

SPAIN, COUNTRY OF IMMIGRATION

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Considering that Spain has gone from a country of emigration to one of immigration only in the mid-eighties, the history of Spanish immigration is recent, but intense. It was not until the beginning of the present decade that the foreign population residing in Spain surpassed the number of Spanish living abroad. The change came about, in the first place, due to the return of the Spanish population from abroad, initially from Europe and more recently, from Latin America. In the second place comes the arrival of foreigners from Europe, and thirdly, the entrance of low-income country nationals, especially Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, into the Spanish labour market. Thus the foreign population in Spain has, especially in the last few years, grown considerably. Yet, it is not only the numbers that are changing, but also population's origins and distribution around the country.

According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, 4,710,757 foreigners were either registered or had valid residence permits as of 30 September 2009. This accounts for around 10% of the total population, but if we further consider municipal census data, which do not require valid legal documents, the figures increase to 5,598,691.

38% of the immigrant population comes from the European Union, of which Romania is the most important country with 728,580 people; 30% are from Latin America, of which Ecuador is the most important with 441,455, followed by Colombia with 288,255; and 20% are from Africa, with the most numerous group from this continent coming from Morocco with 758,174 residents.

Insofar as destinations, 67% of immigrants are concentrated in four autonomous regions: Cataluña (21%), Madrid (20%), Andalusia (13%) and Valencia (13%). The rest of the regions have lower percentages, with the most important in Canarias (6%), Murcia (5%) and Baleares (4%). This demonstrates one of the main characteristics of immigration in Spain, namely, its highly concentrated geographic density.

The arrival of the foreign population has also had direct consequences on the demographic structure. For example, this immigration leads to a change in the composition of the age and sex of the population, both in the configuration of the family (mixed marriages) and birth rate.

Spanish and foreign, especially non-European Union, population age pyramids also have different profiles. The Spanish are older, with 29% over 54 years of age

compared to 5% of non-European Union foreigners. However these differences disappear in younger (under 20) groups. All of this leads to another differentiating aspect, the proportion of the active population. Whereas 63% of Spaniards are of work age, 77% of non-European Union foreigners are. With regard to sex, the Spanish female population is slightly larger than the male (51% and 49%, respectively), whilst the proportion of foreign males to females is larger, 54% compared to 46%.

THE NEED TO DESIGN INTEGRATION POLICIES

The consolidation of immigration in Spain and its presence in different spheres, such as the educational, residential, labour, associations, etc., makes it necessary to incorporate integration and design strategies that make it as least conflictive as possible. This task falls into the hands of the central government, which is in charge of legislating anything affecting the foreign population and immigration phenomenon (such as laws on foreigners and regulations for their application). Their responsibilities include border control, regulating entries and exits, accepting or refusing applications for asylum and refugees, designing contingencies and setting labour quotas by sector and region, signing bilateral agreements with other countries, and seeking governmental formulas for access to the Spanish labour market (with Ecuador, Colombia, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, Poland and Romania). Further duties are repatriation agreements (with Nigeria), visas, etc., designing national plans for integration (such as the GRECO Plan, in 2001, or the *Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Inmigración* [Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Immigration] drafted in 2006). In any case, some of the most important actions carried out by the Spanish Government have been massive legalization processes, the creation of a Forum for Immigrant Integration, and putting the policies or directives designed by European Union into practice in the national territory (under the Schengen agreements, the Amsterdam Treaty, the Council of Tampere and others as they are adopted). The Spanish state, and the administrations in power since the early 1990's, have conceived of immigration as a permanent phenomenon, and have developed a series of political and administrative instruments for its regulation.

The *Plan para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes* (Immigrant Social Integration Plan), or PISI, was passed on 2 December 1994 as a framework of reference for the national government, proposal for action by autonomous regional and local city governments as a way for the general public to actively participate in the integration of the immigrant population. This plan was intended to address immigration in general, for the first time in Spain, following European Union directives. The PISI began by acknowledging that "...migratory movement represents an essential factor in the

transformation and change of Western societies which are faced with the challenge of a multicultural and multiethnic configuration.” Two more instruments created are the Immigration Integration Forum and the Permanent Immigration Observatory (OPI).

The first national plan that concerned itself with the affairs of the foreign population, however, was the *Programa Global de Regulación y Coordinación de la Extranjería y la Inmigración* (General Programme for the Regulation and Co-ordination of the Foreign Population and Immigration), commonly known as the Greco Plan, a multi-annual plan carried out from 2001 to 2004.

Due to the intensification of the stream of migrants changing the population landscape and the need to approach social integration in an all-inclusive manner, the socialist government of Rodríguez Zapatero drafted the *Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Integración* (Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration) (2007-2010), an ambitious plan that carries out a diversity of actions to foster integration and intercultural coexistence.

