

The situation of older migrants: Spanish emigration in Germany and the returnees

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Research project examines the situation of older migrants in Germany and of older returnees from Germany

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Structure

- ☐ Methodology and structure
- ☐ Main results: review of studies and fieldwork
- ☐ Conclusions
- ☐ Recommendations

Methodology and structure

- The research project examines the situation of older migrants in Germany and older returnees from Germany.
- It is about knowing
 - whether the economic resources, formal and informal services available are adequate in the following areas: sufficient income, citizenship and inclusion, promotion of healthy living, non-discrimination or exclusion and abuse / abuse
 - the mix of resources to which older migrants and returnees can turn to meet these needs: networks (families, acquaintances, friends), public and third sector services or associations,
 - the perspectives of different actors involved in the care of these two groups, and
 - whether the National Older People's Strategy for Active Ageing 2018-2021 is useful for older migrants and returnees.

Methodology and structure

Coordinadora Federal
del Movimiento
Asociativo
en la RDA



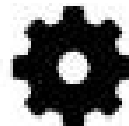
Bundesverband
und
spanischer sozialer
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A.G.E.y R.
Asociación Española de
Emigrantes y Retornados



Federación de Asociaciones Juveniles
y de Adultos (F.A.J.A.)



WfS
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Methodology and structure

- Compilation of available statistical data.
- Review of the studies carried out.
- Focus groups with people from both groups, as well as interviews with experts. (social workers, representatives of associations and administration).
- 61 emigrants and returnees and 18 experts (42 men and 37 women).
 - 28 returning migrants (13 women and 15 men), discussion groups in several Andalusian cities (Almería, Granada, Seville, Cádiz)
 - 10 experts (6 women, 4 men), nine of them workers and managers of five associations (AGER, ASALER, AGADER, Plus Ultra, ASER), the Andalusian Federation of Associations of Emigrants and Returnees as well as a senior official of the Junta de Andalucía.
- Analysis matrix: Dimensions of the National Older People's Strategy for Active Ageing 2018-2021 (sufficient income, citizenship and inclusion, promotion of healthy living, non-discrimination or exclusion and mistreatment/abuse).

Main results I

- ❑ According to the data compiled by Leib and Mertins (Leib and Mertins, 1980), between 1960 and 1978, **a total of 654,411 Spaniards returned from Germany**, 505,358 from Germany, and 505,358 from Germany.
had a job subject to social security contributions.
- ❑ The return statistics **vary considerably depending on the source**. The Federal Statistical Office puts the number of returnees between 1998 and 2019 at 240,222,
The Spanish sources, specifically the Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales (EVR) of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística identifies 56,099 returns in that period, a difference of 76.7%.
- ❑ If we specifically analyse the **return of Spaniards over 65 years of age from Germany, these data also show considerable differences according to Source**. The Federal Statistical Office puts the number of elderly returnees for the period 1988 to 2017 at 15,447, according to the INE's Residential Variation Statistics 8,233 elderly returnees, a difference of 47 %.

Main results I

- Return destinations from Germany:
 - Main Autonomous Regions: Andalusia and Galicia.
 - Main provinces: Ourense, Alicante and Madrid.
- A large proportion of older migrants return from Germany to their home towns. small cities with less than 10,000 inhabitants or to provincial capitals.
- As far as the return destination is concerned, this does not necessarily have to be to the population or even to the province of origin.
 - They often decided to move directly or after a short period in their home town to larger, more economically vibrant urban areas.
 - Older and married people, in p a r t i c u l a r , chose to settle in the populations from which they left for emigration,
 - Younger people often chose their destination on the basis of the economic opportunities it offered them, sometimes also in the hope of being able to continue working in the industrial sector.
 - Some authors point out that another factor to take into account is whether migrants feel that they have been successful in emigrating. In that case they will be more willing to return to the point of departure.
 - In most Spanish regions, the return of emigrants was not enough to reverse the depopulation of rural areas, although it did stabilise average populations.

