ghetto, if we are not one already. We are concerned that that mosque, moreover, will be converted into a county-wide referent for Muslims, leading to an even greater over-occupation of public spaces which generates problems of coexistence.

The mosque is thus viewed not only as symbolic of an immigrant presence perceived as threatening, but also as a force that actively contributes to processes of urban decay and degradation. Residents whom I interviewed were often ambiguous about what they meant when they said that mosques would attract more Muslim immigrants to their neighborhoods. Some feared that Muslims would relocate permanently to their neighborhoods from other areas in the vicinity so as to live nearer to the mosque. Others

voiced concerns that related more so to the large concentrations of worshipers that would occur during concrete periods, such as Friday prayer and major holidays. Most, however, did not distinguish between these two types of concern when articulating their discomfort with mosques. They simply stated that mosques would bring more Muslim immigrants to the area, whether in a permanent or temporary capacity, with the effect of transforming their neighborhoods into “ghettos” where it would no longer be possible to live in peace and tranquility.

Even residents who stated that they were amenable to having mosques in their neighborhoods were generally very measured in their acceptance, stating that the right to have a mosque should be conditional upon the Muslim community’s compliance with basic civic norms. For instance, when asked for his opinion on the proposed mosque in Artigas, Antonio A., a 48-year-old who bartends in the neighborhood, replied:

What can I say? At first glance, I don’t see it as a bad thing. But they should adapt to our customs, you understand? They should have discipline and [good] behavior, which is what they don’t have. You see them throwing trash... you see them pissing in whichever corner – things that don’t sit well with us. Here, for 40 years if they saw you pissing in the street, they’d give you a ticket. So I don’t know, they have a way of being and a way of living that is not ours. The problem is that. I’m not talking about racism... [but] behavior, you understand? They should adapt a little to us, to our customs. They should be well-mannered, which they aren’t. They go along in the street and they go around spitting.

Carmen, a 61-year-old resident of the neighborhood, expresses a similarly measured approval of the mosque:

I will repeat what I said earlier. With order and discipline - with manners they can do what they want... But with respect because if I, for example, go to the Maghreb... I have to do what they demand there... So long as they know how to respect things here, then the same goes... they can go along as they please if they behave.

The remarks of Antonio A. and Carmen illustrate how even those who in principal would accept the presence of mosques in their neighborhoods are generally very tentative in their acceptance and often express deep reservations about the impact that mosques might have on the quality and image of their communities.

As a consequence of the opposition that mosques have elicited in Badalona, there is an extreme dearth of space for Friday and holiday prayers in the city. One of the Muslim communities in the city has found itself compelled to utilize a large plaza located at the border of Sant Roc and Artigas as a provisional mosque. The large gatherings that take place in the plaza on Fridays and major holidays have reinforced perceptions that Muslims are colonizing the area and have contributed to associations that residents draw between the presence of Muslim immigrants, social disorder, and the degradation of public space (Image 4.2). Opposition to mosques in Badalona has thus contributed to the very conditions and associations that account for its emergence.



Image 4.2: Muslims praying in Camarón de la Isla, a large plaza which sits in between the neighborhoods of Artigas and Sant Roc (Source: Photo circulated by the Neighborhood Association of Artigas).

Instead of viewing the Muslim community's utilization of the plaza as a sign that more mosques are needed, most of those whom I interviewed stated that establishing more mosques would only make things worse by bringing more Muslims to the area. Mosques, they argued, would be more suitably located in non-residential areas or in places where they would have less impact on neighborhoods already suffering from degradation and in danger of becoming "ghettos." Such sentiments are evident in the remarks of José María, an active member of the coalition against the mosque in Artigas:

[H]ere we just can't [take it anymore]. And if on top of that they install a mosque? It will result in ten thousand [Muslim] men coming from all over the place – from here, from there, from here... You understand? We're not racists. The only thing we want is that they give them a place... that they take it away from here. What can't be [allowed] is that they pray in public space, in a sports complex, out in the open. What image does that give to the neighborhood?

Like José María, residents critical of the presence of mosques in their neighborhoods are generally aware that their discourses and actions appear “racist” or “xenophobic.” Indeed, when articulating their reasons for opposing mosques, those whom I interviewed commonly began by stating, “I am not racist, but...” Most insisted that their opposition to mosques was not grounded in prejudice, but in a desire to protect their neighborhoods from further disorder and degradation. Nevertheless, their comments made clear the strong associations they draw between Islam, immigration, and urban degradation.

Public recognition and the politics of opposition to mosques

Associations drawn between Islam, immigration, and urban degradation in Badalona have been reinforced by the stark differences that exist between the city's southern periphery and its surrounding areas. Southern peripheral neighborhoods, where nearly all Muslim immigrants have concentrated, are located between several more affluent central neighborhoods to the north and the relatively prosperous municipality of Sant Adrià de Besòs to the south. Although a number of the factors that distinguish Badalona's southern periphery from its surrounding neighborhoods predate the large-

scale arrival of Muslims and other immigrant groups, immigration was consistently identified by residents as the foremost factor that accounted for inter- and intra-municipal disparities. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from an interview with José A., the resident of Roma descent quoted above:

José A.: In the center of Badalona... it's another world, another world. Let's say that this (Artigas) is one world and that over there is another world.

Interviewer: And why do you think there is this difference between these two worlds?

José A.: Because another class of people is arriving (to the center), with more culture, no? With more knowledge, no?... There are fewer immigrants -- there are scarcely any immigrants in Badalona. All the immigrants are in the poorer neighborhoods, and this is the reason for all this.

Notice that José refers to Badalona as if it were somewhere other than the city where he himself is living. For him, Badalona is a distant place where scarcely any immigrants live.

Echoing this sentiment, Angel, the former president of the Neighborhood Association of Artigas, asserts:

Those of us who have lived all our lives in Artigas do not feel as though we are from Badalona... We don't say, "I'm going to City Hall," or "I'm going to the movies" -- no. We say, "I'm going to Badalona to the movies." We put "Badalona" beforehand because the feeling is that we aren't from Badalona... And I believe that this feeling exists because, in Badalona, until 1990 we didn't exist. We existed to pay taxes, but we didn't exist – we didn't feel like citizens. The police didn't come here, the streets weren't repaired. If the lights went out, you might go a week with the lights off. There was a lot, and I mean a lot of abandonment. [To them] it was Artigas – very far away, and [inhabited by] 'those' people.

As Angel points out, feelings of marginalization among residents of Artigas and other neighborhoods in Badalona's southern periphery existed prior to the arrival of foreign immigrants. The intense struggles for public recognition and resources that took place in Badalona toward the end of Franco's regime, as well as during Spain's transition to democracy, were highly formative experiences for older residents of the city's peripheral neighborhoods. Many remain skeptical of the local government's efforts to maintain order and improve the quality of their neighborhoods.

