

1 Experiences of the Spanish *Gastarbeiters* (guest workers) in the Federal Republic of Germany: Opportunities for Reflection on Hispanic/Latino Workers in the U.S.

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2 “*whether or not guest workers stay in the country after their visas expire depends on the way the programme is administered*”^a

“*Latino identity is imagined not as the negation of the non-Latino, but as the affirmation of the cultural and social realities and possibilities inscribed in their own human trajectory*”^b

(Flores, 1997: 189-190)

3 My goal today is to discuss the processes of social integration of temporary workers from Spain into Germany so that the panel can compare these experiences with those of the Hispanic/Latino workers in the U.S. You will see that there are some similarities as well as some important differences in processes in both countries. We will go into greater depth on these issues later, in the Q and A period.

I am especially interested (as you saw in the introduction) in looking for the links between the more subjective aspects of social integration and the macrostructural conditions (juridical, political, economical, etc.) of the lives of the immigrants.

4 With this in mind, I will focus on the experiences of the first wave of guest workers, or *Gastarbeiter* of Spain into Germany, from the beginning of their emigration until the time when some of them became residents (others returned to the homeland). I will broadly sketch the characteristics of the process of integration.

5 I must begin by defining what we, in the social sciences, call social integration. I will also describe the social characteristics of the first wave of *Gastarbeiter* from Spain.

6 I understand *social integration* to be a continuous process rather than a static condition; a process that encompasses the various phases of the life of the immigrant; a multifaceted experience influenced by a myriad of sociological, cultural, legal, political, economic and psychological factors, to cite only a few.

7 In reality, it is unlikely that one could speak of full social integration. There is always more integration in some aspects of socio-cultural life than in others, depending upon the perspective of the person doing the assessment (the emigrant, social worker, researcher, etc.).

8 Integration is a matter of degrees. Depending on the tools we use to assess integration, we tend to speak of individuals being *more or less integrated into a society* just as we do when we refer to poverty, health, well being, quality of life or development, and so on. It appears to me that integration, as well as the other concepts just mentioned, have a strong utopic or ideal component, so we have to be sensible in our definitions.

9 I like to associate the concepts of social integration and citizenship. So, with regard to the first generation of settled *Gastarbeiters* from Spain into Germany, I would say that “ideal” integration occurs when these workers have access to citizenship, both *de jure* and *de facto*, because then they will enjoy or have access to observable benefits and conditions in the host society, equivalent to those enjoyed by the native workers — or at least be on equal footing with them.

10 According to Malgesini and Giménez, integration should be “a process of creation or generation of new citizenship”. In the case of the so-called “multicultural citizen”, Martiniello suggests that to achieve multicultural citizenship a number of conditions are required.

11 *“The starting point must be the equality of rights for all citizens. Secondly, it must be recognized that mere formal equality does not necessarily lead to equality in matters of respect, resources, opportunities or well being. Thirdly, mechanisms must be established for the representation and participation of all groups. And, finally, the individuals with particular traits, needs and wishes become the beneficiaries of differential consideration; considerations which, of course, cannot be contrary to the general norms of the citizenry in general.”* (Martiniello, 1995: 225)

12 When I refer to the “first generation of *Gastarbeiters*”, I will be speaking about those Spanish migrants who lived in Germany for at least twenty years. Today, most of them are senior citizens. In Spain, they are known as the continental migrants (continental migrants, as opposed to those who migrated across the ocean, particularly to Latin America). These continental migrants left Spain in the ‘60s and ‘70s for economic reasons. Many of them left under the protection of the bilateral agreement signed by Spain and Germany on March 29, 1960.

13 To make things easier, we can refer to three periods in the process of integration. These periods are related to events that were happening in Spain and Germany. During the first period, in the 1960s, the work force from Spain and other countries was in much demand. During the second period, in the 1970s and mid 1980s, there were serious restrictions on the immigration and the residency of foreign workers in Germany. The third period began with the admission of Spain into the European Union.

