ARGENTINEANS IN SPAIN: IMMIGRANTS OR RETURNEES?
INSTITUTIONAL VERSUS POPULAR INTERPRETATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

Since 1985, the phenomenon of immigration in Spain has emerged as a social concern, a keystone in national politics, and a topic in need of further research. This thesis aims to build on the existing work by exploring how two processes, the growth and increasing diversity of the immigrant population in Spain and the Europeanization of the country's immigration law, have impacted the legal integration of the Latin American immigrant community since the mid 1980s.

Focusing on the case of Argentinean immigrants, I use a variety of methods to discuss the profile and evolution of this community in the context of the broader general and Latin American immigrations in Spain. This includes an analysis of the changes in immigration and citizenship legislation since 1985, paying special attention to those that have impacted Argentinean immigrants; an exploration of the representation of Argentineans in popular discourse; and a discussion of the ways in which these immigrants see themselves as insiders / outsiders within the Spanish nation-state.

I conclude that there are two conflicting interpretations of Argentinean immigration in Spain. The first and most prevalent is the representation of the Argentinean immigrant as a returnee. This representation emerges strongly in popular discourse, immigrants' claims of belonging to the nation-state, and citizenship legislation; it is a legacy of both Spanish colonialism and emigration of Spaniards to Argentina in the past. The second is the representation of the Argentinean as an economic immigrant, which emerged in the 2000 immigration law. Argentinians are trapped in the contradictions and tensions between these two representations, but far from being passive recipients of the definitions and categories that the state imposes on them, there is evidence that they organize, accept, resist, or manipulate public discourses in their search to find a place for themselves in Spanish society. This thesis supports the status of public policy on immigration and citizenship as a boundary-marker for the national community, and calls for a greater attention to non-governmental actors in the institutionalization of immigration as an object of such public policy.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................... ii  
Table of Contents ........................................................................................... iii  
List of Tables ................................................................................................ vi  
List of figures ................................................................................................ vii  
List of Maps .................................................................................................. viii  
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................... ix  
Dedication ...................................................................................................... xi  

**INTRODUCTION ~ Imagination, the Hispanic Community, and Latin American Immigration to Spain** ................................................................. 1

**CHAPTER I ~ Situating Spain in the Literature on Immigration and Citizenship** ..................................................................................... 7

The Place of the Immigrant Other in the “National Order of Things”: debates at the international and Spanish levels ....................................... 9  
On Spain’s outsiders: foreigners and immigrants ........................................ 11  
Politicization, Securitization, and neo-assimilationism in Spanish politics ................................................................. 13  
Politicization ................................................................................................. 13  
Securitization ............................................................................................... 14  
Neo-assimilationism ..................................................................................... 16  

International Debates on Citizenship applied to the Spanish context ........................................................................................................... 17  
Citizenship, nationhood, and the demise of the nation-state ....................... 18  
The limits of Citizenship in contemporary Spain ........................................ 21  
Concluding remarks ..................................................................................... 23
CHAPTER II ~ On the field: approaches, strategies, surprises

CHAPTER III ~ When the numbers soar: Argentinean immigration in context

Foreign population in Spain: evolution and profile

A difficult count: strengths and limitations of statistical databases for the study of immigration in Spain

A world in twenty years: Spain’s quick transition to a country of immigration and the growth of the Latino population

Counting the “invisible” people: undocumented, naturalized, and second-generation immigrants

History in a nutshell: population exchanges between Argentina and Spain

“Making the Americas”: Spanish overseas mass migrations

Leaving in a hurry: the arrival of political refugees in the 1970s

Hyperinflation and the “corralito”: economic migrations in the 1990s and the 2000s

Argentinean immigration today: profile and distribution

Concluding remarks

CHAPTER IV ~ Bringing order to chaos? Immigration and citizenship laws, 1985-2007

Legal framework: immigration law

Legal framework: nationality legislation

“A multilevel system of migration management”: the role of the Comunidades Autónomas

Concluding remarks: a hierarchy of otherness (I)
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Characteristics of the immigrant sample ............................................. 30
Table 3.1: Evolution of legal foreign population in relation to the Spanish population... 39
Table 3.2: Evolution of the top ten nationalities in 2005 (1997-2005) ....................... 41
Table 3.4: Argentinean immigrants by legal status (1985-2005) .............................. 56
Table 4.1: Types of residence permit, eligible groups, and duration ....................... 67
Table 4.2: Entry requirements for entry and stay for citizens of different world regions .............................................................................................................. 68
Table 4.3: Access to citizenship according to main principle of application, with specifications for Argentinean citizens ......................................................... 71
LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 3.1: Demographic indicators: births, deaths, natural growth, and immigration in Spain, 1991-2005 .......................................................... 40
Graph 3.2: Naturalizations of foreigners in Spain, 1960-2004 ......................... 48
Graph 3.3: Evolution of Spanish emigration to America and Europe (1885-2001) .... 51
LIST OF MAPS:

Map 3.1: Distribution of the total foreign-born population in Spain, 1996 (quintiles).... 46
Map 3.2: Distribution of the total foreign-born population in Spain, 2006 (quintiles).... 46
Map 3.3: Distribution of the total Argentinean-born population in Spain, 1996 (quintiles)................................................................. 59
Map 3.4: Distribution of the total Argentinean-born population in Spain, 2006 (quintiles)........................................................................ 59
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May the journey bring what you long for...
Dedicated to my loving and much loved grandparents:

To my grandfather Jose Maria,

Born in the mountains

Always walking, searching.

(In Memoriam)

And to my grandmother Adela,

Child of the sea, tireless knitter,

For her endless care and ready smile.
"There is no use trying”, said Alice; “one can’t believe impossible things”. “I dare say you haven’t had much practice”, said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast” (Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland).

This thesis is on immigration in Spain – and on how two processes, Spain’s entry into the European Union and the country’s transition from a country of emigration to a country of immigration, have impacted the Latin American immigrant community since 1985. The focus of my research is on Argentinean immigrants. In a sense this research is about the shifting of national borders and the struggles of a specific immigrant group to get their foot in the closing door of the Spanish nation-state, a territory and a community that Argentineans do not experience as foreign. But before I start, I would like to talk about the relationship between Alice and the Hispanic Community.

Alice in Wonderland is a very influential book in the pages that follow. Since I first turned on the digital recorder to talk with my first interviewee last September I have found Alice’s adventures a fruitful simile of the experiences of Argentinean immigrants in Spain. The book fell (once again) into my hands last year, and as I re-read it, the story framed my research and gave it a new dimension: Alice pushed me to look around with eyes that took nothing for granted – neither people nor nations, borders nor governments. The image of that little girl in a baby blue dress trying to squeeze through a door that was obviously too small, shrinking and expanding with the aim to get to the other side, haunted me as I listened to Argentineans’ painstaking efforts to secure a place of their own within Spanish society. Their adventures did not seem much more bizarre than Alice’s, and the land where they had finally arrived had a shade of the surrealism that tainted Wonderland, where a queen ran around yelling “Off with his head!! Off with her head!!” whenever something did not please her. (In Spain we have our own immigration agencies that change laws from one day to the next and allow for a rather arbitrary application of the legislation.)
True, *Alice in Wonderland* is neither about immigrants nor about Spain. But both the novel and this thesis share a common preoccupation with imagination, and more specifically, with how we can believe impossible things and make them happen. For me, the international order of nations is one such instance of impossible things that we have created and learnt to take for granted through the daily exercise of our imagination and practice.

In academic terms, my argument is that nation-states are social constructions that need to be critically revisited on a regular basis, to make sure that they still do more good than harm. Some of the scholars that have influenced my work go much farther and argue that we must overcome nation-states all together. For example, Nandita Sharma, professor at the University of Hawaii and activist of the No Border movement, believes that we must learn to think and imagine beyond the nation-state – in her terms, we all must stop thinking like a state.¹ For that, we must overcome seven basic assumptions that pervade our vision of the world. These assumptions are, first, the conflation between community and the nation, or the grouping of people in discrete nations; second, the conflation of the nation and the state; third, the assumption that societies are self-contained national units, or that nations are internally homogenous and different from all other nations; fourth, that states are all-knowing and all-powerful entities that can control reality through the law; fifth, that borders are given, and not an ideological construct on the part of the state; sixth, that people can be categorized according to their relation to the nation-state (i.e., citizens versus non-citizens, documented versus undocumented immigrants, etc.) and that it is acceptable to govern each group of people with a different system of legislation; and seventh, that foreigners are a threat, or that immigration must be securitized. Only if we overcome these assumptions will we be able to use our imagination to dream of possible ways to come together, instead of finding more ways to divide each of us from one another (Sharma, 2007).

