

# FACTORS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN SPAIN: THE EXAMPLE OF THE CITY OF JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA

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## ABSTRACT

### **Factors of Social Integration of Immigrants in Spain: The Example of the City of Jerez de la Frontera**

Spain has always been part of international migration flows. Either through emigration or immigration, many Spaniards have found their home abroad and Spain has become one for many people from all around the world. This paper, however, focuses on the latter. It investigates Spanish immigration legislation and integration, focusing on the factors of social inclusion of immigrants and their integration into Spanish society. The core of the paper presents the results of an analysis of ten in-depth interviews with immigrants of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, all residing in Jerez de la Frontera. In addition, the results of three interviews with professionals who work with immigrants are analyzed. Immigrants usually come prepared, already knowing people in Spain who support them financially, guide them through the bureaucracy process and help them with integration and finding work.

**KEY WORDS:** Spanish immigration legislation, immigrant integration, motives for migration, Jerez de la Frontera, in-depth interviews

## IZVLEČEK

### **Dejavniki socialne integracije priseljencev v Španiji med teorijo in prakso: primer mesta Jerez de la Frontera**

Španija je vedno zavzemala velik del mednarodnih migracijskih tokov. Najsi bo to odseljevanje ali priseljevanje, veliko Špancev je svoj dom našlo v tujini, prav tako pa je Španija postala nov dom za državljane mnogih držav, pri čemer se pričujoča raziskava osredotoča na slednje. Članek preučuje špansko priseljenjsko zakonodajo in integracijo priseljencev. Pri tem se predvsem posveča dejavnikom socialne vključenosti in uspešnosti integracije v špansko družbo. Jedro predstavlja analiza rezultatov desetih poglobljenih intervjujev s priseljenci različnih kulturnih in narodnostnih ozadij, pri čemer vsi vprašani prebivajo v mestu Jerez de la Frontera. Dodatno so predstavljeni rezultati analize treh poglobljenih intervjujev z zaposlenimi, ki delajo s priseljenci. Večina slednjih pride pripravljenih. V Španiji že imajo prijatelje ali sorodnike, ki jih podpirajo finančno, pri pridobivanju bivalnih in delovnih dovoljenj ter jim tako pomagajo pri vključevanju v družbo in pri iskanju dela.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** španska priseljenjska zakonodaja, integracija priseljencev, razlogi za migracije, Jerez de la Frontera, poglobljeni intervjui

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## INTRODUCTION

Even though Spain is one of Europe's larger multicultural countries, migration became a state and public issue only in the mid-1990s. The main reason for this is the fact that until the 1970s the majority of Spanish migration flows involved emigration.

Between 1850 and 1950 most Spanish emigrants left for South America (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay), with only a smaller part emigrating to North America, Algeria and Morocco. From the 1950s to the 1970s the emigration destinations changed, and more than 70 % of emigrants left for Northern Europe. In the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Spain changed its traditional role of being a sending country and became a receiving country, accepting mostly North African and Latin American workers, as well as citizens of European Union countries. From the mid-1980s until 2000, the inflow of immigrants in Spain increased considerably (Ortega-Pérez 2003). The same trend continued until the beginning of economic crisis in 2007, when the inflow of immigrants dropped significantly and continued to fall until 2012 (OECD 2015). The latest available data for the year 2013 continue to show a decline, with the number of immigrants decreasing to 4,676,022 (-7.8 %). Nevertheless, the foreign-born population still stood at 10.05 % of the total population, amongst which the most numerous were Romanians, followed by Moroccans, citizens of the United Kingdom and Ecuador (INE 2014).

Spain has generally been perceived as a country with an open immigration policy and a dedication to integration (Arango 2013: 6). Occasional social tensions and race riots have, however, been documented, that put a certain level of scepticism into the idea of Spanish tolerance and openness. Before the crisis there was for an example an anti-immigrant riot that exploded in the town of El Ejido in 2000, where the focus of the attack were Moroccan immigrant workers (The Economist 2000), and at the beginning of 2007 on the outskirts of Madrid, where youth clashed with Latin American gang members (Hunsicker 2011: 70). There are several dimensions of integration and, as we will see below, there are significant differences in each dimension in the case of Spain.