14 During the first period (the ‘60s), Spain was experiencing economic instability. Agriculture was depressed and living conditions for farmers were very hard. Jobs in agriculture were scarce and industrial development could not absorb the unemployed. There was an excess of labor in Spain and the government was eager to make it easy for Spain to enter the European market. Out-migration was considered to be an “escape valve” for the problem of unemployment. The Instituto Español de Emigración began to sponsor out-migration. Out-migration of workers was considered to be an element of Spanish economic development.

15 Several years had elapsed since World War II. Germany and Central Europe were involved with reconstruction. Germany was in need of foreign workers, mostly unskilled or semiskilled. This rapid industrial and economic expansion is known as *Wirtschaftswunder* or German economic miracle.

16 During the 1960s, foreign residents in Germany numbered only 686,200 (a mere 1.2% of the population of Germany); in the year 2000, there were 7,296,800 foreign residents (8.9% of the population).

17 An important segment of the Spanish migrants were “controlled or assisted” migrants, since the flux was organized and directed by the Instituto Español de Inmigración and the German Federal Labor Office. During the first period, as a result of the cooperation between both institutions, Spanish migration was normally organized in groups, and once in Germany the workers were given living quarters by the companies themselves, in houses or barracks provided in industrial areas.

18 According to Castles, Germany had the best-organized national government system in Europe to carry on this recruitment of labor force; their system drew on the experiences of other parts of Europe. The Spanish contingent was generally assisted by the Catholic parishes or by the people of Misión Española or by the *Caritasverband*. *Caritasverband* was the institution provided by the German system for the Spanish immigrants.

19 In the first period, the still mostly male Spanish immigrants tended to work extra hours, thinking, as they were, about returning to Spain. The Spanish workers focused on work; this was the main social trait of the group. In their scarce free time they socialized with fellow Spaniards or within the family, if there was one. They participated in activities and social events organized by the Catholic churches (Catholic missions).

20 As a commentator suggests, “*Germany was just a strange country where one happened to have a job. For some it was enough to know, in that strange country, the way from home to work and from home to the homes of Spanish friends.*” (Ruiz, 1999: 24)

21 Given the major barrier or obstacle of an unknown language, social relationships with Germans were strictly functional, whether at work, in daily shopping, etc. At that time, neither was Germany ready for the settling of immigrants, who were always thought of as “temporary”, nor were the Spanish workers ready for settlement. The Spaniards were fixed on returning and could not imagine their stay in Germany as a protracted one.

22 Some authors point out as major problems for the social integration of the immigrants the temporary character of their jobs and the absence of their families. Additional unsettling elements were the feelings of insecurity of the Spanish workers who were totally dependent on the vagaries of the labor market, their lack of formal education, their ignorance of the German language, the lack of infrastructure (schools, housing, etc.) available to them, and the little attention paid by the system to the education or professional development of these Spanish migrants.

23 The second period of the three I have mentioned started in the ‘70s. In a rather simultaneous fashion, two phenomena were observed. One is the tendency toward greater settlement of some of the workers and the other is the sudden reduction of waves of immigration (so strong in the preceding decade) as well as the return of many Spanish workers to Spain. A steady return was observed after 1974.

24 In 1973, there were about 287,000 Spaniards in Germany. There were only 152,000 by 1985. In 2000, only 129,400 (a 1.7% of the foreign residents) remained; 69% of these had been residents for at least 20 years. The number of Spaniards had noticeably decreased by the time of Spain's admission to the European community.

25 Various crises in the German economy caused the reduction in the number of the Spanish migrants. The most important was the energy crisis of 1973. It caused the *Anwerbestopp*, or halting of influx of migrant workers from countries outside the European market. According to Shieren, of the 14 million "invited workers" that came to West Germany between 1955 and 1973, 11 million went back home and only 3 million remained. These changes were also caused by a number of measures taken by the German government. For example, Germany limited the immigration quotas as well as the time of residence of those who came. There were also changes in the requirements to receive social benefits. Some of these measures produced sometimes unexpected results, such as the acceleration of the coming together in Germany of whole families. A new situation of unfriendliness toward foreigners emerged.

