

Is citizenship enough? Argentineans in the Spanish labour market. ABSTRACT

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Until the first half of the 20th century the international migration, mainly originating from Europe, had a major role in the economic, social and cultural development of Argentina. The most important flows took place between 1870 and 1929, accompanied by policies clearly designed to attract immigrants in order to populate vast extensions of land, to cater for the increasing demand of labour force and to consolidate the National State. Thus, the dominant liberalism opened the borders, selectively though, privileging people of European origin.

The crisis in the 30s and the Second World War provoked a reduction of these flows; later in the post-war period, a second and last wave took place, though smaller in volume than the first. Lattes y Recchini de Lattes (1992) estimate that approximately 10.9 millions of people arrived at the South Cone between the end of the 19th century and 1970, figure representing 78% of the net migration received by Latin America as a whole. Argentina and Brazil concentrate almost three quarters with quotas of 38% and 35% respectively. Argentina, apart from being the main host, is the country where the overseas migration had the greatest impact on population.

Towards the end of the 1960s, two nouvelle phenomena started delineating which later became more pronounced: the change in the composition of foreign migration whose origin is now almost exclusively from neighbouring countries and from Peru, and the emigration of Argentinean citizens expressed in increasing negative migration balances.

It is important to make clear that although immigration originated in neighbouring countries began a long time ago, it only became predominant in the last decades and acquired greater visibility as a consequence of the absence of overseas flows and of its concentration in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. Thus, Argentina starts shaping as a particular scenario where its traditional role of host – of overseas population, of neighbouring countries and most recently of Peru- coexists with a more recent one of country of emigration.

Since the 90s, significant changes have taken place in the emigration patterns of the Argentinean population: not only there is an increase in the volume of the flows, but there are also two features worth highlighting.

In the first place, the destinations diversify. Besides the United States - which used to be the main host country-, Spain and other European countries have emerged as destinations. Thus, at the beginning of the century, Spain outnumbers the US, recording over 100,000 Argentineans in the 2001 Population and Housing Census. The presence of Argentineans also has a greater impact in Spain, because at that time they represented 4.8% of those born abroad, while in the US they hardly amounted to 1% (Maguid, 2005). The choice of Spain by Argentineans is in part due to the possibility of many migrants to acquire the nationality of their ancestors, protagonists of the old and great European immigration that took place between the end of the 19th and the mid-20th century. In this sense, Martínez Pizarro (2003) refers to a kind of generation-deferred return.

The second feature is the growing social and educational heterogeneity within the universe of Argentinean emigrants. Until the mid 1970s, most emigrants were scientists, professionals and highly qualified technicians, expelled by the military intervention of the universities. Later, they were joined by those who exiled from the generalised political repression; and more recently, during the 90s, the persistent economic deterioration and its repercussions in the labour markets not only contributed to increase the volume of flows, but also to their social diversification. Nevertheless, a pattern that persists is the high qualification of the Argentinean emigrants (Pellegrino, 2003).

The arrival of new Latin American flows to Spain takes place in an immigration context characterised by the acceleration, diversification of origins, and the increasing irregular status of their residence. These movements acquire relevance within a process of intense economic, social, and demographic changes that start in the late 70s, among which the most salient are the rapid decrease of fertility and increase of life expectancy, together with a greater coverage of the educational system, particularly of women, and their inclusion in the labour market. Immigration gains importance in order to favour population growth, as well as to supply labour force for a segmented labour market that assigns foreign population a complementary role to the mobility of the younger generation of better educated Spaniards. (Domingo, 2002).

At the beginning of the 90s the Moroccan workers and Dominican female workers prevailed in the Spanish labour market, but since the second half of that decade important flows from Latin American and Eastern European countries joined the labour force: those born in Latin America increased six times between 1998 and 2006, according to data from the Continuous Municipal Register.

According to some authors, this increase responds to a great extent to a political will to favour the inflow of Latin Americans in detriment of African population- particularly Moroccan-, and is interpreted in terms of “the favourites” (Izquierdo Escribano, López de Lera y Martínez Buján, 2002) or “ethnic substitution” (Domingo, 2003), preference shown in the amount of permits granted to Latin Americans, particularly during regularisation processes (in 2000 and 2001) and in the signature of several bilateral agreements. However, Domingo (2005) warns about the “Hispanic rhetoric”, given that their labour and social insertion is not always appropriate considering their educational level.