The economic crisis starting in 2007 had an extremely severe effect on the Spanish economy, and it was expected that Spain would soon tighten its immigration policy, which would lead to worse policy and integration indicators. But according to the Migration Policy Integration Index (MIPEX) that was not entirely the case. The data measured right before the beginning of the crisis (March 1 2007) show that Spain scored 61/100 (slightly favourable) and ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 25 EU members. This is above the EU average, which scored 53/100 and was ranked 14<sup>th</sup>. The best scores which Spain received were in the fields of Labour market access (90/100), Long-term residence (70/100) and Family reunion (66/100). However, it scored fairly poorly in Political participation (50/100), Anti-discrimination (50/100) and Access to citizenship (41/100). There is no notable shift in comparison with 2014. The EU average lost one point and scored 52/100 in 2014. The Spanish score remains the same (61/100) and Spain is now ranked 11<sup>th</sup> on the scale of 28 EU members (dropping one place). There are, however, notable differences in the areas measured. Spain has lost the most points in Labour market access (72/100) due to a lack of employment opportunities. In almost all other areas, except for Anti-discrimination (here it lost another point, now scoring 49/100), Spain improved its scores: Family reunion (90/100), Long-term residency (74/100), Political participation (54/100) and Access to citizenship (48/100). The highest Migration Policy Index in 2014 belongs to Sweden (ranked 1<sup>st</sup>), followed by Portugal (2<sup>nd</sup>), Finland and Norway (4<sup>th</sup>), Belgium (7<sup>th</sup>), and Germany (10<sup>th</sup>). Spain shares 11<sup>th</sup> place with the Netherlands, followed by the United Kingdom (15<sup>th</sup>), France (17<sup>th</sup>), Austria (20<sup>th</sup>) and Slovenia (27<sup>th</sup>) (Niessen et al. 2007: 3; MIPEX 2015).

This paper aims to investigate factors of integration and gaps between theory and practice using the example of the city of Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. The main purpose is to draw a comparison between the theoretical background and immigrants' perception of three factors: 1) residence permits and legal immigration regulations, 2) social integration activities and education, and 3) motives and pre-established contacts in Spain, related to migrant social networks. Through in-depth interviews we analyze immigrants' perceptions and experiences with residence permits and regulations, level, willingness and

opportunities to integrate, current and previous educational activities, motives for migration and pre-established contacts in the host country in relation to the formation of migrant social networks.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Legal basis of the residence permit procedures and access to citizenship

Immigration in Spain (excluding EU citizens) is regulated by the Organic Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and their Social Integration 4/2000 (Ley Orgánica 4/2000 sobre Derechos y Libertades de los Extranjeros en España y su Integración Social (LODLE)), more commonly known as the Aliens Act (Ley de Extranjería), by the Civil Code (Código Civil) and individual bilateral agreements between Spain and certain countries (e.g. Chile or Morocco) (Setién et al. 2011: 49-50). The important characteristic of Spanish immigration regulations is the difference between foreigners (*extranjeros*) and immigrants (*inmigrantes*). The first group includes all non-Spanish citizens, regardless of their foreign citizenship, who reside in Spain. On the other hand, immigrants comprise a group of citizens of countries that are considered less developed, and it is assumed that they possess fewer resources. This definition excludes citizens of the following countries: European Union member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, United States of America, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand (Estudio de la población extranjera empadronada en Jerez de la Frontera 2014: 5).