26 This new situation of unfriendliness toward the foreigners (Leitner, 1988) remained in the collective memory of the first generation of Spanish workers. They could hardly explain how they were transformed from "guest workers" invited to contribute to the German "economic miracle", into *Auslander* (in German, the word is more vivid and connotes the notion of a stranger in the country). Some said they were considered only commodities: they were "temporary" or "seasonal" and whose limited permits for work and residency depended on the whims of the labor market.

27 This is but an instance of typical procedures of economic capitalism: temporary foreign workers are but a cushion for the protection of the native workers from the vagaries of the market. Policies for temporary workers are aimed to discourage the coming of dependents or families of the workers. Solitary workers can be sent back home more easily. Around 1971 the *Gastarbeiter* had begun to be compared with what had happened to Africans in various parts of the world.

28 During this second period, the Spanish who had decided to stay in Germany changed their patterns of social life. They rented living quarters for newly married couples and for reunited and growing families. Social life among Spaniards was strengthened. As Antonio, a son of migrants and a resident for more than 40 years told me, "*my parents' generation did not look for contact with the German population.*" (Gualda, 2001: 93)

29 Social life among the Spaniards was invigorated. Parents associations (very much linked to the Catholic church) are worth special mention. So, too, are the Casas de España and "casas regionales" (Casa de Andalucía, Casa de Galicia...), the youth groups, and the cultural societies. This amounted to a considerable "social capital" for the Spanish residents in Germany.

30 The German government's measures directed to make the *Gastarbeiter* "invisible" met only with partial success; there remained plenty of foreigners in Germany, many of them Spanish. Their goal of returning home was then postponed to the time of retirement. The rationale for the delay was the feeling that the savings they had accumulated in Germany were not sufficient, or that the children were midway toward school graduation (a feeling compounded with the little value granted to Spain's vocational education programs).

31 At times, the feeling was that the relations between the workers themselves and their native lands had weakened and there was fear with regard to the process of readaptation in Spain. The workers had basically secured a decent job in Germany, while in Spain the unemployment was at an all-time high. This last fear and uncertainty was perhaps the most important factor. As Sánchez puts it, "unemployment was reason for migration in the first place and at the end, the obstacle for not returning." (Gualda, 2001: 79)

32 There was another fear to be noted. Upon returning, they would be perceived as competitors with former coworkers in the Spanish labor market. One of the returned workers spoke with utmost clarity to Leitner: "*The situation was never as bad: In Germany they wanted us to leave (rausgeben) and in Spain no one wanted us.*" (Leitner, 1988)

33 Another migrant commented: "*Now, it sounds as if the intent is for us (the workers) to remain migrants for life, at least for our working life. Individuals are viewed merely as a force for labor. Spain seems to be saying, Stay there, enjoy your good wages and your rights and your chances for legal residency. Please do not come back. Things here do not look good. Set roots there, with your families, and forget about coming back-. This seems to be the thinking of those newly in charge of migration policy in the Spanish government.*" (Martinez Sanchez, 1984: 3) As a consequence, there grew some resentment toward the Spanish government.

34 The third period begins in the mid-80s upon the incorporation of Spain in the European Union. In this period, the process of integration was eased. Not that the integration was perfect. I understand that the integration was not of Spaniards *with* the German population outside the working place, but of Spaniards *in* Germany, within the framework of social relations with other Spaniards.

35 So, as far as I know, after Spain's admission in the European community, Spanish residents are well integrated in some aspects. They enjoy an acceptable labor situation or an adequate pension; they have an apartment—rented, as is usual in Germany for most people; and the children are well integrated in the German labor and educational systems.

36 Likewise, there has also been legal and administrative progress. They have been made participants in the public discourse. They are included in the collective image of "we" (since they now belong to the same political European entity) in contrast to the former times when they went from being *Gastarbeiter* to *Auslander*.

37 All these changes (political, legal, etc.) are important due to the fact that they are so well ingrained in the first generation; they did not lose the memory of the times past as they developed their identities—individual and collective. Some of the positive memories usually invoked to enhance self-esteem is the fact that the Spanish workers were essential in bringing about the *Wirtschaftswunder* (the German economic “miracle”), a fact that at present is recognized publicly and institutionally.