Part of the reason that the changes commonly associated with immigration have elicited such hostile reactions from local residents is that they 'key' memories of past deprivation and neglect by public authorities. The pronounced disparities that exist across neighborhoods in Badalona, and the tendency of immigrants to concentrate exclusively in the southern periphery of the city, have led many residents to conclude that they once

again have been abandoned by the city government. Many portrayed their neighborhoods as liminal spaces where public authorities failed to uphold the rule of law and where anarchy was the order of the day.⁸¹ Such sentiments are evident in the remarks of Jordi, a 31-year-old resident of Artigas. He states:

This is a neighborhood that nobody wants, since all the poor immigrants are here, all the delinquent immigrants. As I've told you, the Romanians over there were on TV for stealing cell phones. My mother who lives here saw a Muslim that stops around here to sell drugs. The people see him acting shamelessly, as he's clearly involved in dealing drugs. And the police pass by and don't even say a word! Because this is a neighborhood that is part of neither Badalona nor Sant Adrià. It's a separate neighborhood.

Feelings of neglect and exclusion among residents of Badalona's southern periphery have contributed to the integration of disputes over mosques into broader struggles over social justice and public recognition. Through my interviews, I found that those who were most vehement in their opposition to mosques also tended to harbor the strongest feelings of resentment toward the city government.

The perception among residents of Badalona's southern periphery that public authorities fail to prioritize their needs has amplified their hostility toward the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods. Public funds and resources, they argue, should be used to address pressing urban deficits, rather than the demands of Muslims

⁸¹ Here, I draw on Turner's (1969) use of the term "liminal" to capture how peripheral neighborhoods in Badalona are perceived as a type of "no man's land" where ordinary laws and regulations are unenforced.

and other newly-arriving immigrants. The central complaint of residents who partook in the massive anti-mosque campaign that took place between 2006 and 2007 revolved around the city government's cession of public land for a mosque in the neighborhood of Montigalà. The leaders of the campaign argued that there were "actions and facilities more urgent than a mosque" that merited the time and resources of public authorities.⁸²

Similar complaints were raised regarding the newly-established mosque in Artigas. The aforementioned manifesto of the coalition that opposed the mosque states:

In order to get out of this situation, we need facilities that open our neighborhoods to the rest of the city. We need day care centers, libraries, centers for the elderly, sports complexes and service areas, in addition to the rehabilitation and development of completely degraded public spaces, streets, and plazas.

Residents of Badalona's peripheral neighborhoods may be mistaken in believing that there is a tradeoff between the dedication of time and resources to the establishment of mosques, on the one hand, and the provision of other needed facilities and services, on the other. Nevertheless, this perception is relatively widespread and has contributed to the integration of disputes over mosques into broader struggles over social justice and public recognition that have deep historical roots in the city.

Dissatisfaction among residents with how Badalona's city government has managed tensions surrounding mosques, and immigration more generally, has created new opportunities for the main conservative opposition party, the Popular Party (PP), to

⁸² "Vecinos de Badalona (Barcelona) crean una plataforma contra la construcción de una mezquita en terreno público." (2006). *Europa Press*, October 25.

make electoral gains and to challenge the longstanding power of the Socialists' Party (PSC). As in other municipalities in Barcelona's "red belt," peripheral neighborhoods in Badalona were once a bastion of working-class activism and anchored the PSC's hegemony in the city following Spain's transition to democracy. However, the PP's strategic use of anti-immigrant rhetoric in recent years has elevated its popularity significantly, particularly among residents of Badalona's southern periphery, culminating in its ascendance to power after the 2011 municipal elections (Figure 4.2).

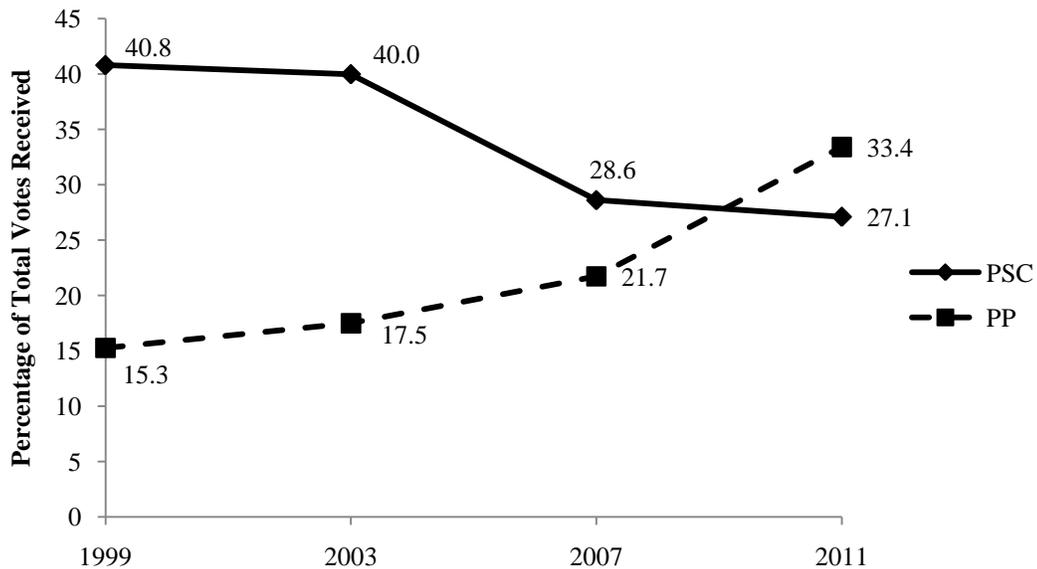


Figure 4.2: Votes received by the PSC and PP in Badalona's last four municipal elections (Source: Compiled by author based on data solicited from the city government of Badalona).

The PP has fomented hostility toward mosques in Badalona through disseminating anti-mosque rhetoric via local newspapers, radio programs, TV broadcasts, and internet videos. It has also actively urged residents to sign petitions protesting the establishment of mosques in their neighborhoods during the course of several of the anti-mosque campaigns that have been launched in the city. The discourses and stances that it

has promoted, however, do not find appeal among residents solely because they oppose mosques, but also because they resonate with local narratives that blame immigration and poor governance for the progressive physical and social deterioration of Badalona's peripheral neighborhoods.

Alternative narrations of diversity and difference

Narratives that identify immigration as the principal source of urban degradation and social breakdown in Badalona are not shared by all segments of the city's population. Several individuals and associations have advanced counter-narratives that aim at creating a more inclusive sense of local belonging. For instance, in response to the opposition launched against the Pakistani community's mosque in Artigas, 11 local organizations joined together in April of 2009 to form a coalition entitled "We Are All Badalona" (*Badalona Som Tots*) (Image 4.3). The organizations were dedicated to a variety of issues, including urban renewal, social integration, education, youth activities, immigrant advocacy, and the promotion of Catalan identity and culture.

Presentació i signatura pública
de les entitats convocants del manifest
'Badalona som tots' per a la cohesió social
a la ciutat.

Arsis - Ateneu de Sant Roc - La Rotllana - La Mussara -
AMICS - Fundació Salut Alta - Òmnium Cultural - Espai Jove
de Converses Interculturals - Naday-E-Pakistan - Associació
Projecte Musivari - Associació Cultural Popular Xinesa

Centre cívic de Sant Roc
dimecres, 29 d'abril de 2009
19:30h



Image 4.3: A flyer advertising the inaugural meeting of the coalition “We Are All Badalona” (*Badalona Som Tots*).