The Spanish immigration system is based on a visa system. Applicants who are not citizens of European Union member states or citizens of countries with which Spain has signed bilateral agreements can apply for the following types of visas: transit, short-stay, residence, residence and work, seasonal residence and work, and study and research (Ferrand Rodríguez 2013). However, these procedures can be time-consuming and often inefficient, which can result in an unregulated stay. The main problem which coincides with the latter is finding work placement with a long-term contract, and this is also the most difficult condition to meet in order to obtain a residence permit. In 2010 the Spanish government adopted four guidelines in order to encourage the development of and provide more attention to the field of migration: 1) strengthen the mechanisms for fighting illegal migration, organized crime and human trafficking from the countries of immigrant origin, 2) raise awareness of the fact that migration is usually an economically motivated act and that it is a consequence of an unbalanced labour market, 3) as it is strongly believed that integration activities have proven beneficial for immigrants, the government is obliged to promote policies in this area, and 4) a commitment to work closely together in order to achieve successful cooperation with the immigrants' countries of origin (Rodríguez Pardo 2010: 19). Even though Spain is not a closed country to immigrants and shows an initiative for their acceptance and integration, there is still a lot of room for improvement, especially in the field of anti-discrimination and differentiation of immigrants based on their nationality.

One of the factors of integration is access to citizenship. Naturalization can be achieved by the combination of two principles; "right of blood" (*ius sanguinis*) and "right of soil" (*ius soli*). In the case of Spain, "right of blood" usually has a priority. This means that any child of at least one Spanish parent will automatically be entitled to Spanish citizenship. However, many cases show that naturalization is usually a consequence of the principle of "right of soil", which means that gaining citizenship is a consequence of getting married to a Spaniard, long-term residence in Spain or giving birth to a child on a Spanish territory (Enríquez González 2014: 1-2). Even though Spain at first glance does not seem to permit dual citizenship, this is another field where differentiation based on a country of origin is present. The strong historical linkage with some Latin American countries resulted in the concluding of dual citizenship treaties between Spain and certain countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Consequently, citizens of the latter have the possibility to acquire dual citizenship under different conditions than citizens of countries without such treaties (Vonk 2012: 281).

## Importance of social and integration activities and access to education for immigrants

Integration is a process of mutual adaptation by immigrants and the communities where they settle. Communities consist of two main elements, individuals and institutions, and once an immigrant settles in a community, integration becomes part of their everyday interactions. The country of integration interprets how immigrants and native community members will manage to cope with socioeconomic fulfilment, political participation and social cooperation. Because of the multiple and interdependent dimensions that integration comprises, they all affect one another. Good knowledge of the language increases the migrants' level of political integration and improves their socioeconomic situation, and consequently their level of social and residential integration (Jiménez 2011: 4).

There are, however, more components, such as age, gender, mental and physical health, education and skills, social networks and support, previous experience of discrimination and type of current immigration status, that affect integration and its duration (Clayton 2007: 10). As the concept of multiculturalism is closely related to integration, which also represents its mechanism, they can both be perceived as two-edged. On one hand, integration activities can be beneficial for migrants, as they get the opportunity to learn the language and get to know the new constitution, culture and customs, but on the other hand, in order to gain citizenship, migrants might need to undertake integration tests and pledge their allegiance to another nation, which can lead to assimilation (Pajnik 2014: 22).

The law states that public authorities are obliged to promote social integration for all immigrants and encourage them to play an active role in diverse Spanish society (BOE 2014: 2). They should, however, be carefully formed since social interactions vary with level of education, sex, employment status, and the migrant's length of stay in the host country (De Palo et al. 2006: 9). An effort to maintain a multicultural but well-integrated society is also visible in the widely accessible education system, in which intercultural education plays a significant role. However, when talking about accessible education, this mainly refers to the public education system, due particularly to economic reasons. Therefore, in public schools there is higher concentration of students with immigration backgrounds than in private schools, which display a lack of cultural diversity (García Castaño et al. 2015: 37). Despite the fact that in the past couple of years Spain has become one of the EU countries that receives the largest share of low-skilled workers, data show that 84.6% of all children of foreign-born parents up to the age of 18 are enrolled in education programmes. This shows the wide accessibility of the public education system with efficient education mechanisms (OECD/EU 2015: 30; Aparicio, Portes 2014: 126).

