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Striking a Balance? The Battle for Euskara in a Diversifying Basque Country

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Language is often at the heart of conflict in diverse societies. States cannot avoid making decisions about language policy with respect to education, the civil service, highway signs, and many other facets of public life. In a multinational state, the stakes are often higher since the different constituent nations may regard their language as central to their identity. This is why in multinational countries, such as Canada, Spain, and Belgium, policies often favor group rights to encourage and sustain the presence of minority languages at the expense of individual rights. Consequently, substate minority nations have experienced much success in proliferating their languages within their respective regional entities. In recent years, however, a new challenge for language preservation in substate nations has come from foreign migration. Will Kymlicka argues, "there is a strong temptation for immigrants to integrate into the [state] dominant culture and language, thereby debilitating the majority status of the substate national language within its historic territory."¹ According to this logic, substate nationalists will view immigrants with suspicion and aggressively assimilate them into their language and culture.

If we accept the goal of promoting the linguistic aspirations of substate nations as worthwhile—which most would—two questions worth considering are: is there a viable alternative to the models of exclusion or assimilation? What would such a model look like? This paper explores these questions through a case study of the language and diversity policies that undergird the education system in the Basque Country of Spain.

Euskara is the native language of the Basque people, spoken by a majority within Spain's Basque provinces in the mid-nineteenth century.² Intrastate migration, emigration, and repressive language policies by the Spanish state reduced the percentage of *euskaldunes* (native speakers of Euskara) to less than 20 percent by 1970.³ When Spain transitioned to democracy in 1978, the Basque Country—also known as Euskadi—became an autonomous region with a set of competencies to protect its national distinctiveness. Importantly, Article 6.1 of the Basque Statute of Autonomy designates Euskara “the language of the Basque People,” as official alongside Castilian Spanish in Euskadi. Article 6.3 states that the common institutions of Euskadi “shall carry out whatever means necessary to ensure knowledge of both languages.” Correspondingly, Section 3 of the Constitution of Spain recognizes that the “richness of different linguistic modalities of Spain shall be respected and protected.”

These articles were agreed upon in the late 1970s, however, long before Spain or Euskadi became a destination for foreign immigrants. Despite a slow, steady increase in the presence of Euskara, the Spanish language is still predominant, with only 30 percent of Euskadi's population able to fluently speak Euskara.⁴ Alarms bells rang in the early 2000s when foreign immigrants started to settle in Euskadi. Sectors of society with a vested interest in promoting Euskara took note of the possibility that new immigrants would not appreciate the bilingual condition of the region and integrate solely into the Spanish-speaking milieu.⁵

More than a decade has passed since the issues of education and immigration first intersected in Euskadi. These debates have taken place at a time during which Europe is turning away from multiculturalism, with many states pursuing “aggressive means of immigrant integration.”⁶ Concern about the consequences of immigration for national cultures has not been limited to radical right-wing extremists; various European governments controlled by centrist parties have blamed multiculturalism for the segregation and poor socioeconomic advancement of immigrant communities.

The project to revive and promote Euskara in the Basque Country has faced challenges on two fronts: nation building by the Spanish state and the arrival of new foreign immigrants without an appreciation of Basque national identity. A possible response to this dilemma is, of course, the outright rejection of new diversity in an effort to protect the hard-won victories of Basque nationalists to institutionalize and revive Euskara. For both practical and normative reasons, though, this is an unattractive strategy. A low birthrate and high rate of emigration means that the Euskara “normalization” process is dependent on the integration of new immigrants into the Euskara-speaking milieu. Second, claims for more recognition and autonomy by nationalist elites become less credible if they themselves are demanding that immigrants abandon their native languages and cultural customs. An alternative response—and one that

has gained traction in Euskadi—is to reconceptualize national identity along multicultural lines. Budding evidence from Euskadi reveals that immigrants there are responding to the respect and accommodation afforded to them through multicultural citizenship by embracing Euskara for their children and absorbing ambivalent feelings toward Spain.⁷ Perhaps, therefore, a better model of integration relies on compromise and flexibility rather than decisiveness and force, the latter of which risks turning potential allies of the nation into enemies.⁸

Before elaborating on the application of multiculturalism in the specific case of Basque education, I need to say more about the logic foregrounding predictions of conflict between substate nationalism and multiculturalism, and why they are indeed compatible.

SUBSTATE NATIONALISM, IMMIGRATION, AND MULTICULTURALISM

The hysteria stemming from the perceived deleterious effects of immigration—especially from Islamic countries—on democracy and cohesion has spurred a new politics of nationalism in the West obsessed with defining a cultural core that defines “insiders” and “outsiders.” Of course, acts of “homegrown” terrorism and segregated ethnic neighborhoods are matters of concern, but as Kymlicka argues, the most pressing challenge to unity in multinational states comes from their substate nations rather than newly settled immigrant collectivities.⁹ The term substate nation connotes a historic territorially grounded cultural community that pursues self-governance. In the developed liberal democracies, substate nations have proved quite successful at obtaining some degree of political autonomy, projecting a civic identity that rejects race as a defining feature, and reviving the languages that are at the core of their “societal cultures.”¹⁰