The coalition’s founding declaration, which was distributed in Catalan, Spanish, Urdu, Arabic, and Chinese, begins by stating:

In the last several years, Badalona has experienced a social and demographic change, due to different migratory processes, which has transformed the city. The

arrival of people from other countries should be taken into consideration because it is an important factor that, like others, influences the local economy, social needs, cultural and religious pluralism, the distribution of public services and issues related to the perception of the city that this new social composition evokes.

After acknowledging that Badalona has indeed undergone significant changes in recent years, the authors of the declaration aim to counter narratives that blame immigrants for the current problems afflicting the city by reminding residents that social and economic difficulties existed prior to their arrival. Hence, the declaration goes on to state:

This new reality, which is often experienced with concern – due to the understandable difficulty of assimilating the changes that have occurred, and, *above all, because it has added to unsatisfactory socioeconomic situations that already existed previously in the city* – is also, undeniably, an opportunity. The management of this situation is a common challenge for [public] administrations, social and economic actors, and citizens more generally (emphasis added).

The authors of the declaration thus strategically shift the blame for the problems currently plaguing Badalona away from immigrants and toward pre-existing urban inequalities and deficits. They recognize that their success in countering anti-immigrant discourses is contingent upon their ability to advance an alternative narrative that represents immigration as an “opportunity,” rather than a problem. Through redefining immigration

as an opportunity, the authors aim to develop a more expansive notion of local belonging. Their vision for a future, more inclusive Badalona is reflected in the subsequent paragraph, which states:

The future that we want for Badalona aims to achieve social cohesion and citizenship, understood as a common space of coexistence and a point of reference for everyone, and as a juridical status that establishes rights and obligations in relation to the community. In this cohesive future, it is necessary to share values, language, democratic principles and certain patterns of behavior. This pledge for cohesion is strategic for Badalona and demands the opening of a period of social, institutional, and political coordination.

In developing their new vision of identity in Badalona, the authors thus attempt to broaden the definition of citizenship in the city to include all of its residents, so long as they adhere to basic civic norms. The key to a less conflictive future, they argue, is the acceptance of new sources of social cohesion that transcend national, ethnic, and religious affiliations.

Coalitions like “We Are All Badalona” are not particular to Badalona, but rather have been formed in other municipalities host to mosque opposition as well. In Mataró, opposition to the proposed mosque in the neighborhood of L’Havana led the Federation of Neighborhood Associations of the city to plead for a citizens’ pact against racism.⁸³ The following year, 17 local organizations came together and drafted a “Manifesto for Coexistence” (*Manifiesto por la Convivencia*) denouncing those opposing the

⁸³ “Vecinos de Mataró reclaman un pacto contra el racismo.” 2001. *El Periódico*, March 24.

establishment of mosques and supporting the rights of immigrants in the city.⁸⁴ Similarly, in Santa Coloma de Gramenet, the daily protests during evening prayers in Singuerlín triggered a series of counter-protests by residents who supported the mosque. In Reus, 500 residents gathered in protest of the racism and xenophobia expressed during opposition to a mosque in the city in 2004 (Image 4.4).⁸⁵



Image 4.4: 500 residents gathering in Reus to protest racism and xenophobia in the city. The banner to the right states, “For a Reus open for living together in peace. No to racism” (Source: Giralt, Esteve. 2004. “Mea culpa por la mezquita.” *La Vanguardia*, March 27).

The presence of pro-diversity and pro-mosque advocates and coalitions highlight how boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in Badalona and other cities in Catalonia are highly contested. Although many seek to curtail the increased presence of immigrants

⁸⁴ “17 entidades sociales de Mataró firman un manifiesto antirracista.” 2002. *El Pais*, March 21.

⁸⁵ Giralt, Esteve. 2004. “Mea culpa por la mezquita.” *La Vanguardia*, March 27.

and physical symbols of their presence in the region, a significant segment of the population has sought to develop a more inclusive sense of belonging by appealing to shared values of openness and respect for diversity.

Conclusion

The analysis advanced above suggests that opposition to mosques in Badalona is rooted in the powerful associations that residents of the city's southern periphery draw between Islam, immigration, and processes of urban decay and degradation. These associations are expressed through narratives that emphasize a sharp rupture between the "way things used to be" when all residents shared similar moral and cultural values, and the "way things have changed" with rising levels of foreign immigration. Mosques are viewed both as symbols of an immigrant presence that threatens to undermine the conditions necessary for maintaining cohesive and dignified communities, and as active forces that attract increasing numbers of Muslims to the neighborhoods where they are established. Consequently, they have elicited significant opposition from residents eager to salvage their neighborhoods from being 'colonized' by foreign immigrants and converted into ethnic ghettos.

In analyzing the emergence of what I have called "rupture narratives," I have placed particular emphasis on the active memory work involved in their construction. When contrasting the past and present of their communities, residents of Badalona commonly erase or minimize the significance of past social conflicts and cleavages, and selectively emphasize disjuncture over continuity with the past. This memory work is central to the identification of immigration as the chief development that has generated

the problems currently afflicting southern peripheral neighborhoods of the city. It has also precluded residents from seeing potential similarities in experience and class position that might help to foster greater inter-ethnic understanding and solidarity.

I have shown, moreover, that despite their glorifications of the past, many residents in Badalona's southern peripheral neighborhoods have vivid memories of past hardship and abandonment by local administrations. The perceived failure of public authorities to address the challenges associated with immigration has triggered memories of prior neglect and has amplified local struggles over public recognition and resources. It has also created new opportunities for conservative parties, most notably the PP, to bolster their appeal among voters through critiquing the failure of the Socialists' Party to crack down on immigration and to prioritize the needs of longstanding residents. Although the discourses advanced by the PP and others hostile to the presence of mosques have been contested by pro-diversity activists, they continue to resonate deeply with a large segment of Badalona's population.

Chapter V

Conclusion: Unpacking the context of conflict

Over the course of this dissertation, I have brought attention to how popular reactions to mosques in Spain have been shaped by several distinct, but inter-related factors, including the historical construction of North Africans and Muslims as Other in the Spanish collective imaginary, the relative size and position of Moroccan immigrants in different parts of the country, the socio-spatial configuration of the municipalities where Muslims have tended to settle, and the history and culture of the communities in which mosques have been established. Through highlighting the diversity of factors that have influenced the reception of mosques in Spain, the findings advanced in this study challenge the reductive dichotomy of “Islam versus the West” that has come to dominate popular debates concerning the periodic tensions that have emerged surrounding Muslim integration in the post-September 11th world. Although the attacks of September 11th, the 2004 Madrid train bombings, and other recent events undoubtedly have increased concerns about the threat of Islamic extremism and reinforced negative attitudes toward Muslims in Western contexts, focusing exclusively on the impact of these events obscures the significance of contextual factors that are equally important to consider when analyzing local reactions to mosques and other visible markers of Islamic presence.