However, our imagination keeps stopping at the national border, especially when we talk about people on the move. It is in national borders where emigration and immigration are constructed as a condition, a symptom of incompleteness; borders are the places where people dig up their roots and stick them into their pockets hoping to find

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¹ In this context, Sharma explicitly draws from James Scott’s work (Scott, 1998).
new fertile land to keep growing, or looking forward to their return. “The pathologization of uprootedness” (Malkki, 1992) starts at the border.

National borders, both imposed by the state and interiorized by the individual, are presented to us as permanent and immutable through at least most of the nation-state’s history. Individual attachments to such boundaries should not be underestimated, as personal identifications with these borders that divide territories, governments, and people are one of the main conditions for nation-states to exist. But one of the things that I wish to prove here is that national boundaries are neither permanent nor immutable: going through just the last twenty years of Spanish history shows how the borders of the (symbolic) nation can shift if they are found to be an obstacle to “greater” interests, such as international politics or economic interests. Immigration and citizenship legislations are a privileged site to study this malleability of the border, as they serve as boundary-markers for the national community (Brubaker, 1992; Favell, 2001). Through the careful analysis of the evolution of immigration and citizenship legislation since the mid 1980s, we can start to understand how Spanish nationhood has shifted its terms of reference, from the Latin American world to Europe; and how, as this happens, Argentineans are stripped of the privileges they have enjoyed so far as members of the Hispanic community and their place in Spain becomes more precarious.

The relationship between Spain and its former colonies (a “family” of nations known as the “Hispanic Community”) is a long and complicated one that would deserve a whole thesis.² For the purposes of this one, what matters is that Spain has, in one way or another, had a close relationship with its colonies even after the demise of the Spanish empire in the late 19th century. For some time after the end of Spanish colonialism this relationship was maintained mostly through the intense migratory flows from Spain to Latin America, and especially to Argentina. Most of these Spanish emigrants fled poverty and starvation, and later war, and dreamed of taking part in the prosperity of the new world that would help them improve their lives (not in vain Argentina means “land of silver”). The relationship between Spain and its former colonies in Latin America became more institutionalized during the times of Franco’s regime, as the dictatorship was shunned in the Western Hemisphere and the government looked for allegiances

² For a more complete discussion on this issue, see for example Rojas Mix (1992, 2003).
within the Spanish-speaking world, which gave birth to the concept of Hispanic Community. In 1948, a pro-dictatorship intellectual argued that despite the ambiguity of the term, "Hispanidad is a reality of first magnitude that emerges from the depths of History and that searches today, in the midst of many trials, hesitations, anguish, and disorientation, its political, social, and economic definition" (Barnada, 1948, 6; author’s translation). In the eyes of this intellectual and the regime that he was writing for, the Hispanic nations were organs of a same Christian body, Hispanity, whose governments were bound to the task of "conquering the world for God".

Of course, many things have changed since Franco’s death in 1975. The democratic transition that followed had a marked commitment to break with the past, and in 1985 Spain entered the European Union (EU) as a full member. Part of this modernization project, of which the EU is a core element (Laffan, 1996; Santamaria, 2002) is the trend to remove Spain from the Hispanic Community and its Third World aura. Some intellectuals argue that the burning of bridges with the Latin American nation-states is in fact a crucial element of the Europeanization of Spain (see for example Garcia Marquez, 2001).

The process of “becoming European” after decades (if not centuries) of isolation from the rest of the continent requires a good deal of imagination and a deep re-definition of the self. The transformation through which Spain becomes part of Europe in geographical and symbolic terms also involves a revision of the people who are entitled to enter, live, and work in the country without legal restraints. This entitlement is allocated by the state according to the national origins of the individuals: prior to 1985, all Latin Americans were allowed to migrate to Spain without a visa, while nowadays only Europeans enjoy this privilege. But have Spaniards really changed that much? Have they changed skin colour, language, religion, or culture? Not really. What has changed is the way Spain (wants to) imagine itself, as not part of the Third World that Latin America has become, but of prosperous Europe. Public policy in the areas of immigration and citizenship, arguably markers of the borders of the national community, are a privileged area to study this transition.

I decided to focus on the case of the Argentinean immigration because it is the community with the strongest historical and ethnic ties with Spain, which I assumed
would show this shifting of the Spanish national borders more strongly. And so it does. I found that, in the case of the Argentineans more than for any other Latin American immigrant group there is a conflict between two representations related to Spain’s transition from emigration to immigration, and from the Hispanic Community to the EU. In the first representation, Argentineans are perceived as insiders to the Spanish nation; in the other, they are immigrants, strangers.

The origin, implications, and reactions of, and to, these two conflicting representations will be explored in the pages that follow. The thesis is organized in six chapters: in Chapter I, I discuss the main theories that frame my research. Far from being an exhaustive listing of the relevant academic works on the fields of citizenship and immigration, this chapter aims at providing the reader with the basic theoretical framework through which I have studied the integration of Argentineans in Spain. Chapter II briefly covers the main methods that I have used to carry out this research and their limitations, as well as some of the philosophical assumptions that justify the choice of flexibility, reflexivity, and triangulation as research strategies. Here I also describe the characteristics of the sample and reflect on the interactions that took place during my fieldwork.

The empirical part of the thesis starts in Chapter III. In this chapter, I use three statistical sources (the Annual Reports on Foreigners/Immigration, the Municipal Registries, and the Naturalization Records) to trace the evolution of immigration in Spain, paying special attention to the Latin American and Argentinean immigrant populations. Chapter IV, on the other hand, discusses the changes in Spanish immigration and citizenship legislation since 1985, focusing on those that directly impact Latin American immigration to the country. These two chapters, III and IV, support the argument that the construction of immigration as an object of public policy is closely linked to the Europeanization of Spain since 1985.

Once the institutional context is laid out, I turn to the fieldwork that I carried out in Spain between September and December, 2006. Chapter V deals with the popular representations of Argentinean immigration to Spain. Through an analysis of the stereotypes of the Argentinean immigrant community in the popular imagination and the representation of this immigration in the press and in politicians’ speeches, I explore how
Argentineans are imagined in relation to the Spanish nation-state. Chapter VI, on the other hand, draws from interviews with Argentinean immigrants and analyzes the ways in which these immigrants imagine themselves in relation to Spain and accept, resist, or manipulate the categories that the recent Spanish governments impose on them. In this chapter I also explore the meanings that Spanish citizenship had for the interviewees, either as a marker of the emotional attachment to Spain, as an instrument towards the full integration of the immigrant, or as a right.

What emerges from this research is a clear picture of two contradictory representations of the Argentinean community in Spain and the multiple tensions that run between them. The first representation, found in the immigration law of 2000, casts Argentineans as outsiders of the Spanish nation-state. In this strand of legislation the "treatment of preference" to which Latin American nationals were entitled in the pre-2000 laws disappears, and the Argentinean immigrant becomes equivalent to any other economic migrant from the Third World. The second representation is that of the Argentinean immigrant as a returnee who comes back to his or her motherland, the child or grandchild of Spanish emigration to Argentina. This representation is very strong in other parts of the legislation (especially that regarding access to citizenship), popular discourses, and also among the Argentinean immigrants that I interviewed during my fieldwork. It is in the cracks and tensions between these two conflicting imaginations of the Argentinean community in Spain that I am particularly interested, as they highlight the precariousness of national borders and the role of both individual and group agency in shaping, resisting, and redefining such borders.
CHAPTER I

SITUATING SPAIN IN THE LITERATURE ON IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

If wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptual opposite to fixation at such a point, the sociological form of the "stranger" presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics. This phenomenon, too, however, reveals that spatial relations are only the condition, on the one hand, and the symbol, on the other, of human relations. The stranger is (... the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself. (Simmel, 1950, 402).

In this chapter I will discuss the theoretical perspectives on immigration and citizenship that I have found particularly useful for the study of the legal integration of Argentinean immigrants in Spain since 1985. Far from providing an exhaustive review of the literature in the field (a task both impossible and unnecessary), in the following pages I will engage with specific theories and concepts that can help understand what immigration and citizenship mean for contemporary Spain, which factors are behind the changes that have occurred in the legislation in the last two decades, and what consequences and implications these have for Argentinean immigrants in the country.