## Motives, pre-established contacts in the host country and migrant social networks

Some new forms of migration have appeared in the past few decades that correspond to modern demographic trends. With population aging and fertility decline in developed countries, the number of senior migrants has increased significantly. "Aging in migration" and "social gerontology" have become large fields for researchers to investigate (Cukut Krilić 2013: 99–100). The migration of British senior citizens to Spain, for example, has been recognized as "lifestyle migration", meaning that it is not triggered by economic reasons or by an effort to overcome poverty. It is a consequence of a desire to improve one's quality of life and it is a non-materialistically driven motivation (O'Reilly 2012: 66–67). A lot seems to depend on the immigrant's origin. If we look only at the motives for migration we can see differences based on ethnic background. Migrants from Northern or Western Europe tend to migrate to Spain due to geographic/climate and lifestyle motives, while those from South America mainly choose Spain as their immigration destination for Spanish being official language and for similar cultural characteristics.

Many migrants from developing countries tend to choose the host destination depending on pre-established contacts. These might be close family members, other relatives, friends, spouses etc.

It would be too risky for them to migrate to any other place where they do not know anyone who might help them. Pre-established contacts often form the migrants' social networks, which they usually become part of immediately upon arriving in the host country. Despite the positive effects such networks might have, it has not been uncommon that internal interactions can lead to tensions, conflicts, dishonest relations, broken promises, and finally to the exclusion of members from the group, or to segregation and the forming of separate ethnic communities that do not interact with the rest of population (Poros 2011).

## **Sample Analysis and Research Methodology**

The main purpose of the second part of the paper is to present the research results and to draw a comparison between the theoretical background and immigrants' perspectives of three groups of integration factors in Jerez de la Frontera. The findings presented in this paper were collected through the qualitative method of in-depth interviews. By using a smaller sample they enabled us to focus on the words, expressions and non-verbal elements of the interviewees and gather as many details as possible (Guimarães Pereira et al. 2015: 1–2).

The author participated in a 4-month Leonardo da Vinci exchange program in Jerez de la Frontera where she worked as an associate at the Jerez City Council Department of Social Inclusion and Immigration and was part of an ICI project whose main purpose was forming and organizing integration and social activities for underprivileged populations, including immigrants. As part of author's work with immigrants she was in contact with individuals on a daily basis and had the opportunity to hear their distinctive stories. All are unique, carrying their past and hopes for the future. With the desire to learn and present them on an individual basis we decided to use a smaller sample that does not necessarily reflect the national average. This is also why we decided to include immigrants of such diverse profiles. By doing so we can present a more diverse range of stories and illustrate the similarities that exist between them despite the different origins, motives and cultural backgrounds. Integration is not an individual process, but a compound of many means and actions. Like all individuals in their environment, immigrants also build and spread their social networks and acquaintances. But we wanted to gain the individual's perspective in particular and not a collective outline of a specific ethnic group of immigrants.

The interviews were conducted by the author herself, in either Spanish or English, depending on the language spoken by the interviewee. In order to discover both perspectives, ten interviews were conducted with immigrants and three with professionals working in the field of migration. The interviewees were identified through work acquaintances, the owner of a local language school who organizes an English and Spanish Conversation Club and a Spanish language course for immigrants at the local Centre for Lifelong Learning. The following table presents the study sample and includes characteristics relevant for the research.

Table 1: Structure of study sample – immigrants (Source: author's research)

Participant no.	Sex	Age	Country of origin	Level of education	No. of years in Spain	Reason for migration
1	Male	20	Bolivia	Secondary school	1	Personal
2	Female	26	France	University	6 months	Professional
3	Male	34	Senegal	Primary school	3	Existential
4	Male	34	Serbia	University	10	Personal
5	Female	35	Bolivia	University	3	Personal
6	Female	36	Peru	Secondary school	8	Existential
7	Female	40	Haiti	University	2	Personal
8	Female	54	Morocco	Secondary school	9	Existential
9	Female	70	South Africa (with British passport)	Secondary school	11	Personal
10	Male & Female (couple)	57 & 50	Great Britain	Secondary school & University	17	Personal

Table 2: Structure of study sample – professionals (Source: author's research)