Constructions of North Africans and Muslims as Other in historical and contemporary perspective

Understanding the susceptibility of mosques to popular protest in Spain, I have argued, requires situating conflicts surrounding their presence within the *longue durée* of Spanish history (Braudel et al. 2001). Negative representations of North Africans and Muslims in the Spanish collective imaginary are rooted in centuries-old conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. These representations later resurfaced and gained renewed currency during Spain's colonial endeavors in North Africa, the Spanish Civil War, and other events that have been central to Spain's history as a nation. In more recent years, representations of Muslims as conflictive and dangerous have been reinforced by a series of domestic and international events, such as the conflicts that took place in Terrassa (Catalonia) in 1999 and El Ejido (Andalusia) in 2000, as well as the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 in the US and March 11, 2004 in Madrid. Although portrayals of North Africans and Muslims in Spain have not been stable or uniform across time, they have made available a common stock of negative images and associations that have made it difficult for Muslim immigrants to find acceptance in the communities where they have settled.

Nevertheless, the fact that negative representations of North Africans and Muslims are present throughout Spain suggests that it is necessary to analyze how such representations interact with more contemporary processes and developments when explaining why mosques have elicited divergent reactions in different regions of the country. In Chapter II, I brought attention to the influence of demographic trends on local and regional attitudes toward Muslims and physical markers of their presence. Specifically, I argued that the extent to which Muslim populations have been singled out

and scapegoated for the difficulties associated with immigration and ethnic diversification has been influenced by their relative size and visibility in different Spanish regions.

In Madrid, North Africans have dwindled in number relative to other immigrant groups, particularly since the late-1990s, as a result of several factors, including the prominence of the service sector in the region's economy and the implementation of policies and practices that have promoted the replacement of Moroccan workers with immigrants from Latin America and Eastern Europe. As a result, Moroccans are increasingly perceived as one among many groups that constitute the region's multicultural mosaic. This has added complexity to conceptions of Otherness in Madrid and has taken the spotlight off of North Africans and Muslims, at least to a degree. In Catalonia, by contrast, Moroccans continue to be the most visible of immigrant groups, contributing to the ongoing construction of North Africans and Muslims as the prototypical Others of the region. This, in turn, has amplified associations between mosques and an assortment of social problems related to immigration and ethnic diversification.

This finding builds upon and extends previous studies that have brought attention to the connection between outgroup size and anti-immigrant attitudes. Most of these studies have focused on how the overall number or proportion of immigrants within a given setting influences perceptions of economic or cultural threat (McLaren 2003; Quillian 1995; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders 2002; Schlueter and Wagner 2008; Schneider 2008). Specifically, they have shown that perceptions of threat and anti-immigrant attitudes tend to be strongest in settings with proportionally large or rapidly

growing immigrant populations. These studies, however, have often problematically conflated out-group *size* with out-group *visibility*.

As explained above, despite the fact that Latin Americans outnumber North Africans in Catalonia, most residents perceive North Africans as the most numerous immigrant group in the region. This has resulted from the distinct timing of Latin American and North African migrations to Catalonia, the level of segregation members of each group face within the municipalities where they have tended to settle, and the manner in which they inhabit and utilize public space. The high visibility of Catalonia's North African population has played an important role in solidifying the strong associations that residents draw between Islam and social problems related to immigration, over and beyond the effects of relative group size. To be sure, relative group size is still important to consider when explaining variation in attitudes and practices toward immigrant populations. However, it is not just the size of a given immigrant group relative to the overall population that matters, but rather its visibility relative to other racial and ethnic minorities. This is essential for understanding the degree to which certain groups are singled out and scapegoated for the difficulties associated with immigration and ethnic diversification.

Place, ethnicity, and status

The findings of my dissertation also show how understandings of, and reactions to, processes of ethnic diversification are influenced by the historical development and socio-spatial configuration of urban space. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of work on the spatial dimensions of boundary-making (Gieryn 2000; Lamont and

Molnar 2002), the importance of “neighborhood effects” to a range of social outcomes (Elo et al. 2009; Harding 2009; Morenoff 2003; Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002; Spielman and Yoo 2009), and the linkages between urban stratification, racial and ethnic segregation, and social integration (Adelman 2005; Bolt, Ozuekren, and Phillips 2010; Crowder and South 2008; Musterd and Ostendorf 2009; Phillips 2010).

Nevertheless, relatively little has been written on how different configurations of urban space influence how people react to the entry of immigrants and other minority groups into their neighborhoods. To be sure, some have highlighted how levels of residential segregation influence possibilities for intergroup contact, which may mitigate the effects of competition and prejudice (Oliver and Wong 2003; Semyonov and Glikman 2009). The effects of intergroup contact, however, take time to develop and have little bearing on how spatial context influences *initial* reactions to immigrants and other minority groups. Moreover, the extent to which contact will tend to produce positive or negative interactions may vary, depending on the general atmosphere and conditions under which it occurs.

The findings presented in Chapter III bring attention to how the degree to which residents feel compelled to defend their neighborhoods against the encroachment of immigrants and other minorities depends critically on the relations that their neighborhoods bear to the broader urban landscapes in which they are situated. Specifically, I have shown how the strong socio-spatial divisions characteristic of historically industrial cities in Barcelona have led immigrants to concentrate heavily in narrowly-circumscribed and tightly-bounded areas. This, in turn, has increased their visibility, intensified contestations over the use of public space, and generated fears about

the emergence of ethnic ghettos. The highly uneven distribution of immigrants in municipalities in Barcelona has also contributed to the emergence of immigration as a central criterion for differentiating between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ neighborhoods. Consequently, mosques and other symbols of immigrant presence increasingly have become associated with processes of urban degradation and territorial stigmatization. Opposing mosques is thus perceived by residents as a strategic means of resisting further marginalization (in the poorest of neighborhoods) or protecting their privileged status (in more affluent neighborhoods).

In Madrid, by contrast, weaker socio-spatial divisions and conceptions of urban privilege have facilitated a more equal distribution of immigrants across neighborhoods. This has precluded mosques and other visible markers of immigrant presence from emerging as symbols of urban marginality. It has also helped to mediate fears about the development of ethnic ghettos and feelings of injustice among residents for having to shoulder a disproportionate share of the burdens associated with immigration and ethnic diversification. With that said, residents of Madrid certainly complain about the challenges brought about by immigration. However, their complaints are not bound up with broader struggles over urban privilege and public recognition as they are in Barcelona.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ It is important to note that the settings that I have selected in Barcelona and Madrid are relatively large municipalities with over 100,000 inhabitants. In explaining differences in how residents have responded to mosques in each metropolitan area, I have argued that the neighborhood and city are the relevant units of analysis, given that mosque opposition has been connected to more general practices of neighborhood defense. In other instances, it may be the case that analyzing similar processes requires utilizing distinct units of analysis, since many people, especially those residing in smaller municipalities, assess their status in relation to other municipalities in the vicinity, as opposed to other neighborhoods. For example, there appear to be some cases where residents fear that the establishment of a mosque in their municipality will lead to an influx of immigrants from other, more working-class municipalities in the area. In determining which units are appropriate to a given analysis, scholars must be attentive to the subjective frames that residents utilize to interpret their social position and to evaluate their experiences.