Even though the spotlight has shifted away from substate nationalism toward immigrant-generated diversity, tensions between substate nations and their respective states in the West persist. In Spain, the central government has threatened military intervention to protect state integrity if Catalonia tries to secede. Relations between the British and Scottish governments are more amicable, but the Scottish National Party's recent success in the 2015 general election signals that there is still a strong appetite for a more sovereign Scotland. Yet, independence is likely not on the horizon for any substate nation in the West. Support for independence, during referendum campaigns and otherwise, rarely, if ever, exceeds 50 percent. Moreover, the majority of those residing in substate national territories express a dual identity, which indicates loyalty to both the state and substate national communities.¹¹ Generally, conflict between substate nations and the state in the West takes place within

democratic institutions rather than through violence or civil disobedience. Scholars, such as Kymlicka and Michael Keating, credit the stabilization of majority-minority relations in industrialized multinational states on the implementation of recognition and autonomy for substate nations.¹²

Article 2 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 "recognizes and guarantees the right to self-government of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed." While it was not made explicit, the nationalities that the article is meant to address are the Basques, Catalans, Galicians, and majority Castilian Spaniards. Consequently, the three minority nationalities agreed upon separate statutes of autonomy with the Spanish state to adjudicate competencies. Even though there are seventeen autonomous communities in Spain, the Spanish state practices informal and formal asymmetry in order to satisfy the demands of the nationally distinct regions for additional competencies.¹³ A similar practice occurs in Canada as the central government treats Quebec differently and formally recognizes that the "*Québécois* form a nation within a united Canada."¹⁴

Shifting our attention back to how states incorporate immigrants, scholars have traced a slow shift in immigrant-receiving countries away from assimilation toward multiculturalism since WWII.¹⁵ What is actually constitutive of multiculturalism is quite hard to pin down; it is simultaneously used as a sociological label for an objective situation of diversity and as a moral stance "that cultural diversity is a desirable feature of a given society as well as the different types of ways in which the state could recognize and support it."¹⁶ Practically, this has meant measures such as public recognition for ethnic minority organizations, consideration for minority languages and cultures in education curriculums, immigrant-specific social services, religious accommodation, and awareness campaigns to promote diversity as a good unto itself.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the concept of multiculturalism fell out of fashion in most immigrant-receiving countries—with the exception of Canada—even though evidence linking the multicultural practices listed above to segregation, separateness, and the poor socioeconomic fortunes of visible minorities is scarce and unconvincing.¹⁷ The policy instruments chosen as the means to reject multiculturalism have been mandatory integration courses with strong emphases on language acquisition and the inculcation of country knowledge and national values.¹⁸ These courses are not necessarily free to immigrants, thus the onus of integration is being placed more on the immigrants rather than the receiving society. These reforms have often been accompanied by "sharply antagonistic discourse" that signals to immigrants that their values, languages, and cultural habits are not valued or worth preserving in their new country.¹⁹

Scholarly interpretations of the trend toward state-led identity building are diverse. One viewpoint is that such measures are not ill inten-

tioned, but indicative of a genuine desire to rectify the shortcomings of multiculturalism by coupling a strong common identity with the recognition of cultural differences.²⁰ Another perspective contends it is a sign of resurgent nationalism based on a preference for cultural homogeneity over liberal values as the basis of societal unity.²¹ In either scenario, an identity-building agenda at the state level is particularly controversial in a multinational state: should the state promote a multinational conception of its identity to new immigrants? Kymlicka certainly believes so, as he argues that immigrant integration in multinational states "is not about resolving disputes over legitimacy, but about learning to live with their contested character, and building democratic forums for continuing that conversation."²² In the real world of multinational politics, however, central states are simply not willing to remain ambivalent about which community immigrants should develop affection for. Doing so opens the possibility that an immigrant will adopt an exclusive substate identity, perhaps leading them to support independence.

In Spain, there is little flexibility on the terms of integration or conception of national identity. The Spanish government—especially when controlled by the right-leaning Popular Party (PP)—has promoted a citizenship agenda that conceives of Spain as a single national and cultural entity. From 2000–2004, PP leader José María Aznar pursued reforms to "push back against the tide of multiculturalism."²³ Aznar's government targeted the educational curriculum as a means to recast the Spanish identity in the minds of younger generations. For example, new obligatory teaching materials for history courses emphasize Spain's integrity and culturally rooted identity instead of its cultural and linguistic diversity. Aznar's successor, Mariano Rajoy, current president of Spain, announced his intention to force immigrants to sign a contract that would oblige newcomers to "respect the customs and culture of the Spanish people" or face expulsion.²⁴

During his tenure, Aznar had displayed outright contempt for Spain's substate nations. He personally denounced Basque nationalism as a "Nazi ideology" committed to breaking up Spain. The Basque branch of the PP stood behind Aznar and even hinted that Basque autonomy was causing more harm than good. The party derided the Basque government, at the time governed by a coalition of nationalist parties, for supposedly designing a regional education curriculum that pays no attention to Spanish history and undermines the right of students to study in Spanish-medium schools. The party has also worked to increase the presence of Spanish national symbols and ceremonies across the country, all in the name of encouraging loyalty to the Spanish nation while stamping out the country's substate national cultures.²⁵