Participant no.	Country of origin	Occupation/position	Organization
11	Spain	Social worker	Jerez City Council, Department of Social Inclusion and Immigration
12	Spain	Teacher of English and Spanish	Aljibe – Centre for Lifelong Learning
13	Chile	Head of Jerez office/branch	Accem – Spanish Catholic Migration Association

According to Spanish standards, Jerez is considered a small city, with a population of around 215,000, located in Cádiz province and part of the autonomous community of Andalusia. It shares same characteristics as its community, meaning that the main economic activity is tourism, which also represents the main source of income, but less than other larger and more touristic cities such as Seville or Málaga. There is only a small share of industry and agriculture compared to the provinces of Almería or Murcia. The latter offer more work opportunities, particularly for low-skilled foreign workers in agriculture and industry. The lack of employment opportunities is the main reason why Jerez is home to fewer immigrants than other cities with offer better prospects for finding work. But despite the lower number compared to the national average, there is still a great diversity in the structure of nationalities. In 2014, immigrants accounted for only 3.36 % of the total population of Jerez (Estudio de la población extranjera empadronada en Jerez de la Frontera 2014: 76), while the national average stands at around 10 % (INE 2014) or according to IOM (2014) even higher, at 13.8 %.

## OUTCOMES AND REMARKS

This paper aims to investigate three groups of factors of integration and how immigrants' actual experiences relate to the theoretical context. In order to obtain a comprehensive perspective, interviews were conducted with both sides (immigrants and NGO/government representatives). It is, however, important to emphasize that the following conclusions are based on the responses of interviewees who are based in the city of Jerez and cannot be generalized to the whole Spanish society.

### Role of residence permits and immigration regulations

Differentiation of immigrants based on their country of origin and their economic status was one of the first topics brought up during the interviews. It is also what we discovered to be the situation among the participants. All three professionals as well as the immigrants explained that they all feel the differences that stem from an immigrant's national background and economic status.

I have a residence permit which allows me to stay in Spain as long as I want, because I have a steady job and enough resources to support myself; otherwise I would never receive a residence permit. Now, when I look back at my beginnings in Spain and all the bureaucracy I had to overcome, it was really hard. But I love Jerez and its people and it was worth it. Even though I could now obtain dual citizenship, I do not really see any additional benefits there, so I am just keeping my residence permit for now. (Participant no. 4 from Serbia)

Participant no. 11 (social worker) explained that it is assumed that citizens of European Union countries have enough resources to support themselves. This, however, turned out to be the wrong assumption in many cases, because immigrants from countries with lower standards of living, such as Romania or Bulgaria, mostly represent the often exploited low-skilled labour force that does not possess any financial resources.

Soon after two of my colleagues were laid-off a new cleaning lady started working their shifts. She was Romanian and this job was the only way for her to survive. She is working full time, sometimes even overtime, cleaning trains, and earns 400 euros a month. This is just so very sad. I do not want to imagine in what world that is allowed and tolerated. (Participant no. 8 from Morocco)

Undocumented stays, when they are residing in Spain without any papers or documents, are a major issue for many immigrants. This is a consequence of the regulations and lack of permanent employment contracts. They depend on their families at home or work on the black market, which brings low income, insecure, occasional jobs with no social security and a high level of uncertainty about their future (Repič 2008: 78).

Participant no. 7 explained she was staying undocumented in Spain. She has already been in Spain for two years, which means she has one year left until she will be able to apply for a residence permit. Because she could not find work and does not have enough resources she cannot apply for the permit yet. The social worker at the Department of Social Inclusion and Immigration in Jerez explained that such practice is very common. Some immigrants apply for a residence permit just to obtain the right to migrate to some other, more prosperous country, where they will be able to find work.