The volatile situations that arise when disputes over mosques are linked to broader struggles over urban privilege and public recognition, it should be noted, are not unique to Barcelona, but have occurred elsewhere in Spain as well. In Seville (Andalusia), for instance, struggles over urban privilege were similarly at the core of the most heated episode of mosque contention that has taken place outside of Catalonia. Between 2004 and 2009, residents of Los Bermejales and San Jerónimo, two peripheral neighborhoods of the city, mobilized on numerous occasions to prevent the establishment of a large, purpose-built mosque in their neighborhood (Image 5.1). Their main complaints were that they lack needed facilities and services that ought to be prioritized over mosques, and that their communities should not be the “trash bin for what is not desired by other neighborhoods.”⁸⁷

While discussing the case of Seville in detail is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth highlighting that its traditionally robust economy in comparison to the rest of Andalusia parallels Catalonia’s strong economic standing relative to Spain as a whole in key ways, and has led it to follow a pattern of urban development comparable to that followed by industrial cities in Barcelona. Consequently, social cleavages and center / periphery dynamics are similarly pronounced in Seville. The presence of such cleavages and the manner in which they map onto urban space cannot be ignored if we are to understand how established residents react to mosques and other physical markers of minority presence.

⁸⁷ See “Los vecinos de San Jerónimo entregan mañana 3.000 firmas contrarias a la ubicación de la mezquita.” 2009. *Europa Press*, November 3; “Unas 200 personas se concentran en Los Bermejales contra la mezquita y denuncian un 'boicot' a la protesta.” 2005. *Europa Press*, March 19; “Vecinos de Los Bermejales amenazan con ‘echarse a la calle’ si se sigue adelante con el proyecto de la mezquita.” 2006. *Europa Press*, September 30; “Vecinos de Los Bermejales piden dotaciones sociales en los terrenos de la mezquita.” 2004. *ABC*, March 12; “Vecinos de San Jerónimo se reúnen hoy con urbanismo para expresar su rechazo a la mezquita, con 2.000 firmas.” 2009. *Europa Press*, September 30.



Image 5.1: Residents protesting the establishment of a mosque in the neighborhood of San Jerónimo (Seville) (Source: Pérez Ávila, Fernando. 2009. "Casi mil vecinos rechazan la mezquita en San Jerónimo." *Diario de Sevilla*, November 13).

Memory work and boundary production

Although social cleavages are particularly pronounced in historically industrial cities in the Barcelona area due to their historical development, they by no means originated with the presence of foreign immigrants. Nevertheless, those whom I interviewed commonly advanced temporal narratives of community and belonging that identified immigration as the foremost factor that disrupted the peace and stability of their neighborhoods. Cultural sociologists have highlighted how processes of boundary-making are shaped by the local narratives and repertoires that individuals and

communities draw upon to differentiate themselves from outsider groups (Lamont 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Somers 1992; Somers and Gibson 1994). Scholars who have studied working-class settings undergoing processes of racial or ethnic diversification have found that narratives of identity and community commonly convey a sense of nostalgia for a past when all residents shared the same identity, culture, and values (Amin 2002; Back 1996; Keith 1993). However, little attention has been given to the memory work that gives rise to narratives of this nature or to the centrality of this memory work to the production and maintenance of ethnic boundaries.

In Chapter IV, I argued that this memory work consists of two related, but analytically distinct mnemonic strategies.⁸⁸ 1) the erasure or minimization of the significance of past social cleavages and conflicts; and 2) the selective emphasis on rupture and disjuncture over continuity between past and present circumstances. With respect to the former, bringing attention to how immigration has generated contention, mistrust, and insecurity often entails erasing or minimizing the importance of social cleavages and conflicts that existed prior to the arrival of immigrant groups. In historically industrial cities in Barcelona, residents commonly downplayed the complicated relations that existed in the past between those who were culturally Spanish, those who were culturally Catalan, and those of Roma descent, as well as previous conflicts rooted in class inequalities, when blaming foreign immigrants for eroding the trust and sense of community that once existed in their neighborhoods. Instead, they emphasized how their shared “Spanish” values allowed them to live together in peace and

⁸⁸ My use of the term “strategy” here does not imply intention. It speaks, rather, to the strategic effects that selective representations of the past have on the production of ethnic boundaries.

tranquility, and commonly attributed the physical and social deterioration of their communities to the failure of immigrants to adhere to basic civic norms.

Longstanding residents of Barcelona also selectively focused on processes of rupture and disjuncture, while overlooking continuities between past and present circumstances when voicing their discontent with immigration. As in most historically working-class communities, many of the residents in peripheral neighborhoods in the Barcelona area have experienced significant material deprivation and social dislocation over the course of their lives. The urban deficits and social problems (i.e. crime and drugs) that they attribute to immigration were often present in their neighborhoods prior to the arrival of foreign populations.

In narrating the history of their communities, however, residents commonly downplayed the difficulties they experienced in the past, while emphasizing how the transformations brought about by immigration have undermined their ability to maintain cohesive and dignified communities. Some performed this memory work by minimizing the gravity of previous social problems, while others emphasized how the strong sense of community present in their neighborhoods allowed them to overcome the challenges they faced in the past. This memory work has been central to the construction of rupture narratives that identify newly-arriving immigrants as the primary culprits for the current physical and social deterioration of working-class neighborhoods in the Barcelona metropolitan area.

Given the historical importance of class activism in Barcelona, it is surprising how infrequently residents used the language of class when referencing the high level of solidarity once present in their communities. Instead, residents generally attributed this

solidarity to their shared “Spanish” identity and values. This is reflective of how, in the midst of demographic transformation, local narratives connecting past to present increasingly have become organized around ethnic and cultural, as opposed to class, categories. This has had the important effect of impeding residents from seeing similarities in historical experience and social position that could potentially serve as a basis for cross-ethnic, working-class solidarity (cf. Steinmetz 1992).

In addition to showing the important role played by rupture narratives in the production and solidification of ethnic boundaries, the findings presented in Chapter IV build upon Small’s (2002; 2004) work on neighborhood narratives by highlighting how such narratives often center on concrete sites that are of functional or symbolic value to local residents. The value attached to these sites may, in some cases, be culturally specific. In Spanish cultures, for instance, plazas play a particularly important role in the collective life of the community and hence are frequently subject to political and social contestation (Low 1997; 2000). As exemplified by the case of Badalona, anti-immigrant sentiment in Spain commonly focuses on the manner in which foreign immigrants have altered the quality and character of plazas and other cherished public spaces. Specifically, residents voice complaints that they no longer feel comfortable inhabiting spaces that were once an integral part of their lives because they have been colonized by ethnic minorities. Since mosques in Barcelona, and in Catalonia more generally, are perceived both as symbolic of the increasing ethnicization of public space, and as magnets that attract more immigrants to the neighborhoods where they are established, they have become a major focal point of contention.

“We are Catalan Muslims!”: Carving a space for Islam in Catalonia

Before concluding, it is important to highlight how Muslim leaders have by no means been passive bystanders amidst the contention that has taken place surrounding mosques in Catalonia. Many have attempted to counter anti-mosque campaigns by engaging in outreach activities meant to allay residents’ concerns about the presence of mosques in their neighborhoods. In October of 2004, Muslim leaders from different cities in Catalonia met in Barcelona and developed a plan for each mosque in the region to dedicate one day a year to hosting an Open House with the purpose of educating residents about Islam and the activities that take place in mosques.⁸⁹ The main impetus for establishing this tradition was the belief that it would make mosques more transparent and hence less likely to be interpreted as potential breeding-grounds for terrorists, particularly after the Madrid bombings in 2004. Open Houses are also meant to demonstrate the desire of Muslims to integrate and become part of the communities in which they reside.