38 Belonging to a major religious denomination, Catholicism, and enjoying a reputation of not being a troublesome group were two factors that facilitated their social acceptance. Even at the peak of their numbers, the presence of Spaniards in Germany, in comparison with other national groups, was more anecdotal rather than evidential. The Spaniards were scattered around the country; they constituted a “colonia” only in a symbolic sense. Unlike other groups of immigrants, the Spaniards were not perceived as a threat. They were very “simpáticos” (cheerful and congenial), as was reflected in polls taken at the time.

39 According to a poll taken in 1980, Shiren suggested that the Spaniards, the Greeks and Yugoslavians were held as simpáticos by 26% of the Germans, as fairly simpáticos by 15%, and as neither simpáticos nor antipáticos by the rest.

40 In spite of all this, some (not most) elderly Spaniards still live in Germany suffering social discrimination, difficulties and exclusion due to their low retirement pensions which forces them to request supplemental social benefits. Particularly difficult is the situation of those elderly Spaniards who were unable to save enough to buy a home in Spain. Now, they can not dream of returning to Spain and they must rent housing in Germany, which is very high in relation to their retirement income. Added to this are the illnesses and problems associated with old age, and the outcome is marginalization and solitude.

41 Isaac Bermejo calls this “*the third major frustration of their lives.*” (Bermejo, 1998:111) The first was “*that their native land was unable to sustain them; the second, that once in Germany they were unable to fulfill their dreams; and the third, that not even in old age can they afford to realize their dream of returning home.*” (Bermejo, 1998: 111)

42 I have made reference to many of the positive aspects of the Spaniards integrating into German society. Now I have to mention some of the negative ones. The first one has to do with the overall feeling of rejection the Spaniards experienced. We are speaking of “institutional rejection” (political, legal, etc.) of the foreigner in German society, even when this foreigner has spent many years in the host country.

43 This sense of rejection has to do with the fact that, until recently, Germany did not consider itself a country of immigrants. Heckman underscores the ambivalence of German policy and German society regarding immigrants. “*There is a lack of legal, political and even cultural symbols that convey the message that German society is willing to accept new citizens.*” (Heckman, 1999: 90)

44 Brucker and Kilp (Brucker and Kilp, 1997) comment that both the German laws and the German mind are not very receptive of immigrants. Consequently, there are many hurdles in acquiring German citizenship or dual citizenship. German policies related to the acquisition of citizenship are very controversial and have been greatly debated. German policies are rooted in a tradition of careful selection and control in matters of immigration. Their policies are rooted in the *Rechts-und-Staatsangehorigkeitsgesetz* of 1913, and are based on the principle of *ius sanguinis* or blood rights.

45 Many authors have observed that during the '90s, there were several attempts to adjust German policies to the realities of current immigration and new ethno-cultural changes. In 1999, after much debate, changes in German immigration policy regarding the acquisition of citizenship became accepted. The *ius soli* (land's right) was finally accepted as a principle for the acquisition of German citizenship for the second generation of children of immigrants. Dual nationality for the children of immigrants born in Germany also became accepted. Finally, the waiting period for first generation immigrants to acquire citizenship was reduced from 15 to 8 years of continuous residency in Germany.

46 In spite of the new measures, Germany does not easily or frequently grant dual citizenship. Furthermore, dual citizenship for the children of immigrants is temporary, since, upon coming of age, these children must choose between one citizenship or the other.

47 Wydra (Wydra, 2002) has recently pointed out that *Schily's Bill to Control and Limit Immigration and to Regulate the Residency and the Integration of Citizens of the European Union and Foreigners* could be the opening for a more humane German policy toward the immigrants. The bill recognizes that immigrants are needed for the economy of the host country and that their social integration is important. Nevertheless, there are groups of unprivileged foreigners from outside the European community. It appears difficult for the nation-states to place their particular interests within a framework of human rights:

48 "It may be legitimate that a nation-state select the migrants who are allowed to enter. This is ... reflected in the widely held belief that the societal capacities to integrate foreigners are already overstrained. However, one has to ask how this practice is in line with any democratic principles referring to equality or even to standards of the human rights regime at all." (Wydra, 2002: 31)