Almost everyone from my family migrated to the United States. They live in Boston, where I also plan on going when I obtain my residence permit because it is a lot easier to move there with European documents. My family will help me find work, they all have jobs there. I would love to stay in Spain because I like it here more, it is warm, compared to freezing Boston, and the people are really nice. But I cannot find work here, no matter how I try. And I really need to work, I cannot depend on my son to support me for this long. (Participant no. 7 from Haiti)

## Social integration activities and education system

In Jerez there are many organizations, e.g. Accem (Asociacion Comision Catolica Española de Migracion), Cruz Roja (Red Cross), Caritas, C.E.A.I.N. (Centro de Acogida de Inmigrantes), Aljibe (Centro de educación permanente), as well as municipal bodies that implement many programs for immigrants. These organizations operate within the public education system (elementary schools, secondary schools, universities), extracurricular activities, and those organized by NGOs. As the three professionals explained, the organizations and departments hold workshops and round tables, provide counselling, language courses and intercultural dialogue courses, which provide an essential basis for integration. Intercultural dialogue in particular might seem to be an abstract concept, which cannot be generalized. It can, however, be described as an interchange of perspectives, opinions and customs that belong to people of diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic origins and it is an important factor of political, social, cultural and economic integration (Knežević Hočevár et al. 2009: 30).

The biggest differences observed among the interviewees were with regard to their employment. Those who had jobs tend to participate in fewer integration activities than those who were unemployed. The main reason for this was explained perfectly by two of the professionals (the social worker and the teacher of Spanish and English). Immigrants rarely work in the public sector. They are mostly employed by private employers, work more hours per week, do not have a steady schedule, and work late hours, on weekends and holidays. This makes it more difficult for them to plan and attend activities and events. Salaries can be low compared to those in the public sector. All this leads to unwillingness to attend social and integration activities outside the workplace. This is why it is important that these events are as affordable as possible or are free of charge. Additionally, they represent commitment, require dedication and thus encourage people to become more active.

I do not really feel the need nor do I have the time to attend different events at the local community centres. In the bar that I own, there is always more than enough work. Deliveries, employees, accounting, customers ... I think social activities and professional support may be good for those who need help with permits, do not have work or do not know many people. I think with these activities they can become more sociable and well-informed. (Participant no. 4 from Serbia)

It is a goal of the NGOs and municipal bodies in Jerez to attract more employed immigrants. The head of Accem in Jerez believes it is of huge importance for them to know where to turn for help, advice or just to interact with people outside of work and home. Local associations provide numerous vocational courses that participants can benefit from and gain new skills and knowledge, regardless their previous educational or work background. The most popular are computer courses, an internet job-searching course, Spanish for foreigners, Microsoft Office for beginners and advanced users and cooking workshops.

I am very happy I can attend classes at the Centre for Lifelong Learning in order to obtain a secondary school diploma and to learn Spanish here for free. This is something I could not have done in my country because of the unfavourable conditions. I think becoming more educated will help a lot getting a job. All the classes have also helped me to get to know people, other immigrants and natives. That is very important to me, because I like being around people and meeting new friends. (Participant no. 3 from Senegal)

Our research shows that the majority of participants in integration and other social activities are unemployed immigrants from developing countries, mainly due to the lack of established social contacts. As they explained, these events enable them to get to know other immigrants and exchange experiences, make new friends, learn or improve their language skills, gain new skills and knowledge that might help them find work, expand their social networks, receive information on job or training opportunities etc. Such activities are also one of the most important or in some cases even the only



means of social integration for the interviewees. It is important that integration activities do not represent an additional expense. They are usually free of charge or cost a symbolic entry fee of 5 euros at most.

We always try to form meaningful activities that we believe participants will highly benefit from. Despite the difficulties with financing we try to offer activities free of charge. The most popular courses at the moment are intensive Spanish, the latest 60-hour online Spanish course and a tutorial for internet job searching. We always encourage the participants to attend more courses at the same time. Not only ours, but also to search for other organizations' activities. That way they can get really engaged and gain as many skills as possible. I know it is really frustrating being unemployed and worrying about future, which is why we try to do everything to make their lives easier. (Participant no. 13 from Chile)

One of the mitigating circumstances for the immigration situation in Jerez is the lower number of immigrants compared to the rest of the Spain, especially due to the lack of employment opportunities. Another important aspect is organization of work and coordination between associations and organizations. They hold regular meetings and round tables regarding topics of activities and put a lot of effort into equal thematic distribution. Through this they achieve thematic diversity, and also prevent overlapping of events of the same or similar content by different organizations.