In some cases, Open Houses have helped to achieve their intended goal by mitigating residents’ fear of the unknown and demonstrating the desire of Muslims to dialogue and interact with the broader communities of which they are a part. Several of those whom I interviewed, however, were more skeptical of the efficacy of Open Houses. Some said that they were perceived as scripted and unreflective of the true intentions and character of Muslim communities. A second limitation to the efficacy of Open Houses is that many who attend are those who are already open to the possibility living together with Muslims and having mosques in their neighborhoods. I observed this firsthand while

⁸⁹ In Spanish, the tradition is called *Puertas Abiertas* (*Portes Obertes* in Catalan), which literally means “Open Doors.”

attending an Open House aimed at quelling residents' concerns about the disputed mosque in Artigas (Badalona) (Image 5.2). The vast majority of those attending the session were either immigrants themselves or local residents already sympathetic to the proposed mosque. The most vocal opponents of the mosque refused to attend on principle, and hence were not able to hear about the steps the Muslim community was taking to ensure that the mosque would not generate disorder and chaos in the area.



Image 5.2: The audience attending the Open House hosted by the disputed mosque in Artigas (Badalona).

In addition to promoting community engagement through Open Houses, Muslim leaders in Catalonia have become increasingly vocal and open in asserting their right to religious freedom. Given that many Muslim immigrants cannot vote in municipal

elections, they have had to resort to other methods of placing pressure on public officials to guarantee the rights of their communities. One method has been through establishing formal organizations, such as the Islamic Cultural Council of Catalonia (CCIC), which was created in 2000 to represent Muslim interests at the regional level and to help resolve disputes at the local level. The CCIC, however, is not recognized as a legitimate representative body by many local Muslim communities, and its power to resolve local disputes has been relatively limited. Increasingly, local Muslim leaders have taken it upon themselves to pressure municipal governments to protect their rights through dialogue and, on occasion, public demonstrations.

Taoufik Cheddadi, a Moroccan who has lived in Catalonia since 1989, has been one of the more outspoken advocates of the right of Muslim communities to establish mosques in the region. Since arriving to Catalonia, he has lived in several municipalities, including Lleida, Terrassa, Mataró, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, and Barcelona. Given his experience living in the region and fluency in both Spanish and Catalan, as well as his strong linkages to Muslim communities, he has taken on much of the responsibility for mediating tensions that have emerged surrounding mosques in the Barcelona area.

Cheddadi was the primary interlocutor between the Muslim community of Singuerlín (Santa Coloma de Gramenet) and the local city government during the heated dispute that took place in 2004. Later, he advocated on behalf of the Muslim community of Badalona during the course of several anti-mosque campaigns between 2005 and 2007. Although he recognizes the need to engage in dialogue with public officials, he also believes that Muslims must not be afraid to protest when their rights go unprotected.

Hence, he has led a series of demonstrations in central city plazas and other visible locations (Image 5.3).



Image 5.3: Muslims praying outside City Hall in protest of the closing of a mosque in Badalona (Source: Perales, Cristina. 2005. "150 musulmanes oran ante el consistorio de Badalona." *El País*, February 26).

The speeches Cheddadi has given at public demonstrations have focused primarily on issues of religious freedom, citizenship, and belonging. He has been particularly adept at playing upon national, regional, and local symbols and values in advocating for the right of Muslim communities to establish mosques. On the one hand, he has placed a strong emphasis on how the establishment of mosques is a right guaranteed by the Spanish constitution and other legal instruments that protect religious freedom. At the same time, he has leveraged more locally-based cultural symbols and

moral codes in an effort to convince others that Muslims are deserving of equal social and cultural rights. He has put special effort into demonstrating his sensitivity to Catalonia's history and culture.

For instance, as part of a speech given at a public gathering following the tumultuous events that took place in Santa Coloma de Gramenet during Ramadan in 2004, Cheddadi exclaimed, "Catalans, here I am! Catalans, here we are!" This particular phraseology was consciously used to reference a famous speech given by Josep Tarradellas i Joan, a former president of Catalonia who played a pivotal role in re-establishing Catalonia's regional government after Franco's death. In explaining his remarks, Cheddadi stated, "Catalans and Muslims live together and we should mutually recognize our cultures. We are Catalan Muslims. But no public administration has acknowledged us during Ramadan."⁹⁰

Although Cheddadi and other Muslim leaders in Catalonia have demonstrated a certain level of skill in articulating arguments that play upon values and beliefs that are central to the region's history and identity, the high ideals to which they appeal often fail to allay residents' concerns about the more mundane impact of mosques on the quality and image of their neighborhoods. In conversations that I had with Cheddadi about why he thinks residents in Badalona have been so antithetical to the presence of mosques in their neighborhoods, he acknowledged that certain areas of the city are "very abandoned," creating an especially hostile context for the establishment of mosques. Nevertheless, he feels that it is the obligation of the city's political leaders to set an example by standing up to the pressures placed upon them by local residents. Since many

⁹⁰ Benvenuty, Luis. 2004. "'Catalanes, ya estamos aquí': Los musulmanes de Santa Coloma celebran un fin del Ramadán reivindicativo." *La Vanguardia*. November 15.

Muslims lack the right to vote, however, it is difficult for them to exert the level of pressure needed to counter the demands placed on public authorities by those hostile to their presence.

Mosque conflict and the future of inter-ethnic relations in Catalonia

In outlining different patterns of mosque establishment in Europe, Maussen (2007) draws a distinction between settings that encourage “neighborhood Islam,” or the development of private, middle-sized prayer rooms that cater to distinct Muslim communities, and settings that encourage the development of a single purpose-built mosque intended to serve all Muslim residents. The high level of opposition to mosques in Catalonia has engendered an alternative pattern that some in the region have called “industrial Islam” (*Islam del polígono*),⁹¹ or the establishment of mosques in industrial parks (*polígonos industriales*) that are located at a distance from residential areas (Moreras 2009).⁹²

Some feel that this trend is the best solution to a difficult situation. For example, Mohammed Halhoul, a spokesman for the CCIC, has argued that industrial warehouses often provide the best option for meeting the increased demand for space that has resulted from the rapid growth of Catalonia’s Muslim population. Others have voiced concern, however, that locating mosques in industrial parks will contribute to the segregation and exclusion of Muslims from social life. Jordi Griñó, an architect and urban planner who was hired to evaluate the possibility of moving the main mosque of Lleida, a large municipality in western Catalonia, from the city center to an industrial park, concluded

⁹¹ Carranco, Rebeca and Lluís Visa. 2010. “Los riesgos del ‘Islam de polígono.’” *El País*, September 22.