If there is no room for national diversity in the state's education regime, what is the best course of action for substate nations in the face of "new" diversity? Given that foreign migrants have descended upon the

metropolitan areas of substate nations in recent years, the sustainability of substate nations will depend on whether newcomers choose to associate with the substate national identity. To combat the trend toward strong common citizenship at the state level, substate nationalist parties could opt for their own aggressive means of nation building. Along this line, multicultural practices at the substate level would be dissolved because they encourage immigrants to remain attached to their homeland culture and remain neutral toward the national conflict in their new country. Moreover, substate nations with distinct languages at their core—Québécois, Catalan, Basque, and Flemish—would oblige immigrants to learn the local language as a precondition for certain social rights to the extent the regional government can control access. A well-known example comes from Quebec, where Bill 101 limits access to English-medium schools for the offspring of immigrants. The legislation has had success in meeting its primary goal of having immigrant children learn French, but less so in terms of socializing them into the Québécois national identity in order to reduce the “ethnic barrier” between *Québécois de souche* (old-stock Quebecers) and immigrant communities.²⁶

There are good reasons why aggressive nation-building measures are unlikely to be practical or effective in sustaining substate national projects. Because substate elites seek legitimacy and recognition for their nation—domestically and internationally—they are under pressure to disprove the pervasive myth that substate nations practice ethnic exclusion.²⁷ Unfortunately, dominant nations have a tendency to “assert moral superiority” over substate nations by labeling them “archaic, tribal, and ethnic” without provocation or justification.²⁸ Consequently, there can be extra pressure on a substate nation to promote an identity that is inclusive in order to further autonomy from the state and cultivate an international presence.²⁹ Doing so, however, may require the agreement of state actors who are hostile toward any actions that deviate from the principle of state sovereignty, and thus will readily charge that substate nations are parochial, even though nationalism at the state level is often more exclusionary than in substate regions.³⁰

A second reason is that aggressive integrationism is likely to alienate immigrants from the substate national community rather than welcome them into it. A recent perspective on the anti-multiculturalism trend in Europe conceives of it as a reincarnation of Carl Schmitt’s strand of liberal thought; anti-multiculturalists in Europe are engaging in claims making to unite people around a commonality—liberal values—against “real and perceived threats from putatively dangerous immigrants.”³¹ According to Schmitt, boundary drawing between “who we are” and “who our enemies are” is fundamentally important for a society, but liberal multiculturalism prohibits it and thus leaves us vulnerable to external threats.³² “Schmittian liberals” think that liberal multiculturalism’s excess emphasis on relativity must be relaxed so that “dangerous immi-

grants can be screened out or forcefully transformed” into members of the liberal political community.³³ Multiculturalism, on this view, is dangerous because it promotes societal fragmentation, conceives of ethnic identities as “frozen” and permits illiberal practices.

If the anti-multiculturalists, or “Schmittian liberals,” are correct, substate nations should be very concerned about the threat new immigrants pose to their cultures. This line of argumentation, however, misrepresents multiculturalism and poorly predicts the likely effects of revoking it in favour of a stronger emphasis on the national culture. Multiculturalism is not a license for immigrant communities to circumvent communication and interaction with the majority group. Instead, it promotes interaction and the development of common values by leveling the playing field; without measures to recognize pluralism, immigrants and minorities will be discouraged from participating in the development of a common project. As Viet Bader reminds us: “all civic and democratic cultures are inevitably embedded into specific ethno-national and religious histories.”³⁴ Therefore, excessive prioritization of the dominant national culture—even if it is based on liberalism and democracy—sends a message to minorities that they are inferior.

Substate nations must carefully consider the potential effects of adopting aggressive integration tactics as their societies diversify. In the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Quebec, common sources of concern are that immigrants threaten the local language and will support centralist parties in regionalist and state elections. The pursuit of language revival and substate nationalist politics through policies and rhetoric that conjure up an image of a superior “us” against an inferior “them” promises, at worst, to drive immigrants into isolation, and, at best, will push them to seek belonging solely within the state’s national identity. On the other hand, respect for their differences will engage the vast majority of immigrants to participate in the substate national community through language learning, open dialogue about sovereignty, and cultural interaction.

In the following sections, I present the case of Basque education as an example of how multiculturalism can help, not hinder, unity and language revival in a substate nation. Rather than relying on decisiveness and force, Basque nationalists integrate immigrant families into the Euskara-speaking milieu through persuasion and multicultural initiatives in the education system. The evidence is embryonic, but many immigrants are choosing to send their children to Euskara-medium schools not only for instrumental reasons but also as a means to take part in the common society.

REVITALIZING EUSKARA: THE MODEL OF PARENTAL CHOICE

Since time immemorial, Euskara has been spoken as a native language in the Basque provinces. Reliable estimates are difficult to find, but numerous sources suggest that 60 percent of the population spoke Euskara from approximately 1850 to 1868.³⁵ Moreover, the percentage of Euskara speakers was on the rise before the Spanish Civil War erupted in 1936.³⁶ These statistics indicate that Euskara was a prominent language before the Franco era and could have established itself as the *lingua franca* in modern-day Euskadi. Repression of Euskara by the Franco dictatorial regime (1939–1975) and Castilian migration to the Basque provinces, however, had a dramatic effect: by 1970, the percentage of Euskara-speakers had plummeted to less than 20 percent.