49 For Rubio, both Germany and the United States are good examples of the tensions experienced by modern democracies between their ethical ideals and the *de facto* realities. (Rubio-Marín, 2000)

50 The feelings born from "institutional rejection" and from the principle of *ius sanguinis* explains the struggle for social identity that leads many Spaniards to strengthen their links with Spain. Antonio, who went to Germany when he was a child and lived there for more than 40 years, told us "the ideal, of course, is to enjoy dual citizenship, but if they want me to stop being a Spaniard, never! It'd amount to a humiliation in front of the Germans; it would seem as if I were slighting my people... I could not face others that way; I do not have the stomach for such." Yet, Antonio was very active in the struggle for dual citizenship.

51 The issue is one of ambivalent feelings. Rosario, in turn, declares her ambivalence: “*I am neither fish nor fowl. It is very difficult. I came as a little girl. My husband is German, my children are half-Spanish, half-German.*” Rosario had been living in Germany more than 40 years.

52 In many, the wish to return works strongly against integration, even more so when retirement looms close. Bermejo suggests that the idea of returning to Spain continues to guide the lives of many, even if they know that, in reality, it is not possible. This desire “*is an obstacle against full integration.*” (Bermejo, 1998)

53 So, the strong wish to return, the ignorance of the German language, the scant social life of the Spanish “*colonia,*” the strong ties to family life with children and grandchildren, nostalgia for the native land and fondness for the Spanish lifestyle, are all impediments to full integration. The immigrants never forget the Spanish ‘*sociabilidad*’ which is so much less formal than the German. Again, Antonio illustrates this: “*We miss the cheerfulness, the liveliness of Spain...*”

54 There are also those described as “*pendulum immigrants*”, that is, “*immigrants who come and go and retain an itinerant status for many years.*” (Bermejo, 1998: 116)

55 No wonder Garmendía comments that the Spanish continental migrant is “*a migrant who keeps returning to Spain in mind*”. He believes that the migrants went with the idea of returning rather than with the idea of integrating into a new system. This is supported by data from the *Instituto Español de Emigración* and other sources. As for those who, by the end of the ‘70s had already returned to Spain, Castillo shows, in his already classical study, that about 50% returned because of family ties; 24% because of nostalgia and 11% because they had achieved their goals. The rest gave a medley of factors as a reason for their return.

56 The fear of future unemployment, the reality of having their children in school in Germany and the perceived weakening of their own social and family relations in Spain were given as reasons for remaining in Germany. Many also said that their children had begun to work in Germany, or that the arrival of grandchildren made it hard for them to leave, while a few suggested that they had adjusted, somehow, to the German lifestyle. They expressed particular appreciation for German organization, order and cleanliness. Moreover, there was the quality of the public services (and particularly for seniors the quality of health services); also, for a few, their return was impeded by their inability to buy or build a home in Spain.

57 Let us now compare the processes of integration of the Spanish *Gastarbeiters* with similar problems encountered by Hispanic/Latino workers in the United States. To begin with, it is said that no matter how restrictive its character, the American policy tends to support the permanence of the immigrant in America, more so than the German policies. This becomes evident when one examines, for example, the number of workers who came under the Bracero Program who stayed in the U.S. Even when they stayed illegally, they found support through existing social networks and through economic structures that needed them.

58 An examination of Canadian and German data shows that those countries keep stricter controls on illegal immigrants. In the United States, according to Martínez-Brawley and Zorita, there is a heated debate regarding the status of three million Hispanic/Latino illegal workers; the issue is whether to regularize their status by offering them either total amnesty or at least an extension of their permits as “invited workers”.

59 In evaluating the efficiency of restrictive policies in the U.S., Massey and Espinosa have suggested that policies such as reducing the number of visas issued and strengthening the border patrol in the international borders do not result in restricting the flux of illegals; rather they increase the illegal population, who become “*poorer, less healthy, less educated and more tenuously connected to the rest of society*”. (Massey and Espinosa, 1997: 991)

60 A typical trait of the Hispano/Latino population in the U.S. is poverty. Based on 2000 census data, Therrien and Ramírez state that 22% of Hispanics are under the poverty level in contrast to 7.75% of non-Hispanic whites. Something similar happened in Germany in the mid-’60s with regard to immigrant workers.