Immigration has only become an object of scientific inquiry in Spain in the last two decades. The evolution of the research in this field has paralleled the increasing importance of the foreign population for the nation’s demographics, economy, and politics. Since the mid 1980s, immigration research has gone through a major transformation: the number of projects in the area has increased spectacularly, their quality has improved, and more and more disciplines are contributing to the production of knowledge in the field. However, as Santamaria noted, research on immigration in Spain is still characterized by the “lack of theoretical concern” and most research is “limited to the simple ascertainment and description of (...) empirical regularities and / or their more or less systematic classification” (2002, 46; author’s translation).
Although this empiricism is rapidly being overcome, the theorization of immigration and citizenship in Spain at this point is still insufficient for the purposes of this research. Thus, I have incorporated theories and concepts originated outside Spain by scholars based in societies with longer trajectories of immigration, mainly North America and the rest of Europe. This incorporation was at times problematic: even the meaning of the basic concept that grounds this thesis (e.g. immigration / inmigración) changes from Canada to Spain. In this sense, my task has been to “provincialize” the international literature on immigration and citizenship, and weave it together with available research in Spain. I borrowed the inspiration to do so from Chakrabarty’s book on India Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference. Adapting his methodological proposal to my research, this methodological approach means an acknowledgment of the relevance of North American and European theories, while at the same time addressing the multiple problems that using them in the Spanish context creates.

The “provincialization” of the international literature has presented a double challenge. On the one hand, it involved the translation (in a broad sense of the term) of ideas and concepts back and forth between two languages and contexts: first, to create a theoretical framework with explanatory power within the Spanish context; and second, to bring those concepts, often modified, back inside the parameters of international academic debates. On the other hand, I aimed to study immigration in Spain from a Geographical perspective, a rare approach in Spain and in Europe despite the fact that both phenomena under scrutiny, immigration and citizenship, are about space: the former about people crossing territorial, administrative, and symbolic borders; and the latter about the membership of individuals to the territorially defined community and government that is the nation-state. I had to jump over linguistic, national, and disciplinary boundaries in my search for ideas that would help me bring space to the centre of the picture.

In the pages that follow, I bring together the main theoretical perspectives and concepts on the fields of immigration and citizenship studies that frame the rest of this thesis. In both cases I identify international debates first, and then put them in dialogue with the Spanish literature.
THE PLACE OF THE IMMIGRANT OTHER IN THE "NATIONAL ORDER OF THINGS":
DEBATES AT THE INTERNATIONAL AND SPANISH LEVELS.

World atlases represent the world as a flat space divided in clearly delimited surfaces of different colours by clear-cut lines. The same oversimplified illusion pervades our vision of human societies, which we imagine as divided in distinct nations governed by sovereign and independent states. The nation was defined by Benedict Anderson as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991, p. 6). The members of the national community "are bound together by a sense of solidarity rooted in an historic attachment to a homeland and a common culture, and by a consciousness of being different from other nations" (Smith, 2004, p. 532).

The concept of the nation-state rests on three main conditions: imagination, borders, and self-governance. First, the national community is imagined, because the "essence" that binds its members is necessarily abstract: it does not derive from direct interactions, but from a discourse of shared direction – past, present, and future – dependent on the continued re-creation of national histor(ies) (Friedman, 1992). Second, the nation is limited, compounded only by a fraction of humankind; but the symbolic borders of the nation are relatively malleable, and their evolution uncovers the historical, spatial, and social motivations of the political leaders (Friedman, 1992, p. 856; see also Agnew, 2003). And finally, the nation is conceived as free and self-governing, where the "gauge and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state" (Anderson, 1991, p. 7). Karmis and Maclure (2001) argue that contemporary Europe is still trapped in this "paradigm of monistic authenticity" of the nation-state. According to this paradigm, "political and social elites' interpretation of given identities have continued to be largely dominated by attempts at identifying one authentic and immutable source of identity" (361), most often the nation.

The model of the nation-state, which originated in Europe during the 19th century, has important implications for the study of international migration: the world has become gradually divided in idealized unities in which nation, government, and territory have
been bound together, imposing a “national order of things” (Malkki, 1992). The relationship between people and territory is constructed as natural and explained in “arborescent” and “familiar” metaphors, representing individuals as rooted into their mother- and father-lands through strong, naturalized bonds (Malkki, 1992). The territorialization of people’s identities imposes a strong sense of sedentarianism on the way humankind is imagined and governed: individuals “belong” to nation-states – mobility should be an exception; permanent migration becomes a stigmatized condition. Refugees and Third World immigrants (the “unwanted”) suffer especially from the “pathologization of uprootedness” characteristic of post-war Europe (Malkki, 1992). Moreover, the division of the inhabitants of the planet into sedentary and discrete entities fosters the vision of an “us” that becomes intelligible only through its opposition to an imagined “other” beyond the national border (Bowden, 2003, p. 244).

This discussion on the nation-state and national identities is relevant for the study of immigration and citizenship in Spain for two reasons. First, it emphasizes that international migration is a construction that depends, first and foremost, on the modernization of politics: the division of the world in discrete territories, governments, and people in nation-states. The category of the immigrant does not exist in a political vacuum. The emergence, in the context of the EU, of the category of the third-country or non-communitarian immigrant (defined not by her attachment to another nation-state, but to her lack of attachment to any of the EU member states) exemplifies the extent to which the state can create and redefine the categories of migration.

Second, national identities are malleable and change according to specific interests. As many have noted before, immigration and integration policies are key elements of national projects, and work as instruments for the inclusion / exclusion, selectivity of foreigners, or even as population policies (Favell, 2001; Gil Araujo, 2006; Ley and Hiebert, 2001). The shifting, shrinking, and expansion of national belongings and alliances can be traced and studied through the evolution of immigration and citizenship policies.
The Europeanization of Spain and its transition to a country of immigration, both processes closely linked, have contributed to the division of the foreign population in two main categories: the foreigner and the (third-country or non-EU) immigrant. Although both are labels that emphasize the strangeness of the other, the implications of each are very different.

Spain’s foreigner is close to Simmel’s classic definition of the stranger quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Symbolically, the foreigner occupies a dominant position also relative to the local population. In his book *La Incognita del Extraño* ("The mystery of the stranger") Santamaria (2000) notes that in Spain the label “foreigner” is applied to tourists, international students, qualified workers, diplomats, wealthy pensioners, and CEOs of multinational companies from different parts of the world. Immigrants and refugees, on the other hand, represent the darker side of otherness: the poorer, less educated, economically motivated, and presumably undocumented “other”. It goes without saying that immigrants thus represented do not hold a dominant position in Spanish society. Although technically many foreigners are in fact immigrants and many immigrants are becoming citizens, non-nationals are assigned to one group or the other depending on their national origins and perceived ethnicity; in other words, the racialization of ethnic identities that results from the division of the world in nation-states is at the root of the category of the immigrant (Moreno, 1998). In Spain, a black international student will regularly be perceived as an immigrant regardless of her permit and qualifications, while a white individual from Canada will consistently fall under the category of the foreigner.

The categories of the foreigner and the immigrant do not exhaust the possibilities of assigned otherness in the Spanish context though. The line between the “self” (Spaniard) and the “other” (foreigner or immigrant) is not absolute; foreignness in Spain constitutes “a complex and sinuous and layered space that conjugates several degrees of inclusions and exclusions, ordinations and subordinations” (Santamaria, 2002, 56; author’s translation). Even more complex categorizations of the “outsider” that consider the legal status of foreigners (documented / undocumented, refugee, temporary /
permanent resident, naturalized foreigner, etc.) or their motivations to emigrate (economic, political, and so forth) are not comprehensive: many immigrants exist within the liminal spaces of such categories. These categorizations, for example, cannot explain the place that many Latin American (and especially Argentinean) immigrants occupy in contemporary Spain. Argentineans have been foreigners in the time of the Indianos; political refugees during Videla’s dictatorship; returnees coming back to the land of their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents; and are increasingly perceived as immigrants. There have been several attempts at categorizing Argentinean immigration to Spain (see for example Esteban, 2003; Mira Delli Zotti and Esteban, 2003; Actis and Esteban, forthcoming). The relationship between Argentineans and the Spanish nation-state is a long, complicated one that cannot be comprehended through simple, unidimensional analytical categorizations.

The complex representations of Argentinean immigrants in Spain (which I discuss in chapter V) may result, in part, from the long-standing population exchanges between Spain and Argentina during the last centuries. The relationship between the two countries supports the argument that “migration flows acquire a measure of stability and structure over space and time, allowing for the identification of stable international migration systems” between sending and receiving societies, as argued by migration systems theory (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Taylor, 1993, 454). Migration system theory builds on world systems theory, institutional theory, networks theory, and the theory of cumulative causation. Together, these argue that the emergence of migration systems is reinforced by links between people, national economies, cultures and institutions. Argentinean migration to Spain would be part of one of the trans-Atlantic subsystems that links Europe and Latin America (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming). As they cross the border at the airport, Argentineans reinforce this migration system; at the same time, the system and the meaning of such immigration is channelled through the institutions of the country, the characteristics of the newcomers, and the surviving collective memories of past interactions between the Argentinean and the Spanish communities.