One of the principle reasons Euskara survived the onslaught of the early Franco period was the *ikastola* (Euskara language school) system developed clandestinely by Euskara speaking parents. Beginning in the 1950s, small garages and flats were used as makeshift classrooms for a Euskara-medium education system hidden from Spanish authorities. State repression of *ikastolas* softened by the 1960s. The Franco regime issued a decree permitting Euskara to be the principal language in state-sponsored primary schools at the full discretion of each school's principal. The legalization of *ikastolas* allowed them to expand and recruit more students from both Spanish and "mixed" Basque-Spanish families.

After Franco's death in 1975, civil society was able to lobby for Euskara in the education system. The Royal Academy of the Basque Language commissioned a landmark study on the status of Euskara in society in 1976, of which a major focal point was education. A distressing finding was that 95 percent of state preprimary and primary school teachers in Euskadi had no knowledge of Euskara, and the situation was not much better in private schools. The authoritarian state, since 1937, had made it impossible for anyone to become an officially accredited teacher who was a known speaker of Euskara. It was remarkable, according to the study, that the *ikastola* system sustained a parallel Euskara-medium system replete with innovations in pedagogy and the production of textbooks without public resources.³⁷ The militancy required by teachers and parents to operate clandestine *ikastolas* during the dictatorship was indicative of how central the language continued to be to the identity of many Basques.

Two major waves of domestic migration—from approximately 1900–1930 and 1950–1980—dramatically altered the demographics of what became the Autonomous Community of Euskadi in 1979: *euskaldunes* became a minority and the Spanish language predominated in urban centers. It was during the first migration wave that the modern nationalist movement coalesced under the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)

and expressed an anti-migrant position. An early PNV platform claimed that most Spanish migrants would be expelled in an independent Basque Country; only those with needed skills would be permitted to stay as temporary laborers.³⁸ Moreover, the party statutes in the 1930s stated that only those of "Basque descent are considered members."³⁹ The fracture between native Basques and Spanish migrants started to heal in the 1950s when Basque nationalists began to discard references to race and adopted language as the main distinguishing element of national belonging.⁴⁰ Schools were a main site of conflict resolution as the teachers in *ikastolas* insisted on having migrant children learn Euskara alongside natives. In rural areas, there was some resistance among Basque parents to integrated classrooms, but relations improved slowly as Basques came to see that the experiment could help achieve the broader goal of improving the status of Euskara.⁴¹

Even before the Basque Statute of Autonomy took effect in late 1979 and competency over education was transferred to the new Basque government, demand for bilingual and Euskara-medium schooling had grown significantly. The democratizing Spanish state promulgated two Royal Decrees in early 1979 paving the way for public funding for the *ikastola* system. By way of this decree, the Basque political elite and Spanish state tacitly agreed that most *ikastolas*, especially in urban areas, would function as Euskara "immersion schools" for students with Spanish as their mother tongue.⁴² An immediate problem was a lack of sufficient teachers and teaching materials, which the interim Basque government started to correct by collaborating with the Royal Academy of the Basque Language to establish a Euskara Teacher's Diploma and more funding for the education ministry to produce textbooks and other resources. These had an immediate impact on the number of students that were able to enroll in Euskara-medium education. During the 1971 school year, there were an estimated 18,500 children registered in sixty-seven *ikastolas*, of which approximately 20 percent were of Spanish origin. In 1980, 54,000 were enrolled in 234 *ikastolas* and nearly 35 percent had at least one parent who migrated to Euskadi from elsewhere in Spain.⁴³

The 1982 Basic Law on the Standardization of Euskara formalized the right of every student in the Basque Country to receive his or her education in Euskara or Spanish, which propelled the creation of the three linguistic models:

- Model "A" — all subjects taught in Spanish with Euskara as an additional subject
- Model "B" — some subjects taught in Spanish and others in Euskara
- Model "D" — all subjects taught in Euskara with Spanish as an additional subject

According to the law, parental choice reigns supreme. A Euskara-speaking family can choose model A for their child just the same as a Spanish-

speaking family can select model D. In practice, administering this system is difficult because demand for the three models is not distributed geographically. For example, in areas of Gipuzkoa—the province with the highest number of Euskara-speakers—there are not enough pupils to form model A programs, which means that a parent must accept either a significant commute to school for their child or a non-preferred linguistic model. Nevertheless, for those in favour of promoting Euskara, the parental choice model has had the intended effect of pushing more children of Spanish migrants into model D. Many Spanish migrants and their offspring recognize the economic and social value of bilingualism, and are thus choosing model D because it offers the opportunity to achieve fluency in Euskara. During the 2003–2004 school year, 61.4 percent of three-year-olds were enrolled in model D, 30.5 percent in model B, and only 8.1 percent in model A.

Efforts to revitalize Euskara through the education system encountered a new challenge at the turn of the century: foreign immigration. Spanish-speaking parents now embracing Euskara for their offspring are primarily second-generation migrants who were born in the Basque Country. Migration to Euskadi from within Spain slowed after 1980. Fewer migrants along with a decrease in the birthrate generated concerns about demographic replacement. In the first decade of the new century, the solution to a future demographic crisis in Euskadi appeared in the form of foreign immigration.