Later, towards the end of 2004, the Regulation of the Law on Foreigners is reformed, introducing mechanisms which aim at improving the juridical guarantees of the undocumented residents and facilitate their regularisation. Thus, in the first semester of 2005, a new extraordinary process of normalisation is implemented.

In the generalised context of increasing immigration, the presence of those born in Argentina also becomes more important, increasing four times its volume between 1998 and 2006, and reaching a total of 271,444 people at the beginning of the latter. One characteristic of the most recent Argentinean immigrants is that among them, there is a lower proportion of those who hold the Spanish citizenship, and at the same time there might be a greater incidence in the condition of irregularity, according to estimates by Martínez (2005) and by Actis y Esteban (2007).

This situation expresses the relevance of this population group not only for Argentina, but also for the host country. On the other hand, most of the migration studies carried out in Spain, consider immigrants those who do not hold the Spanish or European citizenship, and exclude those who have acquired it by filiation or length of residence.

This paper is intended to highlight the importance of analysing migration also from the perspective of the countries of origin, including in the universe all Argentinean-born who live in Spain. Whether these migrants hold the Spanish citizenship or not, will obviously still be considered because this attribute provides an apparently egalitarian status for integrating in the destination society.

It is worthwhile to point out that the results thrown by previous research on the emigration of Argentineans to Spain, show that for the whole population born in Argentina the Spanish citizenship has a favourable incidence in access to, and quality of insertion in the labour market. At the same time it is suggested that citizenship would be playing a differential role regarding other factors such as sex, length of residence, and educational level. In the case of the more

educated, it seems that the “nationality effect” loses strength among women and those who arrived more recently (Martinez, 2005; Cacopardo, Maguid y Martinez, 2007 y Cacopardo y Maguid, 2007).

The main objective of this research is to contribute to the acknowledgement of the role played by Spanish citizenship in the access and quality of occupational insertion of the Argentinean-born in the Spanish labour market, controlling other associated attributes such as age, sex, length of migration and educational achievement. As stated above, “Argentineans” will be defined according to the country of birth.

In the first place, we shall analyse the participation and unemployment levels, as well as the type of labour insertion of Argentineans and the differences in relation to the Spanish population, discriminating within the first group the qualities already mentioned above. It is our interest to visualise the role that this migratory group plays in the Spanish labour market, identifying the economic sectors that are insertion niches and the degree of under-utilisation of this labour force in terms of its educational profile.

Later, multivariate techniques are applied which will enable us to consider simultaneously the effect of the variables that influence the quality of occupational insertion, in order to identify the contribution of each factor and, of the “nationality” factor in particular. The analysis pays special attention to the differentiated situation of males and females.

It is important to point out that the Argentinean-born population living in Spain, unlike other majority Latin American groups¹, meets a set of indispensable requirements for developing the adopted approach. That is to say, they constitute a group heterogeneous enough concerning citizenship, length of stay, education and age, that justifies the control of these attributes associated to labour quality.

First, over half of them have either the Spanish or European Union’s nationality, and its obtention is associated with length of stay, but in the case of the Argentineans this is reinforced by the *ius sanguinis* right..

Second, the Argentineans present an appropriate dispersion in the length of residence that makes it possible to distinguish different groups according to this variable. Besides, they display a fairly even composition by sex and an intermediate age structure, rather similar to the Spaniards’, although not as aged. They differentiate from other Latin Americans, such as those born in Ecuador and Colombia, who present a high concentration of younger people aged 15 to 49.. Finally, many of them have reached either tertiary or university educational level.

The source used is the 2001 Spanish Population and Housing Census, which in spite of not being as updated as the Continuous Municipal Register, it is the only one that so far provides the information required for the current study. Unfortunately, the Active Population Survey does not allow a suitable representation of our universe and the data base from the 2007 National Immigration Survey (ENI) is not available yet.

The results here presented constitute an exploratory advance within the framework of a research project on Argentinean emigration developed by the Universidad Nacional de Luján (Lujan National University), which is intended to be furthered with the information obtained from the ENI and by comparing this to the situation of Argentineans in other countries such as Italy and the United States. The ENI will enable us to address the complexity of the migration processes by considering other dimensions, like migratory history, family, social, occupational and territorial structures in the country of origin and in Spain, and the links with the country of birth.

¹ Within the set of Latin Americans living in Spain, the migrants arriving from Ecuador, Colombia and Argentina represent 59%, and follow this order, according the last Population Census.

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