Main results I

- Gender perspective
 - Women migrants are more reluctant to return
 - They achieved enormous quotas of labour insertion, as well as a strong advance in what they refers to family roles and degree of autonomy
 - On their return to Spain, many of the returnees give up work or spend from a job in the secondary sector to a job in the service sector, with lower pay and worse conditions.
working conditions.
- Identity of returnees
 - Return and emigration become part of the returnees' identity.
 - The assessment of emigration is generally positive.
 - Some no longer opt for just one or more identities (German or Spanish) but for that develop hybrid forms of identity that incorporate elements of the various identities that he has incorporated throughout his life.
- Adaptation strategies upon return
 - They range from resistance through assimilation to rebellion...

Main results I

- The family is a central element of any migration project.
 - Experience in many cases marked by misunderstanding and estrangement.
 - Part of the family chose to stay in Germany.
 - Separation from the family made it necessary to develop new forms of sociability and proximity.

- Employment
 - Weight of self-employment.
 - Transit between productive sectors that occurred throughout the migration process.
 - Many returnee women withdrew from the labour market upon their return to Spain.

- Capital and remittances
 - Returnees allocated these savings to the purchase of goods (primarily housing).
 - They had a twofold purpose: to enable them to maintain the standard of living which many of them
They were able to get to know each other in Germany and to visualise the prosperity they had achieved during their emigration.

Main results I

■ Main problems

- ☐ Lack of a return policy, information and institutional support.
- ☐ Difficulties in finding employment.
- ☐ Estrangement from the family that did not emigrate.
- ☐ Lack of recognition, stereotyping and stigmatisation.
- ☐ Adaptation.
- ☐ Constant comparison with what they experienced in emigration.

Main results II

- The reasons for return include family reasons (in particular, those related to the children's families).
children), climate, work, health and having achieved savings targets.
- Most of them value the migration experience in a positive way (experience, values, skills, knowledge, and conditions of work), migration union, social/professional mobility, social/professional mobility in Germany and the transparency of the German administration.
- Returnees are reluctant to speak openly about negative aspects, overshadowing those experiences in their narratives that are focused on highlighting the positive.
- The negative aspects are separation, estrangement/lack of recognition of families due to the migration experience or the discrimination experienced especially in the education system.
- The return did not play an important role for all of them, some of them decided to postpone their return.
They returned to find that the country had hardly changed since the time they had emigrated.

Main results II

- Returnees who maintain family members in Germany seek to live a transnational model that includes stays in Germany. This model depends on the returnees' ability to continue to travel and to keep friendships made in Germany alive over the years.
years.
- Some of the returnees regret having returned to Spain, the men because they left behind a more regulated world of work, the women because of a more developed social system.
- They highlight difficulties in achieving social inclusion and, in particular, the problems of adaptation to the return to Spain. The main reasons are
 - the changes that took place during the period of emigration in the society, both in families as well as in the migrant's immediate environment,
 - the comparison with Germany in health care, education, family patterns and the administration.
- The returnees who participated in the focus groups opted for very different strategies. different ways of dealing with their return, ranging from preparations that begin years ago to the before the return to rebellion against the values they understood to prevail in Spain.
- The resilience they achieved through their experience of emigration and their ability to or The development of a new social protection system was a decisive factor in overcoming the difficulties and achieving social inclusion.

Main results II

- Inability of the administration to adapt its services to the needs of returnees and lack of recognition by society as a whole of the experiences of emigrants/returnees.
- The family and the returnee associations are the two central resources for achieving the inclusion and the realisation of citizenship rights. Family relationships have suffered from the years of separation, many were mediated by considerations economic.
- In Andalusia they have their own network of associations, created by themselves and with the support of a long history. They serve
 - to meet the various administrative challenges posed by return,
 - create a space where returnees can keep alive the memory of their experience migration, as well as social relationships with people who share a similar experience and
 - are the main area in which returnees carry out voluntary work.
- Loneliness is one of the main challenges for older people, a situation that is seen as one of exacerbated by migration-related factors such as the lack of stability of the families and social networks in general. Necessary: a clearer distinction between loneliness desired and undesired.