In the 1990s, Spain became a major destination for immigrants; by the early 2000s, foreign nationals made up over 12 percent of Spain's population. At first, not many "new" immigrants were arriving in Euskadi, but this changed rather quickly. The official immigration rate reached 8 percent by 2012 and this figure does not include recently naturalized immigrants and "illegal" migrants.⁴⁴ The major sending countries are Morocco, Romania, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Pakistan, and Senegal, and so these newcomers are "visible" minorities in Euskadi. Few, if any, arrive with any knowledge that Euskadi is an officially bilingual society. Latin Americans integrate easily into the predominantly Spanish-speaking milieu and other immigrants learn Spanish to access the labor market, generally in the construction, service, and informal sectors. Currently, there are few highly skilled foreign migrants arriving in Euskadi with the intent to enter the education, health, and government economic sectors, in which competency in Euskara is a significant asset. Nevertheless, since these newcomers are settling in Euskadi, the choices they make regarding the education of their offspring will have major implications for the Euskara revitalization project, something Basque nationalists are fully aware of. The proceeding section examines how Basque nationalists, often working through the regional Basque government, have borrowed from both multiculturalist and interculturalist modes of thought to urge immigrants to embrace Euskara for their children.

Euskara as a Means of Integration and Social Cohesion in a Diverse Euskadi

As Euskadi became an immigrant-receiving society, some voices within nationalist circles expressed grave concern about the potential deleterious effects of "new" immigration on Basque language and culture.⁴⁵ Extremist positions against diversity are marginal in Euskadi, but concerns about the consequences for the Euskara revival are widespread. A draconian policy to negate the model A option for immigrant-origin pupils in Euskadi has never been seriously considered for a number of reasons. First, and most importantly, any such legislation by the Basque government would be annulled as unconstitutional. Article three of Spanish Constitution states that "Castilian [Spanish] is the official language of the State. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it." In fact, the PP and some NGOs claim that the current education system provides inadequate opportunities for students to receive a Spanish-medium education in Euskara-speaking areas. Second, even many nationalists in Euskadi envision a bilingual society rather than a unilingual Euskara one. In its latest election manifesto, the most popular nationalist party, PNV, promotes "bilingualism that is as equal and balanced . . . and guarantees the linguistic liberty of Basque citizens."⁴⁶ In the same section, though, the party recognizes that linguistic equality requires governmental intervention to revitalize Euskara given its underrepresentation in official institutions and society.

The Basque government started to define its approach to the foreign population in the early 2000s. At the time, a three-party coalition including PNV, another nationalist party (Basque Solidarity—EA), and a leftist party (United Left-Greens—EB) held the balance of power in the Basque Parliament. An immigration directorate within the Ministry of Housing and Social Affairs was created in 2001, and in 2003, the first broad policy framework for integration was released. According to the Spanish Constitution, competency over the management of foreigners is a state responsibility, but integration measures, such as education, culture, housing, and social assistance generally fall under the jurisdiction of the autonomous communities. Under the heading "interculturalism," the cultural rights of new immigrants are described as having a "double dimension." On one hand, emphasis is placed on facilitating access to the two official languages (Euskara and Castilian Spanish) of the Basque Country. At the same time, it is recommended that public intervention pursue the maintenance and development of the "home cultures of immigrant persons within society." To achieve this, immigrant collectivities should be empowered through collaboration with Basque institutions to "freely develop their cultural identity within Basque society."⁴⁷

The Basque government followed up on its immigration plan with more specific plans for intervention in areas, such as education, considered central to integration. In late 2003, the Basque Ministry of Education

released its plan to integrate the growing immigrant student population. It details Basque society's broad ambitions to construct a "common space of respect and tolerance" without distinctions based on "race, mother tongue or home cultures."⁴⁸ With respect to language, section four details how the Basque government weighs the factors involved for immigrant families making a decision regarding the language model best suited to their children's education. The mission statement focuses on the social, personal, and educational repercussions of not being able to speak either of the official languages of the Basque Country. In this way, the priority is to ensure competency in at least one language, Euskara or Spanish, when circumstances dictate that bilingualism is not achievable. The plan cites the pupil's age, neighborhood, and language spoken at home as important factors that should help families arrive at a decision. If a student enters the educational system at a young age without notable hindrances (e.g., learning disability), models D or B are recommended because bilingualism, or at least some capacity in Euskara, is the preferable outcome. Immigrant families that speak Spanish in the home are given special attention in the plan because of the commonly held misconception among immigrants that the Basque Country is a unilingual Spanish-speaking society. Although parental choice is accented, the two Euskara-centric models are considered preferable for capable immigrant pupils, especially young students living in Euskara-speaking areas, not out of obligation, but because it is "useful for anyone wishing to feel a member of Basque society."⁴⁹

It was already clear in 2003—when the foreign population was less than 5 percent—that immigrant pupils were concentrating in public schools in urban neighborhoods while Basque-born students found themselves predominantly in the private system. Moreover, the parental choice model created a "vicious circle" whereby immigrant-dense neighborhoods acted as a push factor driving more immigrants into model A. Public-sector schools teaching primarily in Spanish have, therefore, much higher than average rates of poverty and marginalization.⁵⁰ The Ministry of Education identified this as problematic for the learning of both official languages because neither was being spoken outside the classroom in many instances. Citing research from sociolinguistics, a ministerial committee made a case for incentivizing school integration, which would generate better language learning outcomes for immigrant pupils. This led directly to a linking of a portion of public subsidies to whether or not a school (private or public) maintained a balance of native and immigrant students reflective of the overall percentage of immigrant pupils in Euskadi.