⁹² According to Moreras, there are between 15 and 20 mosques located in industrial parks in Catalonia.

that such an action would involve “the segregation of a group to an isolated and inappropriate area that in no way favors relations with other strata of society.” He added that it “[e]ntails a distancing and isolation in the social order” that violates “the municipal legislation of the region.”⁹³

Griñó and others opposed to the trend of locating mosques in industrial parks argue that although this practice may provide a short-term solution to the conflicts that have emerged, it contributes to the peripheralization of Islam from urban life, hinders residents from growing accustomed to mosques in their neighborhoods, and delays the process of cultural and religious acceptance. Critics of “industrial Islam” have also raised concerns about how the spatial isolation of mosques contributes to the conditions under which extremist elements within Islam thrive. A report by Catalonia’s regional police force (*Els Mossos d’Esquadra*), for instance, concluded that radical Islamic groups commonly elect to establish mosques in industrial parks, as they prefer discretion and privacy.⁹⁴ Whether or not there is any truth to such claims, they speak to how the establishment of mosques in industrial parks may exacerbate, rather than alleviate, fears of Islamic radicalism.

Although the high degree of opposition to mosques in Catalonia has forced several Muslim communities to pray in locations that are inconvenient, undersized, or unsuitable for prayer, the effects of such opposition have not been uniformly detrimental to the integration of Muslims in the region. Cesari (2005a) notes that disputes over the establishment of mosques often constitute the first step to dialogue between Muslim immigrants and the broader communities in which they reside. Given that the

⁹³ Visa, Lluís. 2010. “Un informe judicial afirma que abrir mezquitas en polígonos es ‘segregar.’” *El País*, September 21.

⁹⁴ Carranco, Rebeca and Lluís Visa. 2010. “Los riesgos del ‘Islam de polígono.’” *El País*, September 22.

contemporary presence of Islamic communities in Spain is still relatively recent, their engagement with civil society and the communities of residents alongside whom they coexist is often quite minimal. In Catalonia, however, Muslims have been forced to be proactive and innovative in reaching out to local communities and convincing residents of their intention to live in accordance with local norms and values. Their efforts have been complemented by those of community activists and government officials seeking to promote tolerance of diversity and more peaceful inter-ethnic and interreligious relations. Indeed, initiatives that aim to promote cultural and religious understanding, tolerance, and interaction have generally been more common in Catalonia than in other parts of Spain.

There are other promising indications as well that Muslims are becoming more integrated socially and politically in Catalonia. In 2003, for instance, Mohammed Chaib Akhdim became the first Spanish representative of Moroccan origin to be elected to a regional parliament when he was chosen to represent the Socialists' Party in the Parliament of Catalonia.⁹⁵ As mentioned in Chapter II, Moroccans in Barcelona demonstrate a relatively high degree of participation in local social and cultural associations and have increasingly diverse social networks. Representations of Moroccans in popular media, moreover, are becoming more complex and reflect a greater appreciation for their individuality, as well as a deeper sensitivity to the discrimination that they have faced in the region.

It remains to be seen, however, whether the emergence of a robust second generation of youth of Muslim origin will lessen or add to tensions between Muslims and

⁹⁵ Chaib immigrated to Spain when he was 13 and later founded the Ibn Batuta Socio-cultural Association, which is the principal association promoting the integration of Moroccans in Catalonia.

non-Muslims in Catalonia. Recent rioting by Moroccan youth in response to police brutality in the Catalan municipality of Salt served as a sober reminder of how, much like in France, frustrated aspirations, social exclusion, and prejudicial treatment may hinder the integration of the second generation and generate a renewed cycle of ethnic conflict.

Madrid, it should be noted, is by no means a multicultural paradise where all are free to express their cultural and religious identities without difficulty. In April of 2011, the first serious dispute over a mosque in Madrid took place in the northwestern municipality of Collado Villalba, when 2,000 residents signed a petition opposing the construction of a 700 m² mosque in the city. In justifying their opposition, residents who were interviewed stated that the large gatherings generated by the mosque would destroy the peaceful atmosphere of the area. The neighborhood where the mosque was to be located, they argued, was ill-equipped to handle the high number of worshipers that would arrive from nearby towns.⁹⁶ As in Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Badalona, and several other municipalities in Catalonia, tensions surrounding the proposed mosque in Collado Villalba were inflamed by the actions of more radically-inclined elements within the population, in this case a group of individuals who hung a pig's head from one of the trees in the area intended for the mosque (Image 5.4). Hence, although it is unlikely that episodes of opposition to mosques will ever be as frequent or intense in Madrid as they have been in Catalonia for the reasons discussed in this dissertation, mosques and other visible symbols of Muslim presence certainly have their detractors in the region.

⁹⁶ “Vecinos de Collado Villalba (Madrid) presentarán al Ayuntamiento 2.000 firmas contra la construcción de una mezquita.” 2011. *Europa Press*, April 4.



Image 5.4: A pig's head hung from a tree at the proposed site for a new mosque in Collado Villalba (Madrid) (Source: "Vecinos de Collado Villalba (Madrid) presentarán al Ayuntamiento 2.000 firmas contra la construcción de una mezquita." 2011. *Europa Press*, April 4).

Conclusion

Although it would be naïve to disregard the influence of global terrorism and negative portrayals of Islam on the susceptibility of mosques to popular opposition in Spain and other European countries, focusing exclusively on these factors fails to capture how the reception of mosques is also conditioned by the history, culture, and structure of the local communities in which they are established. As I have shown in this dissertation, opposition to mosques in Catalonia is connected to more general efforts by local residents to protect the quality and image of their neighborhoods, and the conditions that they perceived as essential to sustaining cohesive and dignified communities in the midst of social change. To be sure, expressions of prejudice and fear commonly arise during the

course of mosque debates. But the potency of generalized prejudices and fears, and their power to generate active opposition to mosques and other symbols of Islamic presence, are often contingent upon how they are contextualized within more localized struggles over urban privilege and public recognition (Allievi 2009; Maussen 2005).

The extent to which the specific sources of opposition to mosques in Spain are generalizable to other contexts is a question for future research. Although there may be a degree of overlap between the episodes of mosque contention analyzed in this dissertation and some of the higher-profile instances of controversy surrounding mosques, such as in Lower Manhattan or East London, there are also some significant differences. Specifically, the grand scale of the proposed Islamic centers in New York City and London, as well as the global significance of their intended locations, have led to a series of debates over their symbolism that are somewhat unique and distinct from the narratives discussed in this dissertation.⁹⁷ Moreover, the intense media attention given to these high-profile cases has led to a degree of public engagement extending far beyond the local level. Most episodes of conflict surrounding mosques in European and other Western cities, however, are much lower-profile and primarily local in character, despite being influenced by global discourses and national or regional traditions (Allievi 2009; Cesari 2005a). As in the case of Badalona, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Mataró, and other Spanish cities analyzed in this dissertation, understanding the sources of these conflicts requires close attention to how the reception of mosques is influenced by the historical development and socio-spatial configuration of the settings where they are established.

⁹⁷ The “Park 51” Islamic center in Lower Manhattan was proposed several blocks from “Ground Zero,” while the “Abbey Mills” mosque in East London was proposed in close proximity to the site of the 2012 Olympic Games. See DeHanas and Pierrri (2011) for a compelling analysis of the importance of scale in the East London case.