### **Motivation for migration and pre-established contacts in the host country as the migrant social network**

Whether it is personal, professional or existential, the reason for migration is an important factor of integration. Participants who left their home countries voluntarily have proved to integrate faster and easier than those who were forced to leave (including those who left because of unfavourable conditions in their home countries). Most of the respondents left their home countries for personal reasons. Some moved to Spain to be with their partners or spouses, others with their families, and some needed a change in their lives. Migration triggered by existential need was reported by three interviewees. They explained that despite the unfavourable economic situation in Spain, they still live a better life here than in their home countries. Two of them also reunited with their children and believe they will have more education and work opportunities in Spain.

I work as a cleaning lady on the trains. I am happy to have any job at all, in Morocco my family lived in a small village, where I could never work. But now I can buy a pair of shoes or a dress I like. And I know my children will have a better life here and more opportunities to become educated and find work. (Participant no. 8 from Morocco)

Furthermore, having established contacts in Spain has not necessarily proven to be helpful in the process of integration. Participants whose contacts were Spanish explained that knowing someone prior to their migration was a great help in starting a life in Spain. Their integration was easier because they instantly became part of their families', friends' or partners' social networks.

I met my husband, who is Spanish, in Bolivia. Later on we decided to move to Jerez and his family and friends were incredibly hospitable, introducing me to their own friends and colleagues. They helped me a lot with bureaucracy and I believe that not knowing anyone in the new country would make my settling down and integration much more difficult. I am very fortunate for having all these lovely people so close. I volunteer at the Centre for Immigrants and I know how challenging can be for them to make friends in a new environment, so I try to help them to become more confident and sociable. (Participant no. 5 from Bolivia)

On the other hand, some of those whose contacts were of the same nationality or of similar cultural background (e.g. Latin American or Chinese), explained that such connections were not necessarily helpful in the integration process and getting to know natives. By knowing mostly “their own people” they created a bubble, made up only of members of their own ethnic group. Many feel more comfortable or accepted by other immigrants or by Spaniards who work with immigrants because they understand their situation better. By having their own migration experience, they have empathy for and understanding of the situation other migrants live in.

I have been working with immigrants from all over the world for six years now. Some integrate faster and easier, some need more time. I have seen all the nationalities integrate sooner or later, except for the Chinese. They come well-prepared, knowing family members who already live in Spain and who will provide work, help them settle down and to deal with bureaucracy. Even after a while, the family usually remains their only social network. They rarely participate in social and integration activities for immigrants and do not seek support from NGOs or municipal bodies. Our goal is to include all immigrants into activities that will help them integrate and make their life in Spain easier. (Participant no. 11 from Spain)

## CONCLUSION

The integration of immigrants does not depend only on the immigrants, but on the entire community: its members, public institutions, and other organizations such as NGOs and local associations. To be successful, everyone needs to cooperate and be eager to benefit from the process.

This paper presents research of three groups of integration factors: legislation and regulations, social activities, and motives related to migrant social networks. We conducted in-depth interviews in order to get to know actual people’s stories. We are aware, however, that the responses obtained cannot be extrapolated to other Spanish cities apart from Jerez de la Frontera.

Differentiation of immigrants based on their country of origin and their economic status occurs in many areas. A lot also depends on individual agreements between Spain and individual countries, and being a citizen of a developed country and having financial resources is an advantage and creates an easier path to obtaining a residence permit, which is an important dimension of immigrant integration. This was an area in which we received unanimous responses from all our interviewees. Participant no. 13 believed that financial resources have even higher value than having the “right” nationality. This corresponds to the theory of Spanish immigrant regulations. The next finding is related to immigrants’ undocumented stays. As one of the participants stated, many cannot find work and consequently cannot obtain residence permits. They can start applying for a residence permit after they have been in Spain for at least three years, depending financially on their families, the black market and NGOs. As we learned from all of the participants, one of the biggest problems for immigrants in Jerez is the lack of employment opportunities, which hinders their socioeconomic integration.