Another early initiative was to tackle the issue of late-entry immigrant children. The "Language Reinforcement Projects" were first implemented in the 2005–2006 academic year to assist pupils who "do not know one or two of the official languages of Euskadi." The underlying intention of the

project was to stream more immigrant pupils into models D and B. To this end, late-entry pupils into models B or D are accommodated through an adapted curriculum that allows them to spend a portion of their day outside their normal classroom to receive tailored Euskara lessons. More broadly, educators are empowered to adapt the curriculum to respect the culture of student in order to strengthen their capacity to succeed and enrich their learning experience.

Another component of the "Reinforcement Projects," started in 2004, is the distribution of multilingual information pamphlets to inform immigrant families about the characteristics of the Basque education system. The pamphlets were made available in various languages such as English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, and Mandarin Chinese. These were considered important for educating immigrant families about the Euskara language and its utility for social and economic participation in Basque society. The pamphlets display children of different races learning together, an important visual to combat the stereotype that Euskara-centric schools are ethnically homogenous and insular.

Around this time, the Basque Ministry of Education began formalizing criteria to help immigrant families choose the "correct" linguistic profile for their children. From 2003 until 2009, the ministry encouraged immigrant-origin and new arriving students to enter model D or B depending on their living environment. The basic recommendation has been that pupils living in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas should enroll in model "B" and families in Euskara-speaking areas should choose model D for their children. Nevertheless, an addendum to this suggestion advises Spanish-speaking students with no serious academic issues to enter model D, at least for their primary education. Moreover, a decree from the Ministry of Education in 2007 made it obligatory for *all* students to pass a difficult proficiency exam in Euskara to graduate from secondary school. A good amount of model D students do not achieve the level of Euskara fluency to pass the exam; in fact, 32 percent of students enrolled in the model D system are unable to pass the B2 proficiency exam in Euskara—equivalent to the Cambridge first certification in English—by the end of compulsory education.⁵¹ Although the decree was not targeted at the immigrant population specifically, logically, families without the means to help their children meet the Euskara requirement would have to choose model D to give them a chance to graduate.

The Spanish centralist parties, along with some civic organizations, began to mobilize against what they perceived to be preferential treatment for the community of Euskara speakers whom are still a minority in Euskadi. Following the 2007 decree, a powerful interest group emerged—Platform for Freedom of Linguistic Choice (PLEL)—with a goal to defend the right of all students in the Basque Country to study in their mother tongue. For Latin American-origin pupils in Euskadi, PLEL contended that they would be best served in model A programs, and lamented that

the nationalist government was making this exceedingly difficult. The PLEL also recognized the emerging linguistic diversity in Euskadi; for many immigrant pupils, neither Spanish nor Euskara would be their mother tongue. To attract this growing segment of the student body to the group's aims, the PLEL argued that mother tongue refers not only to the language spoken at home, but the primary language in one's daily interactions.⁵² For the majority of immigrants in urban areas, that language continues to be Spanish, argues PLEL, and therefore Basque citizens must defend the right of parents to choose their child's linguistic model—inscribed in the Basic Law of Euskara—without government interference or undue hardship (e.g., long commute). The Basque PP, supported by the PLEL, submitted a successful appeal in 2008 to the Superior High Court of the Basque Country against decree 175/2007. When the PNV-led coalition lost control of the Basque executive after the 2009 regional elections, decree 175/2007 was scrapped and the new education minister promised that the principles of equality between the two official languages and parental choice in education would be restored. There was never full consensus with the nationalist parties (PNV and EA) that decree 175/2007 was necessary given that families from various backgrounds wanted their children to learn Euskara.

Since winning the 2012 Basque regional election, the PNV has continued to emphasize Euskara as a vehicle of integration that will allow the burgeoning cultural diversity in the Basque Country to flourish. In late 2013, the Minister of Education and Deputy Minister of Language Policy made "inclusion" and "living together" core components of their speech in San Sebastián to mark the International Day of Euskara. The occasion has been celebrated in the Basque Country and abroad in diaspora communities since 1948. This was the first time that so much significance was thrust upon non-native speakers of Euskara and their role in the future of the language. Many of the activities to celebrate the occasion in the province of Bizkaia included "new" Euskara speakers—known as *euskaldunberris*—and were targeted at immigrant children to make them feel as though Euskara is their language *too*.