61 In the United States as much as in Germany, the official distinction between legal and illegal immigrants is the genesis of social fragmentation, with the creation of first- and second-class citizens. We should ask ourselves, with Rubio-Marín, “*whether nationality will become a privileged status of the modern world, dividing the ordinary population of the state into first- and second-class citizens and allowing only the former into the realm of democratic membership*”. (Rubio-Marín, 2000: 235)

62 Even though illegal workers become “second-class citizens”, they are needed in some sectors of the national economy. However, they are often deprived of access to benefits, as was made clear in 1994 with California’s Proposition 187, which denied social services to the illegal workers in that state.

63 At present in Germany, some immigrant groups who do not belong to the European community cannot benefit from a process of integration that may raise them to a social level comparable with that of the native population. At this point in time, the Spaniards, however, are rather free from this exclusion since they belong to the European community. The problem for the Spaniards existed back in 1973, the year of the oil crisis, a period which resulted in the precipitous return of large number of workers to Spain.

64 According to Flores, the strong sense of identity of the “*comunidad latina*” in the U.S. originated in a long history of discrimination and oppression endured at the hands of another ethnic group. The Latino community thus defined itself through other elements of daily life such as food, music, associations, etc.

65 Some of these traits, particularly daily life, food and associations, also appeared as distinguishing characteristics in the period during which the Spaniards settled in Germany. If a Spanish identity never became as strong as the Hispanic identity in America, it is mostly due to the lesser number of the Spanish immigrants in Germany and their dispersion throughout the

whole of West Germany. In the United States, according to the 2000 census, there are 32.8 million Hispanic/Latinos (12% of the entire population), with a concentration in the Southwest since 66% of them are of Mexican origin. In contrast, there are merely 130,000 Spaniards in Germany today (1% of the population).

66 The Hispanic community in the U.S. and the community of Spaniards who went to Germany appear to have known comparable vicissitudes. Both groups of workers speak the same language, to differing degrees, both have crossed national borders, both keep in their collective memory a history of discovery and colonization, both suffered oppression and exploitation in their own lands and both endured the shock of a foreign culture and of foreign ways of life.

67 Yet, in looking comparatively at the two groups, as a Spaniard, there appear to be many questions to ponder.

68 The Hispanic/Latino community in the U.S. excepting the Spanish, share language, bore their crossing experiences through Mexico, the knowledge of the border land, etc. These shared experiences tie them together tightly. From the outside, it appears as if 0.3% of Spaniards that make up the Hispanic/Latino contingent in the U.S., according to the census of year 2000, are not perceived as much of a part of the very fabric of that “Hispano/Latino community.” Are we likely to expect that this might change? Is there a basis to expect a future closer identification or near-identification of the “español” and the “Hispanic/Latino”?

69 If the contribution of today’s Spain to the presumable building of a Hispanic/Latino identity in the United States is not there, it could be because of the relative small number of Spaniards in the U.S or their relatively good social and economical status. Such a status favors their integration and dilution of the Spaniard in American society. The danger of such dilution is that they will not participate in the task of building a collective Hispanic/Latino identity; neither they will contribute much to remedy to the problems of social discrimination.

^aBasok, T. (2000): “He Came, He Saw, He... Stayed. Guest Worker Programmes and the Issue of Non-Return”. *International Migration*, vol. 38 (2), pp.216-238. Se trata de una de las conclusiones de su análisis comparativo del *US Bracero Program* con el *Canadian Mexican Agricultural Seasonal Workers’ Program*.

^bFlores, J. (1997): “The Latino Imaginary: Dimensions of Community and Identity”. En Aparicio, F.R. y Chávez Silverman, S.: *Tropicalizations. Transcultural Representations of Latinidad*. University Press of New England, Hannover, pp.183-193.

Other references provided upon request.