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3 The Indianos were the Spanish emigrants who migrated to Latin America (mostly to Argentina) in times of economic hardship and returned wealthy. I will elaborate on this in chapter V.
In Spain, debates on immigration engage with broader discussions at the European level that tend to conceive of international migration (specifically that originating outside the borders of the EU) as a threat to the institution of the nation-state. Some scholars have noted that such discussions share a tendency towards an increasing politicization and securitization of immigration in the European context (Huysmans, 2006), the emergence of new systems for managing incoming flows of people (Koffman, 2005), and the creation of a hierarchy of otherness according to the ethnic and racial characteristics of the immigrants (Goldberg, 2006; Gilroy, 2005; for Spain see Agrela Romero and Gil Araujo, 2004).

**Politicization**

The politicization of immigration in Spain reflects the rapidity with which Spain has walked the path of Europeanization. Europeanization is at the core of the re-definition of contemporary Spanish-hood and immigration laws: like other countries of Southern Europe, the processes of modernization and Europeanization of Spain were not only parallel in time, but deeply interdependent. As Laffan states it,

For the peripheral states (...) Europe became the project for their future. Although the emphasis may have been on materialistic considerations, the European project also provided important symbolic assurance for these states by affirming their place in the European Order. (...) For the Mediterranean states EU membership symbolized the end of dictatorship, an acceptance of democratic values and an external barrier against the reappearance of authoritarian rule. For Spain in particular, EU membership meant a reversal of a process which had led to a de-Europeanization of Spain from the time of Philip II to the last quarter of the twentieth century (Laffan, 1996, p. 87)

The transformation of Spain into a country of immigration is perceived to be a result of such modernization / Europeanization and requires the severing of ties with the past, including its past as a colonial power in Latin America. The third-country immigrant becomes a key figure for national politics not only because of its increased presence, but also because of its “close relationship with the idea of Europe, of
modernity” (Santamaria, 2002, p. 118; author’s translation) and thus assumes a central role in national politics. Immigration also achieves this position through the construction of a direct relationship between the immigrant and security in the mainstream political discourse.

**Securitization**

The politicization of immigration has resulted in the perception of the phenomenon as a danger to the survival of the nation. Huysmans argues that the feelings of uneasiness that arise from the realization that the immigrant other is in “our” territory have recently derived in the construction of the phenomenon as an existential threat (2006). Hostile reactions to foreigners are not new: in countries with long stories of immigration such as France or Great Britain the depiction of the immigrant as a threat has deep roots (see for example Powell’s classic speech “Rivers of Blood”, 1968). But Huysmans (2000) argues that immigration has recently become a “meta-issue”: “a phenomenon that can be referred to as the cause of many problems” used by “social and political agencies (...) to interrelate a range of political issues in their struggle over power, resources and knowledge” (p. 762). Immigration is perceived as a threat to the welfare state, to internal security and domestic peace, and to the cultural survival of the nation (Huysmans, 2000 and 2006; Koffman, 2005).

In Spain discussions on immigration construct the phenomenon as a threat to the cultural survival of the nation where immigrants (visibly) challenge the myth of national homogeneity and uncover the strength of the discourse of “cultural fundamentalism” in Europe, despite the anti-racist and anti-xenophobic official rhetoric (Stolcke, 1995; Goldberg, 2006; Huysmans, 2000). The discourse of cultural fundamentalism, which arose in late 20th century Europe around immigration, conceives of humans as belonging to solidified and stable cultural groups that are incompatible with each other. According to Stolke,

.... cultural fundamentalism/essentialism does reify culture, but it is in reality about relationships between cultures as understood as bounded, internally homogenous, integrated and exclusive sets of values, behaviour and meanings which are thought to be inevitably threatened by foreigners who by definition have a different culture (quoted in Feldman, 2005, p. 223).
Some have suggested that the European version of cultural fundamentalism, very strong in Spain, is just a form of neo-racism – a continuation of the old discourse under a new guise, used to justify anti-immigration politics and to remind us of the physical and symbolic limits of the nation (Doty, 1999). This seems to be the case in Spain, where culture and the phenotype are bundled together as anchors for discrimination against immigrants according to their national origins and ethnicity in what some observers have labeled “crypto-racism” or institutional racism (Agrela Romero, 2006). This issue is further explored in chapter four of this thesis.

At the European level, the Union is responding to threats posed by third-country immigration on the nation-state with a double move. First, the EU has located immigration and asylum laws at the core of the European project. The goal is to eventually attain the standardization of immigration and visa requirements at the regional level. Second, Europe is raising its borders, the borders of Schengen, to protect Europe from the dangerous other. Spain is key to the construction of the walls of the European fortress, as its territory constitutes a double frontier with the Global South: first, due to its geographical proximity, Spain is the border with Africa; and second, because of the strength of the historical and cultural links with its former colonies, Spain is the border with Latin America. Some even argue that the sealing of the Southern European border, and therefore the Spanish border, is “about suturing the cultural identity of Europe. This desire for clarity, the need to know precisely where Europe ends, is about the construction of a symbolic geography that will separate the insiders from the outsiders” (Morley, 1998, quoted in Pickles, 2005). The present study assumes that the increasing obstacles for Argentinean immigrants to enter and live in Spain is closely related to this need to clarify, fortify, and patrol the borders of the Schengen space.

The meanings of Schengen are multiple: it is a geopolitical border, an extension of the national border, and a biopolitical border. In all three cases Schengen is a site for the production of political power – among territories, political institutions, and people on both sides of it. This border has the mission to build a distinct internal space for the free movement of capital, goods, and people, a space necessarily divided and distinct from the outside. Furthermore, it ensures the functioning of the migratory regime and helps select
those workers with skills that are more beneficial for the European economies. Schengen is the expression of a broader tendency in which "the liberalization of trade and finance at regional and global levels is accompanied by a new set of political anxieties about borders, crime, illegal migration, and terrorism, along with political demands and initiatives to assert the power of the border" (Walters, 2002, p. 561). In raising these borders, Spain assumes it has to erase, or at least diminish, the privileged relationship that during the centuries it has maintained with the Latin American governments and populations.

**Neo-assimilationism.**

Some of the "treatment of preference" that Latin Americans enjoyed in the past has survived in integration policies and citizenship legislation. While some scholars have noted that the trend towards the securitization of immigration in the EU during the last two decades has been accompanied by a retreat from multiculturalism (Koffman, 2005; Brubaker, 2003) in Spain integration policies have been markedly assimilationist since their inception.

Classic assimilation policies were born in the US in the early 20th century. In the 1960s Gordon theorized the concept of assimilation of immigrants into American society. According to him, assimilation described and prescribed the gradual assimilation (cultural, economic, social, and political) of a heterogeneous group of immigrants into an idealized homogeneous local society (Gordon, 1964). This perspective has long been criticized, and instead the neo-assimilationist agenda pursues a more nuanced transformation of the immigrants based in the internalization of the core basic principles that guide the democratic life of the nation (Koffman, 2005). Such principles, however, are rarely defined.

Spain embraced the neo-assimilationist perspective since the first comprehensive immigration law was passed in Parliament in 1985. That first immigration law and its second version, passed with great pain in 2000 and modified several times, created the institutional context for the design and implementation of integration programs at the national level, firmly anchored in the tenets of culturalism and assimilationism:
integration was conceived to be a process of “acculturalization” for which some immigrant groups were more fit than others depending on their national origin.

As the paradigm of cultural fundamentalism explained (Stolcke, 1995), in Europe and in Spain, where the language of the phenotype is not only discredited but also forbidden, the concept of culture is deployed to mark the limits of the imagined community. But “culture” only barely hides racial prejudice: the phenotypical encounter, so recent in Spain, is giving way to deeply discriminatory policies that at the same time decry racism as a deadly sin while they justify the selection of those immigrants perceived as more apt for cultural assimilation into the national society.

INTERNATIONAL DEBATES ON CITIZENSHIP APPLIED TO THE SPANISH CONTEXT.

Technically, all individuals who leave their country of origin and move, more or less permanently, to another country crossing national boundaries are international migrants. This is so regardless of their legal status: undocumented immigrants, political refugees, temporary or permanent residents, naturalized foreigners, and so forth are all immigrants. In Spain, however, immigrants vanish from the official statistics once they obtain Spanish citizenship; they “naturalize” and melt into the Spanish society. They are no longer considered immigrants for governmental and often research purposes. In this section I will explore the main theoretical debates that can help us understand the meanings and implications of legal citizenship in the Spanish context. But before engaging in such discussion, it is worth spending some time clarifying the concepts of nationality and citizenship.