The current president of Euskadi, Iñigo Urkullu, made similar remarks to commemorate the United Nations International Migrants Day in 2014. He called on society to welcome immigrants into the Basque nation while giving full respect to their cultural backgrounds. Urkullu contended that maintaining cultural links to their home country does not compromise immigrants' capacity to integrate and contribute to the Basque Country. He evoked an important part of Basque history, stating Basques "know much about migration" because of the historical circumstances that drove so many to leave the Basque Country and "were welcomed by other people and cultures."⁵³ Responding to recent restrictions to immigrants' social rights legislated by the Spanish state, Urkullu affirmed that the Basque government would combat limitations to the

rights and liberties of immigrants and acknowledge the intrinsic value of diversity. He opined that Euskara has a role to play in "social cohesion" and the construction of "plural and inclusive citizenship" that does not distinguish between Basques and foreigners.⁵⁴

Unlike elsewhere in Europe, Basque nationalists are not using coercion to enforce language adaptation, but encouraging the diversification of Basque culture through interactions with foreign cultures, using Euskara as the fulcrum for the new society. Novel educational initiatives by the PNV-led government prior to 2009 provide further illustration of their commitment to include immigrants in the community without pursuing one-sided assimilation. In the normative debate surrounding multicultural practices in education, Brian Barry argues that multiculturalism in schools, in particular when this involves "separate curricula for distinct groups," discourages the "habits of cooperation or sentiments of trust."⁵⁵ Barry's arguments might resonate even stronger with substate nationalists because the education system is the primary site of integration. Nevertheless, the Basque Department of Education rejected Barry's position in 2003 with the formalization of its Immigrant Student Program: "multiculturalism is more than the idea of acceptance and tolerance. In addition to acknowledging and adapting to different cultures, it calls for dialogue based on equality and reciprocity . . . immigrant students should feel they are part of the group; they should feel they are appreciated, and that their languages and cultures are valued."⁵⁶ The programme outlined actions appropriate to the end of genuine inclusion:

- Include material in the curriculum about other cultures, focusing on bringing "us" together
- Reflect the different cultures and languages in the school environment
- Utilize different cultural elements in activities and conduct them in heterogeneous groups

In various parts of the program, both concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism are used to convey the underlying philosophy of the program. Indeed, actions to promote diversity recognition, cohesion, and the learning of Euskara by immigrant pupils are presented as compatible rather than antagonistic.

The key benchmark to evaluate the Basque model of integration for immigrant pupils is whether families are choosing model D. A disproportionate percentage of immigrant pupils still end up enrolled in model A. Yet, the increase in the percentage of immigrant pupils studying in model D has been impressive. During the 2006–2007 academic year, 26.8 percent of the immigrant student body was enrolled in model D, an increase of nearly 8 percent since 2003–2004, but still low compared to the 50.6 percent of native Basque pupils in model D.⁵⁷ Data released for the 2015–2016 academic year reveals that 43 percent of the immigrant student

population is studying in model D this year.⁵⁸ More and more immigrant families are concluding that learning Euskara will favour the integration of their children into Basque society, even though there is no obligation to do so.⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

Since substate nationalists often consider language a core feature of their distinctiveness, immigration can appear to be a "double-edged sword." Most substate nationalists would like to increase the prominence of their language, which means having more people learn and use it. Since birth-rates are on the decline in the West, immigration should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the prestige of minority languages. On the other hand, historical precedent highlights that immigration poses a risk for substate nations: migrants in earlier epochs did not necessarily switch allegiances to the substate nation or adopt its language. In Canada, for example, Southern European immigrants to Quebec in the mid-twentieth century preferred to integrate into Anglophone society and send their children to English-medium schools. By some accounts, this choice was driven by the hostile posture toward foreigners by Québécois nationalists who favored an ethnic definition of the nation.

How, then, can substate nationalists attract immigrants to their territory and encourage them to adopt the substate national identity and language? This challenge is more onerous at the substate level because once in the country, immigrants are generally free to move wherever they want. States need not be concerned that the supply of immigrants seeking refuge and economic opportunities will dry up even if they emphasize the expectation that newcomers assimilate or face sanctions. In the Basque Country, nationalists have highlighted a refashioned inclusive Basque identity—one that borrows from the philosophies of interculturalism and multiculturalism—to meet the long-term goals of population growth and revitalization of Euskara. Of course, the Basque situation is not perfect; immigrants are concentrated in certain neighborhoods and a small minority expresses anti-immigrant sentiments. Nevertheless, the growing number of immigrant families enrolling their children in Euskara-medium education indicates that a strategy of respect for cultural differences does not necessarily lead to parallel societies, it can, in fact, build the common bonds of belonging. Perhaps states currently swept up in the anti-multiculturalism frenzy need to look at places like the Basque Country as a reminder that the vast majority of immigrants would respond to compromise and flexibility with a greater commitment to integrate into their new society.

NOTES

1. Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 278.
2. Beltza, *El Nacionalismo Vasco, 1876–1936* (San Sebastián: Editorial Txertoa, 1976), 220.
3. Pedro de Yrizar, "Los Dialectos a Variedades de la Lengua Vasca," *International Journal of Basque Linguistics and Philology* 7, no. 1 (1973).
4. Eduardo J. Vieitez, "New Minorities and Linguistic Diversity: Some Reflections from the Spanish and Basque Perspectives," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 6, no. 2 (2007): 7.
5. The fact that the majority of foreign immigrants are from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America magnified the issue. See Cristina Blanco, "Inmigración Extranjera en el País Vasco: Estrategias Políticas para la Gestión de la Diversidad," *Política y Sociedad* 45, no. 1 (2008).
6. Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, "Illiberal Means to Liberal Ends? Understanding Recent Immigrant Integration Policies in Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37, no. 6 (2011).
7. There has been a slowly, but steady increase in the number of immigrant pupils enrolled in Euskara-medium education.
8. William A. Galston, "Two Concepts of Liberalism," *Ethics* 105, no. 3 (1995).
9. Will Kymlicka, "Multicultural Citizenship within Multinational States," *Ethnicities* 11, no. 3 (2011): 283.
10. Scotland is the commonly cited exception. Nevertheless, nationalists do express interest in raising the profile of Scottish Gaelic in official institutions such as schools.
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16. Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, "How Does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 33, no. 2 (2012): 179.
17. Keith Banting et al., "Do Multicultural Policies Erode the Welfare State? An Empirical Analysis," in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies*, ed. Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (New York: Oxford, 2006); Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, "Assessing the Backlash against Multiculturalism in Europe," in *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*, ed. Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf (New York: Routledge, 2010).
18. Sara Wallace Goodman, "Integration Requirements for Integration's Sake? Identifying, Categorising and Comparing Civic Integration Policies," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, no. 5 (2010).
19. Triadafilopoulos, "Illiberal Means to Liberal Ends," 862.
20. Vertovec, "Towards Post-Multiculturalism? Changing Communities, Conditions and Contexts of Diversity," 90–92.
21. Pen Mouritsen and Tore Vincents Olsen, "Denmark between Liberalism and Nationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 4 (2013).