Appendix A

Location and year of opposition to mosques in Spain

Region	City	Year(s) of Opposition
Andalusia	Granada	1985 – 2002
	Nijar	2004
	Seville	2004 – 2009 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
Balearic Islands	Felanitx	2008
	Marratxí	2005
Basque Country	Bilbao	2011
	Vitoria-Gasteiz	2007
Castile and León	Las Navas del Marqués	2004
	Soria	2003
Catalonia	Anglès	2007 – 2009
	Arenys de Munt*	2010
	Badalona*	2002, 2005 – 2007, 2009 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Balaguer	2008
	Banyoles	1999
	Barcelona*	2004, 2007 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Canet de Mar*	1995
	Cornellà de Llobregat *	2005
	Figueres	2002
	Girona	2008-2009
	Granollers*	2000, 2001 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Les Franqueses del Vallès*	2003

	Llagostera	2004
	Lleida	2001 – 2009 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Manresa	2008
	Mataró*	2001
	Mollet del Vallès*	2004
	Montblanc	2007
	Premià de Mar*	1997, 2001 – 2002 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Reus	2001 – 2004 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Ripoll	2008
	Salt	2008
	Sant Boi de Llobregat*	2005
	Sant Feliu de Guíxols	2004
	Santa Coloma de Gramenet*	2004
	Santa Cristina d’Aro	2007
	Torroella de Montgrí	2001 – 2002
	Vic	1990, 1998 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Viladecans*	2002, 2004
	Vilafranca del Penedès*	2004
Extremadura	Talayuela	2006
Galicia	Arteixo	2011
	Vilaboa	2006
Madrid	Collado Villalba	2011
Murcia	Beniel	2009 – 2010
	Lorca	2006
	Murcia	2008

Valencia	Alicante	2005, 2009 (Multiple Neighborhoods)
	Alzira	2007
	Castellón de la Plana	1999
	Cocentaina	2008
	Cullera	2007
	La Vall d'Uixó	2009
	Llíria	2004
	Silla	2010
	Torrent	2010
	Vila-real	2006

Source: Author's review of Spanish press and SOS Racismo's annual reports on racism in Spain.
 * Located in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area

Appendix B

Results of CIS survey questions on attitudes toward mosque opposition in Spain

Attitudes toward mosque opposition in Spain (2007)				
	People protest against the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood			
Autonomous Community (N)	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Does not know	No answer
Andalusia (512)	39.8%	45.9%	13.1%	1.2%
Aragon (87)	34.5%	48.3%	13.8%	3.4%
Asturias (69)	27.5%	30.4%	40.6%	1.4%
Balearic Islands (54)	31.5%	59.3%	9.3%	0.0%
Basque Country (146)	26.7%	59.6%	13.7%	0.0%
Canary Islands (144)	36.8%	45.8%	13.9%	3.5%
Cantabria (33)	30.3%	42.4%	27.3%	0.0%
Castile and León (167)	33.5%	40.1%	24.0%	2.4%
Castile La Mancha (127)	30.7%	45.7%	23.6%	0.0%
Catalonia (430)	58.4%	32.1%	7.7%	1.9%
Extremadura (55)	43.6%	41.8%	14.5%	0.0%
Galicia (171)	35.1%	50.9%	11.7%	2.3%
La Rioja (30)	43.3%	43.3%	13.3%	0.0%
Madrid (353)	35.7%	52.4%	7.1%	4.8%
Murcia (93)	35.5%	49.5%	15.1%	0.0%
Navarra (19)	31.6%	52.6%	10.5%	5.3%
Valencia (287)	40.1%	47.0%	10.8%	2.1%
Total (2,777)	39.4%	45.3%	13.3%	2.0%

Source: CIS. 2007. Study #2731: Attitudes in view of discrimination by racial or ethnic origin (*Actitudes ante la discriminación por origen racial o étnico*).

Attitudes toward mosque opposition in Spain (2008)				
	People protest against the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood			
Autonomous Community (N)	Very acceptable / Pretty acceptable	Not very acceptable / Unacceptable	Does not know	No answer
Andalusia (509)	34.4%	54.2%	11.4%	0.0%
Aragon (96)	42.7%	52.1%	5.2%	0.0%
Asturias (69)	40.6%	26.1%	33.3%	0.0%
Balearic Islands (38)	50.0%	39.5%	5.3%	5.3%
Basque Country (145)	19.3%	66.9%	13.1%	0.7%
Canary Islands (108)	47.2%	37.0%	13.0%	2.8%
Cantabria (57)	36.8%	42.1%	19.3%	1.8%
Castile and León (142)	29.6%	60.6%	9.9%	0.0%
Castile La Mancha (129)	34.1%	59.7%	6.2%	0.0%
Catalonia (423)	58.2%	37.1%	2.8%	1.9%
Extremadura (65)	47.7%	43.1%	9.2%	0.0%
Galicia (191)	39.3%	54.5%	5.8%	0.5%
La Rioja (28)	7.1%	78.6%	10.7%	2.7%
Madrid (338)	37.0%	51.8%	8.6%	2.7%
Murcia (82)	34.1%	42.7%	23.2%	0.0%
Navarra (65)	18.5%	63.1%	16.9%	1.5%
Valencia (285)	36.8%	48.4%	13.7%	1.1%
Total (2,770)	38.7%	49.9%	10.3%	1.1%

Source: CIS. 2008. Study #2773: Attitudes toward immigration II (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración II*).

Attitudes toward mosque opposition in Spain (2009)				
	People protest against the construction of a mosque in their neighborhood			
Autonomous Community (N)	Very acceptable / Pretty acceptable	Not very acceptable / Unacceptable	Does not know	No answer
Andalusia (511)	38.0%	52.4%	9.4%	0.2%
Aragon (83)	50.6%	38.6%	6.0%	4.8%
Asturias (80)	30.0%	47.5%	22.5%	0.0%
Balearic Islands (46)	23.9%	69.6%	6.5%	0.0%
Basque Country (146)	29.5%	59.6%	10.3%	0.7%
Canary Islands (118)	24.6%	68.6%	5.9%	0.8%
Cantabria (65)	40.0%	41.5%	18.5%	0.0%
Castile and León (171)	31.0%	54.4%	14.6%	0.0%
Castile La Mancha (147)	34.0%	52.4%	10.9%	2.7%
Catalonia (435)	53.8%	42.1%	3.0%	1.1%
Extremadura (55)	38.2%	58.2%	3.6%	0.0%
Galicia (186)	33.3%	62.4%	3.8%	0.5%
La Rioja (28)	10.5%	84.2%	5.3%	0.0%
Madrid (365)	27.7%	61.4%	9.0%	1.9%
Murcia (80)	46.3%	35.0%	18.8%	0.0%
Navarra (36)	36.1%	44.4%	16.7%	2.8%
Valencia (19)	37.7%	55.0%	6.9%	0.3%
Total (2,832)	37.1%	53.3%	8.7%	0.9%

Source: CIS. 2009. Study #2817: Attitudes toward immigration III (*Actitudes hacia la inmigración III*).

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