Nationality and citizenship are frequently used as synonyms, but they are not. Nationality denotes “a legal relationship between an individual and a state according to which the individual is subject to the public authority and the legal order of that state”; it situates the individual as a passive subject. By contrast, citizenship “is the status that encompasses the rights, duties, benefits and burdens that follow from a person’s nationality”; the individual as a citizen participates in shaping the polity (Preuss, Everson, Koenig-Archibugi, and Lefebvre, 2003, p. 7). Furthermore, citizenship is a complex concept that can denote multiple levels of belonging to the community (legal, political,
political, social, cultural, economic, etc.). Here I will mostly refer to the legal citizenship that follows from the acquisition of nationality.

CITIZENSHIP, NATIONHOOD, AND THE DEMISE OF THE NATION-STATE.

Isin defined citizenship as “that particular point of view of the dominant, which constitutes itself as a universal point of view” (2002, p. 275): a mechanism of exclusion/inclusion that regulates the discrimination of individuals according to particular understandings of national identity and membership to the polity (Schuster and Solomos, 2002). The status of citizen within a nation-state carries a whole set of economic, social, and political rights that vary from country to country. The evolution of the concept of citizenship has been directly linked to the development of the modern nation-state since the 19th century, when citizenship gradually replaced other kinds of group allegiances as “the main determinant of access to resources, rights and to the institutions of political participation” (Tambini, 2001, p. 202). Formerly limited to a few sectors of society, citizenship in European countries became more and more inclusive during the 20th century, while the rights (and less so the duties) of those entitled to it increased (Marshall, 1964). Today political membership is open to all social groups independent of social class, gender, or race – provided that they are nationals.

The acquisition of nationality, and therefore of the status as a full member of the polity, is regulated through state laws. Foreigners can become citizens through their place of birth (ius soli) in the case of the second and subsequent generations, blood ties with the nation through ancestry or marriage (ius sanguini), or time of legal residence in the national territory (ius domicili). All European states have hybrid laws that put more or less emphasis on each of these three factors.

Some scholars argue that the limits of citizenship are dependent on relatively stable and historically determined modes of understanding the nation. Often they argue that there are two main models of nationhood that conceive the nation as either an ethnic or a civic community. In the first case, the nation is based on the cultural affinities of its members, its past and its shared ancestry; in the second, the nation is conceived as a community of citizens who share an array of rights, duties, and liberal-democratic values.
In 1992 Rogers Brubaker linked these two types of nationhood with two models of citizenship regimes, the ethnic and the civic, exemplified by Germany and France respectively. He further argued that nations defined in civic terms followed more often the principle of *ius soli* (attribution of citizenship by place of birth), while nations that conceived of themselves as ethnic communities tended to articulate their citizenship regimes around the principle of *ius sanguini* (attribution of citizenship by ancestry).

Brubaker's unproblematic relationship between nationhood and citizenship stirred quite a bit of debate. Some argued that it was oversimplistic and relied too much on history: it did not account for the changes that occur over time on the institution of citizenship. In fact, as Favell (2001) and Joppke (2005) showed in their studies, the evolving economic and political interests of the state constantly challenge the symbolic and institutional boundaries of the national community.

Maybe more troubling is the argument that we are witnessing the last days of legal citizenship as it was traditionally conceived. Current debates on the disempowerment of the nation-state in an era of political, social, and economic globalization and increasingly mobile people shed doubts on the survival of national citizenship. Scholars arguing for the demise of traditional citizenship cite the emergence of post-national membership regimes, the creation of supra-national polities such as the EU, and new forms of multicultural citizenship as evidence of the decline of the nation-state and its derived institutions (Joppke, 1998).

In 1994 Soysal explored the emergence of post-national forms of membership that, she argued, would mark a decoupling of nationality and citizenship rights. According to Soysal, this is a consequence of the growing interdependence among states, which forces them into the discourse of human rights and limits their sovereignty. In this scenario of "globally limited sovereignty" (Joppke, 1998), a *de facto* citizenship would substitute current *de jure* allocation of rights among those who live within the boundaries of the nation-state, independently from their legal status. Without denying the increasing interdependence among the states and the impact of the Human Rights discourse in national politics, some scholars have argued that Soysal's analysis focused on the situation of the legally settled, but failed to explain the experiences of those with precarious status, like clandestine immigrants or asylum seekers (Kofman, 2005).
Spain, the benefits of the post-national citizenship described by Soysal seem to be either a rhetorical device (Schuster and Solomos, 2002) or a luxury reserved for EU citizens.

Soysal based her argument on the emergence of post-national forms of memberships such as European citizenship, born in the 1990s. However, European citizenship can hardly serve as a proof that we are witnessing the decline of national citizenship, as membership to the European polity is still dependent on membership in one of the member countries. In Europe, national membership remains firmly regulated by the state. Furthermore, the EU has no say whatsoever on how states regulate the acquisition of citizenship: the allocation and quality of citizenship rights remain under the purview of the nation-state (Joppke, 1999). Even if it were possible for the EU to interfere with citizenship law, it remains to be seen whether the Union would see any benefit in expanding citizenship rights to non-citizenships. Some scholars seriously doubt it. For example, Javier de Lucas (1998, 2005) argues that in fact the EU suffers from the “Athens syndrome”: it aims to recover a democratic model similar to that of classic Athens, “guided by the ideals of civilization, justice, rationality, well being, and progress”. But, as in Athens, this model requires the exclusion of external and internal others: the barbarians and slaves of classical Greece have become the non-citizens (“immigrants”) and the infra-citizens (citizens marginalized by economic and political practices of the nation-state; de Lucas, 1998, 51; author’s translation).

Finally, some argue that the increasing diversity of populations in Europe is leading to the creation of multicultural forms of citizenship (Kofman, 2005; Joppke, 1999). For example, Joppke (1999) observes that an “overwhelming trend in Western immigrant-receiving states is towards liberalized citizenship regimes … partially reversing a two-hundred-year tradition of increasingly ‘ethnicized’ citizenship in Europe” (p. 645-646). However in Spain, with the exception of the increasing acceptance of dual citizenship, there is no support for the hypothesis that a more liberalized (political) citizenship is emerging.
As I have discussed in the previous section, any celebration of the emergence of post-national citizenship seems premature in the Spanish context. It is more accurate to describe post-national citizenship as a goal that is aspired to. In any case, debates on immigration and citizenship call for the study of these concepts to be dynamic and fluid. National regimes of integration, including citizenship, have evolved through time, and are evolving at the moment, by virtue of the relations between a variety of places: between European states, the Global North and the Global South, the East and the West, defunct empires and their former colonies. As the meaning of the nation changes and it adapts to a new global and regional order, so does citizenship change.

Following the hypothesis that there is a close relationship between nationhood and citizenship, some studies have used large-scale surveys to test the civic-ethnic framework in different European countries (see for example Janmaat, 2006). In Spain, Medrano (2005) used a survey on national identity to explore the ways Spaniards conceive of the nation. His research showed that there was no consensus on the way the Spanish nation was defined by its members. Instead, Medrano argued that Spaniards have a complex understanding of the nation that mixes civic and ethnic principles. Through an analysis of legal norms and popular attitudes towards the incorporation of immigrants as citizens of Spanish society, Medrano further proposed to combine the ethnic-civic and credentialist-postnationalist axes. He concluded that, on the one hand, Spaniards conceived of the Spanish nation in strong ethnic and biological terms; in order to be “a true Spaniard” individuals had to meet several requirements (“credentials”). He also found strong support for assimilationist modes of integrating immigrants. On the other hand, Medrano argued that there was also relatively strong support for civic and post national understandings of the nation: Spaniards considered themselves to be “tolerant towards immigrants” (as long as they are legal), supported the extension of *ius soli* provisions for the acquisition of citizenship by second-generation immigrants, and agreed to extend citizen rights to legal immigrants. As Medrano notes, “Spanish views, perceptions and attitudes concerning the nation, citizenship and immigration are only mildly consistent with each other” (2005, 154).
This lack of consistency matches the finding that there is a growing disjuncture between immigration law (increasingly articulated around civic and human rights principles) and citizenship law (still supporting ethnic understandings of Spanish- hood). Considering the importance of citizenship, which is a secure status as well as the only mechanism that immigrants have to claim and defend their economic, social and political rights (Schuster and Solomos, 2002; Joppke, 1999), the support of an ethnic-based citizenship regime results in the broadly accepted ranking of immigrants according to their national origins. Citizenship could consequently be used as a mechanism for excluding those who are perceived by the state as being “more” different. In Spain, several strands of legislation and popular discourse support a hierarchy of immigrant otherness where Latinos, thanks to the historical and cultural links between Spain and Latin America, occupy a privileged position within the general immigrant community. Spain’s entry into the EU and the creation of the figure of the European citizen has further segmented the Spanish citizenship regime. Today, inhabitants in the country are not just Spaniards or foreigners, but there is also a two-fold discrimination among immigrant communities: first, between EU and non-EU citizens; and second among non-EU citizens, between Latin Americans and the rest (this point will be further explained in chapter IV).