As the three professionals explained in the interviews, governmental organizations and NGOs are trying to fill the gap of social inclusion that exists because of the high unemployment. There are many organizations in Jerez that work together to provide help and support for immigrants. Their main goal and purpose is to form activities and projects that will help immigrants integrate into Spanish society while not forgetting or giving up their own cultures. One of the most popular workshops is held monthly and is called the “Workshop of World Cuisines” (Taller cocinas del mundo). Each workshop is based on one country and its people prepare the traditional dishes. Spain is also included, so participants can get to know Spanish dishes and customs as well. The workshop lasts all day and brings together people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and this encourages intercultural dialogue and social integration. The members of the organizations are trying to attract more employed immigrants, since our research also showed that mainly unemployed immigrants attend social activities. Another research

outcome corresponds to the theoretical background. The public education system is widely accessible, promotes education of immigrants and encourages diversity through intercultural dialogue.

Motives for migration are an important group of factors of integration. We discovered that those who left voluntarily tend to integrate faster and attend more social and integration activities. Most of the participants had established contacts in Spain before arrival, who helped them with bureaucracy and integration. But as some of the participants as well as the social worker at the immigration office explained, they are not necessarily helpful since newly arrived immigrants might stay within the social networks of their own ethnic community or pre-established contacts and have little to no interaction with the rest of society.

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## POVZETEK

### DEJAVNIKI SOCIALNE INTEGRACIJE PRISELJENCEV V ŠPANIJU MED TEORIJO IN PRAKSO: PRIMER MESTA JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA

Asja PEHAR

Pričujoči članek preučuje dejavnike, ki vplivajo na integracijo migrantov v mestu južne Španije, Jerez de la Frontera. Skozi oris zgodovine migracij v Španiji, španske priseljenjske zakonodaje in področja integracije migrantov so predstavljene nekatere značilnosti sodobnih migracij v Španiji. V ospredje raziskave so postavljene tri skupine dejavnikov: (1) španska priseljenjska zakonodaja in predpisi, (2) socialne integracijske dejavnosti, (3) razlogi za migracijo v povezavi z migrantskimi družbenimi omrežji. Medtem ko igra veliko vlogo pri pridobivanju dovoljenj za bivanje in delovnih dovoljenj migrantov izvor oziroma državljanstvo (državljeni t. i. razvitih držav – članice EU, ZDA, lažje pridobijo npr. dovoljenje za bivanje kot državljani t. i. nerazvitih držav), so še večjega pomena njegova finančna sredstva, s katerimi lahko dokaže, da je sposoben sam skrbeti zase in za svojo družino, če je slednja migrirala za njim in tako ne bo v breme državi. Ker večina migrantov tovrstnih sredstev nima, mora za pridobitev dovoljenj predložiti pogodbo o zaposlitvi, kar pa je z visoko stopnjo brezposelnosti v Španiji težko dosegljiv kriterij. Tako se veliko migrantov znajde v položaju z neurejenimi dokumenti in delom na črno. Posledično je otežena oziroma onemogočena tudi njihova integracija v širše družbeno okolje, manj se udeležujejo tečajev španskega jezika in drugih aktivnosti, ki bi jim olajšale socialno integracijo. Članek skozi poglobljene intervjuje s strokovnjaki in z migranti različnih narodnosti ugotavlja, da je brezposelnost ena izmed večjih težav, s katero se soočajo migranti v Jerezu in ta tudi najbolj otežuje njihovo socialno in ekonomsko integracijo. Vrzel v integraciji, ki nastane zaradi pomanjkanja zaposlitev, skušajo zapolniti tako lokalne občinske kot tudi nevladne organizacije z aktivnostmi, računalniškimi in jezikovnimi tečaji ter usposabljanji. Tovrstnih aktivnosti se sicer pogosteje udeležujejo migranti, ki so odšli prostovoljno; ti se tudi hitreje in lažje integrirajo. Veliko jih je namreč v Španiji že vzpostavilo stike oziroma že poznajo nekoga iz širše ali ožje družine, ki jim nato pri prihodu v novo okolje pomaga pri pridobivanju dovoljenj in nadaljnji integraciji.