22. Kymlicka, "Multicultural Citizenship within Multinational States," 88–99.
23. Omar Guillermo Encarnación, *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2008), 63.
24. Tomás Bárbulo and Josep Garriga, "Rajoy Quiere Obligar a los Inmigrantes a Firmar un Contrato de Integración," *El País* (Madrid), February 7, 2008, http://elpais.com/diario/2008/02/07/espana/1202338806_850215.html.
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30. Alain Gagnon, André Lecours, and Genevieve Nootens, eds., *Contemporary Majority Nationalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).
31. Triadafilopoulos, "Illiberal Means to Liberal Ends? Understanding Recent Immigrant Integration Policies in Europe," 871.
32. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
33. Triadafilopoulos, "Illiberal Means to Liberal Ends? Understanding Recent Immigrant Integration Policies in Europe," 873.
34. Viet Bader, "Ethnic and Religious State Neutrality: Utopia or Myth," in *Changing the Basis of Citizenship in the Modern State*, ed. Hakan G. Sicakkan and Yngve Lithman (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 169.
35. These figures include the four Basque provinces of Spain: Araba, Bizkaia, Nafarroa, and Gipuzkoa. Nafarroa, however, chose to form its own autonomous community after the transition to democracy in Spain. Nafarroa has the fewest Euskara speakers of the four provinces. Robert P. Clark, "Language and Politics in Spain's Basque Provinces," *West European Politics* 4, no. 1 (1981): 87.
36. *Ibid.*, 89.
37. Nicholas Gardner, *Basque in Education in the Basque Autonomous Community* (Vitoria: Basque Department of Culture, 2002), 25.
38. Marianne Heiberg, "Insiders/Outsiders: Basque Nationalism," *European Archives of Sociology* 16, no. 2 (1975): 185.
39. Julen Zabalo, "Basque Nationalism's Changing Discourse on the Nation," *Social Identities* 14, no. 6 (2008): 799.
40. Julen Zabalo, Txoli Mateos, and Iker Iraola, "Conflicting Nationalist Traditions and Immigration: The Basque Case from 1950 to 1980," *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 3 (2013): 518.
41. Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (London: Hurst, 1997), 201–2.
42. Ignasi Vila, "Bilingual Education in the Basque Country," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 7, no. 2–3 (1986): 132.
43. Clark, "Language and Politics in Spain's Basque Provinces," 96.
44. "Euskadi es la Comunidad donde más Aumentan los Extranjeros," *El Correo* (Bilbao), April 20, 2012, <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20120420/pvasco-espana/euskadi-comunidad-donde-aumentan-20120420.html>.
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46. Basque Nationalist Party [EAJ-PNV], "Compromiso Euskadi: Programa Electoral 2012," http://www.eaj-pnv.eus/documentos/programa-electoral-parlamento-vasco-2012_14391.html.
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49. *Ibid.*
50. Felix Etxeberria and Kristina Elozegi, "Basque, Spanish and Immigrant Minority Languages in Basque Schools," *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 21, no. 1 (2008): 75.
51. Eduardo Azumendi, "Los alumnos que no alcancen el nivel B2 de Euskara podrán tener el título de ESO," *El País* (Vitoria), March 25, 2008, http://elpais.com/diario/2008/03/25/paisvasco/1206477600_850215.html.
52. "La plataforma de elección lingüística exige libertad para elegir la lengua para educar a sus hijos," *El Correo* (Bilbao), February 21, 2009, <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/20090221/mas-actualidad/sociedad/concentracion-derechos-linguisticos-bilbao-200902211307.html>.
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54. *Ibid.*
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56. See note 48 above.
57. Vieyetz, "New Minorities and Linguistic Diversity: Some Reflections from the Spanish and Basque Perspectives," 9.
58. Marta Fernandez Vallejo, "Los alumnos inmigrantes estudian ya de forma mayoritaria en modelos euskaldunes," *Diario Vasco* (San Sebastián), November 30, 2015, <http://www.diariovasco.com/sociedad/201511/30/alumnos-inmigrantes-estudian-forma-20151129222529.html>.
59. Moreover, unlike French in Quebec or Catalan in Catalonia, Euskara does not have much economic value outside a small number of professions.