There is also evidence of an increasing resistance towards the legal integration of foreigners into the Spanish polity through citizenship. Giving foreigners full rights is conceived as an intrusion into the state’s affairs that would seriously interfere with the principle of national sovereignty (Flores, 2004). Furthermore, in Spain, like in other EU countries were immigration is perceived as a threat, the assumption is that “the acquisition of citizenship by ‘foreigners’ is a conscious strategy to exploit a valuable commodity, and that somehow national citizenship is thereby devalued, especially when, as is frequently assumed in the press, there is little desire to integrate (Schuster and Solomos, 2002, 46). This hostility seems to combine with the tenets of cultural fundamentalism and yield a citizenship regime that benefits Latin Americans over all other foreigners.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the preceding pages, I have tried to integrate and adapt several strands of literature originating in different contexts, languages, and disciplines in order to construct a theoretical body that will appropriately frame the study of immigration and the integration of Argentinean immigrants in contemporary Spain. With this, my aim has been to identify areas of research that would benefit from engagement with international perspectives and contribute to overcoming the limitations of immigration and citizenship studies in Spain.

First, regarding the concept of international migration, it is worth noting that it depends first and foremost on the grouping of territory, people, and government into nation-states. The conflation of the three yields a vision of collective identities as rooted to the territory and promotes the stigmatization of migration, especially on the part of economic immigrants and refugees from the Global South. However, evidence shows that the limits of national identities are not fixed, but rather evolve according to the economic and political interests of national elites. In the case of Spain, for example, national identity has gone through a profound transformation in recent decades, largely due to the influence of the EU. The processes of Europeanization and modernization are perceived as deeply interdependent. Immigration, in turn, is conceived of as a consequence of the two; the international migrant emerges as a key signifier of the modernization of the country.

National boundaries not only can and do shift, but the area between the self and the other is often a grey zone. Analytical categories such as economic migration, return migration, foreigner and immigrant, and so forth are useful to make theory, but we should bear in mind that they do not exhaust the possible scripts for interaction among the inhabitants of the country. The Argentinean community in Spain serves well to illustrate this point, as Argentinean immigrants occupy several of those categories concurrently.

These lines drawn between the national self and the immigrant other in contemporary Spain have also to be seen in the larger context of the politicization and securitization of immigration in the European Union. In the countries of the Southern European migration regime immigration has emerged as one of the cornerstones of
national politics. In the case of Spain, however, the tradition of privilege towards Latin
American citizens and the cultural assimilationism of integration policies yield a place for
Latinos within the liminal spaces of the national community. In other words, as “cultural
neighbours” Latin Americans are not as badly perceived as other third-country immigrant
groups.

The long history of Spanish migrations to Latin America and especially to
Argentina supports the argument that there is a long-standing migration system between
Spain and its former colonies in America. According to migration systems theory,
migration flows tend to stabilize over time, linking the societies from the sending and
receiving areas. Argentina and Spain would then be part of a larger migration system that
has linked Latin America and Europe for centuries. The growth of social networks and
the resulting decrease in migration costs would tend to promote further migration,
reinforcing inter-national population flows within the system.

Together with immigration, the second theoretical concept that I have worked on
in this chapter is legal citizenship, conceived as an institutionalized form of inclusion /
exclusion that regulates access to the social, economic, and political rights administered
by the state. Drawing from the literature on the relationship between nationalism and
citizenship, I argue that the legislation on legal citizenship especially as it pertains to
access to citizenship on the part of immigrants can shed some light on the perception of
the immigrant other (and therefore, of the national self). I also argue, drawing both from
the literature and from my own research, that national citizenship is far from obsolete in
contemporary Spain. Citizenship provides immigrants with a more secure status, grants
them access to an array of rights reserved to citizens, and remains one of the main
instruments for their integration.

I believe these theoretical perspectives provide useful tools for studying the
meanings of immigration and the implications of legal citizenship in contemporary Spain.
After a brief digression on the methods and approach used on this research, I will use this
framework to analyze statistical data, government documents, popular discourses, and
interviews with immigrants in an effort to help fill some gaps in contemporary
theorizations of immigration in Spain.
...social researchers draw on their everyday knowledge and on their political and moral values in the process of research; they use them to set the research agenda and to design classification systems; they use their social, as well as professional, skills to obtain information; they employ their knowledge as members of society and their political values to analyze and interpret their findings. But accepting this inevitable and indissoluble link between scientific and everyday thinking and between social theories and moral and political values does not make critical investigation impossible.


Raised by a positivist researcher (my father) and educated in the Marxist-positivist Sociological tradition, it has not been easy to accept that my social identity deeply impacts all stages of the research process (inception, gathering of the data, and interpretation). To abandon the belief in the production of objective knowledge, however, does not mean to give up the hopes to produce good research – research that is rigorous, which contributes to our knowledge of a particular social phenomenon, and which can help guide informed decision-making. In that sense, this thesis embraces the notions of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988): the research in the following chapters is the result of my particular perspective and has no pretensions to uncover universal, immutable truths. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of the integration of Argentinean-born immigrants into the Spanish polity from a critical perspective. Three strategies overarch this research: flexibility, reflexivity, and triangulation.

One of the advantages of flexibility is the constant dialogue that it imposes between the goals of the research, the empirical evidence found in the fieldwork, and the theory through which it is interpreted. When I approached the fieldwork I had no “research questions” to respond to – nor did I have a hypothesis to accept or reject. There was just a concern, a curiosity to uncover how the political integration of Argentineans in Spain has changed since “we” “became” “Europeans” – and the wish to understand how those two categories (“we” and “Europe”) and one process (“to become”) impact the integration of a particular group of immigrants. This flexible approach to empirical
research has forced me to adopt the habit of re-visiting the relationship between the
text theory and my own findings in the field on a regular basis.

The second strategy, reflexivity – a “self-conscious scrutiny of yourself and the
social nature of the research” (Dowling, 2002, p. 34) – means an acknowledgement of the
impact that my own social identity introduces in the research and in the final
interpretation of the phenomenon under study. This social identity is not fixed but
context-dependent. For example, in the interviews I have been seen as an expert and as
ignorant, an equal, a confident, a dominant figure, or an annoying presence according to
the context and the interviewee. There is no point in ignoring the fact that the information
collected has depended upon the interactions established in each occasion—it seems
more fruitful to take advantage of this fact, and integrate the broader context of such
interaction into the interpretative process.

Finally, I have considered the same issue – the political integration of a particular
immigrant group – from several different perspectives and have tried to surpass the
dichotomies that too often seem to limit our understanding of the world. In order to build
as complete a picture as possible I have triangulated between primary and secondary
sources, official documents and media publications, quantitative and qualitative data, and
several views on the same particular subject (from the micro to the macro scale; from
personal interviews to national statistics).

These three strategies – flexibility, reflexivity, and triangulation – and further
assumptions about the nature of social phenomena, research, and the role of the
researcher as an interpreter have conditioned the issues under study and the methods
used. The issues under scrutiny respond to a double purpose: first, to understand the place
assigned to Argentinean-born immigrants within Spanish public policy in the field of
immigration and political citizenship, and to trace its evolution since 1985, the date when
Spain joined the EU and (as a consequence) passed its first comprehensive immigration
law; and second, to understand the ways in which Argentineans during this period
perceived themselves to be a part of Spain, and used history, ethnicity and mainstream
discourses on assimilation to resist the place assigned to them by public policy. To
properly address these concerns implies establishing an intimate relationship with the
public representation of the “self” and the “immigrant other” in contemporary Spain –
both as they occur in the everyday lives of the actors involved and as they are regulated through public policy. This deep knowledge cannot be attained through a narrow use of research methods. Instead, the use of “methodological hybrids” (Mahler and Pessar, 2006) is key.

In this study both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, with a greater emphasis on the latter. This emphasis is consistent with a long-standing tradition in immigration studies since the early twentieth century (e.g. Wirth, 1928; Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918-1920). In Geography the main precursor of the use of qualitative methods was the Humanistic movement, born in the 1970s. Scholars within this perspective refused the clear-cut boundaries imposed by scientific positivism in the social sciences. Instead, they advocated for a reconciliation of “society and man [sic], to accommodate understanding and wisdom, objectivity and subjectivity, materialism and idealism” (Ley and Samuels, 1978, p. 9). Humanist geographers proposed a selective use of different sources of information and research methods in the search for a better understanding (not prediction) of social phenomena. Later developments within geography have contributed to ensure the place of qualitative methodologies in social research, notably the work of cultural, social, and feminist geographers. These geographers have in common a tendency towards “shameless eclecticism” (England, 2002), although with a marked preference for qualitative research methods.