LABOUR INCORPORATION AND THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS

With respect to the relationship between migration data and the Spanish labour market, the situation of foreign workers in the various labour sectors shows their incorporation in the secondary market where manual labour is important (see Portes and Böröcz, 1989). Foreigners are found mainly in four sectors, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics *Encuesta de Población Activa* (Survey of the Active Population) for the last quarter of 2008: *construction* (23.6%), *agriculture* (21.2%), *services* (13.6% of employment) and *industry* (10.7%).

The largest demand for labour in the *construction* sector has allowed the absorption of both native workers from other sectors of activity, especially agriculture, and immigrants. However, the dynamic activity that characterises the construction sector does not translate into stability for the workers. One of the characteristics of the construction sector is its marked instability, which is determined by economic cycles. Thus, dependence on investment has direct repercussions on the creation of jobs and on the characteristics required of labour employed such as flexibility, intra and inter-sector mobility, etc. The heavy specialisation of jobs to be done must also be mentioned, as it leads to a strong division of production and atomisation of businesses. Here the immigrants occupy, once again, the most precarious positions. Although it is true that they are beginning to gain access to this type of employment, it is menial labour requiring little or no qualifications, weak contract regulation, and its highly precarious nature, lack of safety and hygiene, seasonality and mobility.

In *agriculture*, the immigrant is a wage earner whereas the more qualified positions, such as supervisors, agricultural engineers, etc., are reserved for native labours. Therefore, instead of competition between native and immigrant labour, we need to speak of substitution in this sector. In the end, competition can only be related to the wages between legalised and illegal immigrants, since the latter generally are not as well paid.

With regard to the service sector, *domestic help*, characterised by being heavily female, should be stressed. Integration of Spanish women on the labour market is bringing about a need to employ immigrant women in the private sector to carry out housework, cleaning, and childcare, and to care for old people etc.

In recent years, the number of immigrant women employed in this sector has been growing. The main characteristic of this market segment is its irregularity. In this case, certain ethnic discrimination should be highlighted: Latin American women (Ecuadorians and Colombians) are preferred to Eastern European (Romanian and Lithuanian), in the last place are African women (Moroccan or Senegalese). The main reason given for this is the language barrier, so Latin Americans become the most demanded ethnic group in this sector.

In the *hotel and restaurant* sector, in spite of the growing importance of tourism and service in the Spanish economy, the proportion of immigrant workers is not very high. On one hand, it is the sector in which most native workers are employed, and on the other hand, reliable statistics are difficult to find because of the high indices of irregular employment.

In any case, differences are found among immigrants relating to the individual's nationality. In fact, Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans are acquiring access to this sector faster than Africans. Again there is ethnic discrimination that leads African immigrants, in general, to be employed in agriculture.

Moreover, the hotel and restaurant subsector is characterized by strong seasonality, which has caused the existence of two large labour segments, namely workers with stable employment, and seasonal workers who depend on the requirements of tourism and are hired either on a contract basis or part-time. The heterogeneity of the sector leads to a multiplicity of jobs that range from highly qualified (managers, human resources, administration, etc.) to unqualified (cleaning, maintenance, kitchen help, etc.). In general, immigrants are employed in the second type of jobs, in which there is a significant differentiation between jobs dealing with the public and those that do not. So it is relatively easy to find Latin American or Eastern European immigrants as waiters, compared to African immigrants who are employed in the kitchen, on the loading dock, or for cleaning.

All of the sectors in Spain in which immigrants are integrated are characterised by a higher frequency to be an employee.

It is obvious that immigrants occupy the most changeable, precarious and unstable jobs on the Spanish labour market. Furthermore, they are employed by an underground economy which, for many workers, is the only way to earn an income either because they cannot find legal employment or because they are not legalised themselves. It is precisely the immigrants who become the ideal source of labour for an informal economy, since their legal situation, their need for work, or the peculiarities of the market make them accept jobs that are refused by natives.

In the current economic crisis, Spain is going through more difficulties coming out of it than other developed countries. The construction industry, which was the main cause of the recession, has led to the loss of the payments of thousands of people into the social security system, the most being the immigrant population (among whom it has lost around 85% of its membership).

Generally, the crisis has also meant a new outlook on the situation of immigrants in Spain, on enforcement of the laws governing the foreign population, and the design of policies for their return. There are two programmes for assisting immigrants to return to their homes with public funding. Several different organisations take part in the first, which has been operating since 2003 and was initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Immigration and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). A second programme was started up in 2008, coinciding with the economic crisis, to help unemployed foreign workers with the right to collect unemployment payments to return home.

The economic future of immigrants in Spain, the adaptation of the second generation and the success or failure of integration policies are yet to be seen.

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