Conclusions

- The importance of the migratory biography, older people move from being a passive object and vulnerable to being an active subject.
- Centrality of transnational patterns of migration and return thanks to cheaper means of transport and IT tools.
- Hybrid identities, which incorporate elements of both cultures and permeate the narratives of many of our interlocutors.
- The enormous capacity for self-organisation and sociability to respond to the most pressing needs of returnees due to the lack of response from the different administrations is a constant feature.
- Volunteering was a key factor in the creation of a deeply rooted network of associations in both groups that continues to this day.
- Challenge for partnerships:
 - incorporate the new emigration/return into their solidarity networks and
 - building bridges to older people's associations.

Long-term effects: Reflections

Even more shocking was the conscientious extirpation of a part of our historical memory, that which corresponds to the socio-cultural and political experience of Spanish emigration in Europe. (...)

With the exception of a couple of books, as poor as their authors, there is nothing on this experience. The impact of Spanish labour emigration in Europe. Its contribution and the enrichment it brought to a Spain that had become a wasteland. It was the nourishment with which the anti-Francoist struggle was maintained in the 1970s and which allowed, among other things, that the gap between the rural and the urban was not particularly significant during the Transition.

Gregorio Moran, *The Price of Transition*, 1991.

Recommendations

- **The National Strategy for Active Ageing and Well-treated Older People (2018-2021) does not reflect the needs of older people with a migration and return experience.**
- Administration should continuously and stably promote **research in this area.** and **the creation of interdisciplinary networks** of experts.
- Public policies are of great importance for both groups, which is why it is necessary for the **Administration to take on the role of translating the procedures, their functioning, the scope of their competences and obligations for migrants and older returnees.**
- The **recognition of the economic, social and democratic contribution of emigration and subsequently of return is essential**, although it is just as necessary to see these citizens in a holistic way, with their specific needs, which in turn require of specific measures.

Recommendations

- It is not enough to guarantee access for these groups to generic programmes for older people. We believe it is necessary to develop **specific and comprehensive policies for emigration and return**. One of the first steps could be to fill content and resources for the "Statute of Spanish Citizenship Abroad".
- **Unwanted loneliness is probably the main problem for the elderly** in the area of healthy living, **but for the group of emigrants and returnees it has a special weight**, which is why it seems unquestionable that there is a need to develop policies in this area specifically designed for both groups.
- It is also **necessary to recognise the contributions made by associations and networks of emigrants and returnees**.
 - **To ensure sufficient and sustainable funding** for them, to professionalize the attention.
 - It is essential to **promote and train volunteering in emigration and return because of the role of the latter for both groups**, the associations should have ongoing training programmes for its volunteers.

Recommendations

- We believe that it is central that the **organisations of emigration and return develop a policy of alliances** with other organisations such as e.g. confederations and organisations of the elderly in Spain.
- It is essential to **promote and train volunteerism in emigration and return by the**
The role that the latter plays for both groups, not only on a personal level, but also and above all
at the social level, as the functioning and existence of associations and networks depend to a large extent on it. The care that volunteers offer to migrants and returnees is essential, and associations should therefore have continuous training programmes for their volunteers.
- We consider it necessary to **promote the capillarity of the Administration with the associative movement**, e.g. by promoting the training of the Administration's civil servants with the associations' technicians.

Recommendations

- **Co-production in the design of specific policies for both groups**, involving not only the organisations but also the final recipients of these policies in the policy development phase.
- Finally, the Administration should **adapt its communication with migrants and**
The approach and the means used, not only to the needs of new returnees, but also to the needs of the new
The aim is to include older people in this communicative strategy. To this end, it is very important to bear in mind that the digital divide affects this group in particular.

Recommendations

- **Concrete proposals**
- **Formation of the associative network**
 - ☐ Use of social networks and collaborative tools.
 - ☐ Deepening professionalisation.
- **Marking speeches**
 - ☐ To make visible the similarities of new and old emigration/return.
- **Building partnerships:**
 - ☐ In Spain with senior citizens' organisations, coincidence of interests.
 - ☐ In Europe with other organisations that advise emigrants and returnees, highlighting the uniqueness of Spanish organisations.



Thank you very much!

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