The “eclectic” strategy in this study has been attained by the combination of data from secondary sources (official statistics), the careful reading of government documents (mainly immigration, integration, and citizenship legislation), media analysis, and ethnography. Secondary statistical sources, government documents, and newspaper articles were all useful throughout the research process to gain a better understanding of the context in which the integration of Argentineans occurred in Spain. Ethnography (in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and observer participation) was carried out in Spain in the later stages of the research process, between September and December 2006. The use of four different research methods aimed at minimizing the biases introduced by the limitations of each source and by my own subjective positioning – the underlying principle is that the rigorous use of several sources of data on the particular issue that we are to study will yield a more accurate picture of it.
The limitations of secondary statistical sources will be explained in chapter III. Some of the limitations of the databases used here were their inconsistency, short time-span, and lack of representativeness for certain immigrant groups. These limitations highlight the fact that until very recently the Spanish government was largely uninterested in immigration, and bring to the discussion the political and economic interests behind the elaboration of these kinds of statistics (for a more detailed discussion on this issue see for example Dorling and Simpson, 1999).

The lack of consistent information throughout the period, which limited the possibility of knowing the volume and profile of the Argentinean immigrants prior to 1996, moved me to search for information in the national press. News on emigration (in the case of Argentina) and immigration (in the case of Spain) are highly sensitive to external factors such as political interests or marketability of the story. This source was helpful to uncover overarching public ideologies on immigrant integration. For this study I focused on the main national newspaper in Spain, *El País* (1985-2007). Other Spanish and Argentinean newspapers (*El Mundo, ABC, and La Nación*) were used, although to a lesser extent. In all cases I used the newspaper online databases.

The mushrooming of immigration news in the Spanish media since the mid-late 1990s parallels the developments of public policy in the fields of immigration – regulating the entry, stay, and integration of foreigners – and citizenship legislation. As we will see, immigration policies seem to be particularly sensitive to mainstream discourses captured in the media and other external pressures – especially to what some observers have called the “EU mandates”. In contrast, nationality and citizenship laws appear to be rather unruffled by such earthly concerns. Both sources of legislation and policy, immigration and citizenship, have been subject to a very careful reading and discussion with experts during the field research in Spain.

The use of official statistics, media analysis, and study of official documents produced a large body of information relevant to the contextualization and interpretation of the political integration of Argentinean immigrants in Spain. However, ethnographic fieldwork, comprised of 32 interviews and informal observation (sometimes more participatory than others), has been the most important component of the study. I am well aware of the limitations of ethnography, and in particular of interviews: the responses
may not be accurate, truthful, complete, or necessarily sincere (O’Connel Davidson and Layder, 1994). Moreover, the sample was not representative of the broader Argentinean population, and therefore the reader may question the possibility to generalize the findings. I assume such limitations and still would argue that the interviewees’ discourses have been key to understanding the position of Argentineans in Spain. Indeed, the interviews were far richer than any of the other sources used here; their stories have informed every one of the pages in this thesis, even though this is not always explicitly acknowledged.

For this study, I conducted 32 interviews: 25 with Argentinean immigrants, 3 with representatives of organizations advocating for the rights of immigrants of Spanish ancestry (not limited to, but dominated by, Argentineans), 2 with lawyers, 3 with academics whose field of expertise is related to the interests of this thesis, and one interview with a police officer. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, the mother tongue of all participants and the interviewer, and lasted anywhere between 45 minutes and five and a half hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed except two: in one case the interviewee asked not to be recorded, and in other case the information was collected via email. All the personal interviews were conducted in Spain in provinces with a high number of Argentinean immigrants (Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga and Grenada) between September and December 2006. The internet conversation lasted longer and went on between June 2006 and February 2007.

Table 2.1 offers a summary of the characteristics of the immigrants who participated in this study. The interviewees were selected through a snowball method with 6 starting points: 18 of them were contacted through personal and family networks, and the remaining 7 through relationships established during fieldwork.

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4 Two interviews are counted twice: in one case the interviewee was an academic in the field of Latin American migration and an Argentinean immigrant herself; in the other case the interviewee was both the representative of an immigrant association and an Argentinean immigrant. The interviews (one per participant) covered their migration experience and their expert knowledge.

5 The Spanish provinces are local juridical entities formed by the regional amalgamation of municipalities. Currently there are 50 provinces in Spain plus the territories of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa, which enjoy a similar status but are formally known as “plazas de soberania” (literally “posts of sovereignty”). See following note on Autonomous Communities.
### Table 2.1: Characteristics of the immigrant sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample – Argentineans</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Province of residence in Spain</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalonia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Madrid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andalusia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period of emigration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictatorship (mid 1970s)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Crisis (1990s, 2000s)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancestry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education (finished)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment in Spain</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underemployed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed / According to qualifications</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clandestine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Residency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term residency (Régimen Comunitario)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Citizenship</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have ever been undocumented</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship: method of acquisition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ius Sanguini, Italy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ius Sanguini, Spain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characteristics of the sample are very close to those of the broader Argentinean population: both have a sex ratio of almost 1:1, all age groups are well represented, and there is a high concentration in three Autonomous Communities.

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6 The Autonomous Communities are territorial entities within the Kingdom of Spain. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 recognizes legislative autonomy and a limited degree of executive and administrative freedom for the regions with historical, cultural, and economic shared
(Madrid, Catalonia, and Andalusia). The sample is consistent with the argument that there is a high frequency of Argentineans who are or have been undocumented. Furthermore, the sample supports the observation that the working situation of Argentineans is quite precarious, especially when compared to their relatively high educational level (Gil Araujo, 2005). The fieldwork also shed some light on areas that remained dark in official statistics such as period and reason of emigration, ancestry and family networks, and the history of legal status(es).

Of special interest for the purposes of this study were narratives of belonging to Spain that were not necessarily based in blood lineage but in cultural and historical arguments. These narrations were often followed by justifications of feelings of resentment or gratitude towards Spain – sometimes towards specific politicians who had promoted policies that benefited or hurt the interests of the Argentinean colony in Spain – and a positioning of the group and the individual in relation to other immigrant groups. Those who had a European passport (Spanish or Italian in all cases) provided detailed explanations of the nationalization process; all reflected on the meanings and implications of the sanctioned recognition as political members of the Spanish community. The discourses were underpinned with perceptions of Spanish society marked with tales of Spanish-hood brought from Argentina and their own experiences as immigrants. They usually negotiated their belonging in relation to this imagined vision of Spain. In most cases participants also expressed their discontent with the way Argentineans, as a population of European descent, were treated in Spanish immigration and citizenship laws, and proposed alternative scenarios.

Where immigrants related their lived experiences, the “experts” elaborated on the application of specific laws (in the fields of immigration and citizenship) that have regulated the entry, integration, and access to nationality of Argentinean-born individuals in Spain since 1985. Nine experts were interviewed for this study: two lawyers, three academics, a police officer, the director of a religious organization that gathers characteristics and for the insular territories. There are 17 Autonomous Communities in Spain. These territorial entities are similar to Canadian provinces, with the difference that they are not allowed to federate.

Interviewees were asked to provide the national origins of their great-grandparents and grandparents.
information on overseas migration to Argentina at the turn of the 20th century, and two representatives of an organization of immigrants of Spanish ancestry. Two of these experts were immigrants themselves (see footnote 4 in chapter II).

Four observations on these 32 interviews deserve a brief reflection: the difficulty of accessing some interviewees; the discovery of an older and well established group of Argentineans who arrived in Spain as a consequence of Videla's dictatorship in the 1970s; the impact of power relations in the interviews; and the key role of gender.

When I recently read Kim England's comments about the difficulty of interviewing elites, I felt I was in good (if frustrated) company: some people just do not want to be interviewed. England found infinite resistance on the part of bank managers; I gave up on interviewing politicians. Politicians, who originally were going to be part of the sample, demonstrated their slippery skills to avoid me during four months of phone calls and emails. They never refused to meet with me; instead, they kept postponing the appointment, and by the end of December all I had in the recorder were a few conference interventions. Police officers were also hard to convince, but after pulling family strings, several phone conversations, and two one-hour long meetings, I finally managed to interview one officer from the immigration brigade. That interview was definitely a matter of "continual negotiation, bargaining and compromise" (England, 2002, p. 207). The rest of the interviewees posed no problems. Of the immigrants, only two declined to meet with me; in both cases they were undocumented.

The bulk of the interviewees were part of the economic migration that arrived in Spain since the late 1980s. However, in the early stages of the fieldwork I established contact with some Argentinean refugees who had arrived in Spain in the late 1970s. My second interviewee introduced me to the history of the Argentinean refugees and to the strength of the social networks that had facilitated population exchanges between the two countries for most of the 20th century. He had been the primary contact for later migration to Spain, offering his house, his business, and his personal contacts to help friends and family when the economic crises hit Argentina. I then decided to interview more refugees, finding their experiences a valuable point of reference for my understanding of the integration of the newer Argentinean immigrants from the late 1980s and early 2000s. My aim in doing so was not to represent the experiences of Argentinean refugees of
earlier decades, but to get a sense of how the experience of Argentineans who arrived in
the country in a pre-immigration and pre-EU Spain may have diverged from the
experience of the subsequent immigrants. Aware that four interviews would hardly serve
this purpose I made intensive use of other textual sources such as novels and
autobiographies.\textsuperscript{8} I owe a great deal to Margarita del Olmo for granting me a privileged
access to her work on Argentinean refugees in Spain, and especially to her book \textit{La
Utopia en el Exilio} ("Utopia in Exile"), a transcription of eighteen interviews conducted
in the late 1980s with Argentineans who had emigrated to Spain during Videla’s
dictatorship.

In my own interviews, a very important challenge soon emerged: power relations.
The truth is that I am a woman, I am short, and I look young. More than a few
interviewees were surprised when they heard that no, I was not writing a paper for high
school – even though they had received a short description of my research prior to the
interview. This happened more often when the participants were older men – especially if
they were “experts” in positions of power. A positive consequence was that, since I was
“not an expert” they felt their discourse had to be more detailed and direct – stereotypes
and judgments emerged as straight as well-aimed arrows. In that sense the power
dynamics were helpful instead of constraining. However, the interviews with the two
Spanish lawyers and the police officer (all of them men in their fifties) were a real
challenge and I found it difficult to contain my frustration with their extremely
condescending attitudes.

Together with my appearance and the sexist cultural context in which the
interviews took place, my own attitude towards research may also be partially responsible
for that response on the part of some interviewees. I do not feel comfortable in the role of
the “researcher as the omnipotent expert in control of both the passive researched and the
research process.” Instead, I share the view that an interview is a “co-authored
conversation” in which the “researcher and the researched are capable of self-reflexivity
and engaging in the self-conscious, critical scrutiny of their multiple subject positions.”
(England, 2002, p. 209) The attempt to establish a “reciprocal relation” seemed at odds
with the expectations of some male, grey-haired interviewees, but however

\textsuperscript{8} Cortazar (1984) and Fainstein (2006).
uncomfortable these conversations were for me they yielded very interesting information, as we will see shortly, especially when the recorder was off and their tone softened.

In a sharp contrast to that, many other participants, notably women, warmly welcomed the non-imposing tone of the interviews. It made me realize, first, that almost all the participants in my previous research had been men, and second, that gender matters. I was shocked by the amount of very personal, even intimate, information that they wanted to share – and most interestingly, it all spoke directly to their migration experiences and their integration into the receiving society. My deepest gratitude goes to these women (and some men), who decided to pour their lives into the digital recorder. They made me realize that sexuality and the many ways through which we root our experiences in this world through emotion and affection are key in the study of immigration and citizenship. During these interviews I have fully understood the implications of feminist claims “seeking reciprocal relationships based on empathy, mutuality and respect” (England, 2002, p. 209).

The interviews led to other kinds of ethnographic work, carried out in five main settings: Latin dancing clubs where I interacted with Argentinean immigrants in their leisure time; spoken word music and story telling shows in an Argentinean coffee shop; a Catholic local church that helped immigrants of all nationalities to find work and provided the most needy ones with food and clothes; an internet forum for grandchildren of Spaniards (mostly Argentineans); and a few mornings spent at a police station. At the same time that the interviews and the observation occurred, I had many informal conversations with Spaniards about immigration – more specifically Argentinean immigration – that helped me understand how this group (“they”) was conceived in relationship to Spain (“us”) and what the main stereotypes and preconceptions are that underpin inter-group relations. The interviews and the fieldwork notes were transcribed and analyzed. Following the recommendations of more experienced researchers I decided not to use any software for the discourse analysis and instead proceeded with manual coding, using coloured pencils and much patience.

In summary, the methods used in this study are the result of my own understanding of research and knowledge building. Starting with the belief that full objectivity is a non-achievable goal for the researcher as much as it is for anybody else, I
adopt a flexible and reflexive research strategy to understand the integration of Argentinean immigration into the Spanish political community. In order to minimize the biases introduced by my own subjectivity and the limitations of the available information, the fieldwork comprised a combination of sources, methods, and voices – a strategy commonly referred to as triangulation. However, ethnographic sources (in-depth interviews and observation) have proved best suited to my search for a holistic and contextual approach to the study of Argentinean integration into Spain. The following chapters offer an interpretation of the information that the fieldwork yielded and aim to shed some light on the (evolving) place that Argentineans have occupied in Spanish public policy, and the ways in which Argentinean immigrants resist the current trends towards their assimilation into the general inflows of non-European immigration.
CHAPTER III:
WHEN THE NUMBERS SOAR: ARGENTINEAN IMMIGRATION IN CONTEXT.

This chapter is the first of a series of four that summarize the findings of my fieldwork in Spain. In this chapter, I discuss the profile and evolution of the total immigrant population as well as the Latin American and the Argentinean immigrant communities from 1985 to the present. This will include both a descriptive analysis of the evolution of these groups over time, and a brief history of the population exchanges between Argentina and Spain since the late 19th century. This analysis should provide a basic framework for understanding the integration of contemporary Argentinean immigration into the Spanish polity, which will be discussed in later chapters.

The chapter is divided in two sections. The first section draws from official databases to trace the evolution of immigration to Spain and sketches a profile of the country’s foreign population, paying special attention to Latino immigrants. An introduction to the main sources of statistical information and their limitations precedes the brief descriptive analysis. The second section focuses more specifically on Argentinean migration to Spain. Following a discussion of the main periods of population exchange between Spain and Argentina, I draw from statistical databases to provide a snapshot of the current Argentinean-born immigrant community in Spain.

FOREIGN POPULATION IN SPAIN: EVOLUTION AND PROFILE.

The variable quality and limited timeframe of the statistical sources present serious challenges for the elaboration of a fully reliable profile of the immigrant population in Spain since 1985. Two factors account for this: first, Spain’s recent transition from a country of emigration to a country of immigration; and second, a general reluctance on the part of the government to acknowledge that immigration is not a transitory phenomenon. However, the combined use of three official databases (the Annual Reports on Immigration, the Municipal Registries, and the Naturalization records) allows us to
make some generalizations about the characteristics of this immigrant population and its evolution in the last two decades.

**A DIFFICULT COUNT: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF STATISTICAL DATABASES FOR THE STUDY OF IMMIGRATION IN SPAIN.**

Most of the data used in the next pages come from the *Annual Report on Foreigners* (re-titled *Annual Report on Immigration* in 2004; herein the *Report*), which collects statistical information on all legal residents. The first of these *Reports* was published by the Ministry of Interior in 1992. The *Reports* from 1992 to 1996 contained just a handful of tables of very basic socio-demographic information for the whole immigrant population – virtually nothing there is useful for the study of a specific group. Significant improvements have been introduced recently, particularly since 2000, when the responsibility was passed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MTAS). Today, the *Report* is the most widely used source among immigration scholars in Spain. Recent releases have maintained and improved the original tables with basic socio-demographic data – now by country of origin – while at the same time providing very detailed information about immigrants’ legal status (student, refugee, temporary resident, permanent resident, and recently naturalized), and the labour regime (with seasonal, temporary, or permanent work permit; under general labour legislation or EU labour legislation; all divided according to sector). The main problems with this source are its limited timeframe (from 1992 to the present for the total immigrant population and from 1996 to the present for specific groups) and its lack of representativeness: it only provides information about the foreign legal resident population. Undocumented migrants, naturalized foreigners, and a high percentage of second-generation immigrants⁹ are not included in these data.

A more representative picture of the foreign population in Spain can be elaborated by combining the *Reports* with the Municipal Registries collected by municipalities and assembled by the National Statistics Institute (INE). The Municipal Registries produce

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⁹ As explained later (chapter IV), whether the newborn receives the Spanish nationality or not depends on the parents’ citizenship.
annual snapshots of the population living in Spain, regardless of their nationality or legal status. Although this database has a long history, a new immigration law passed in 2000 created a crucial link between immigration and the Municipal Registry. Under the new law, newcomers are legally required to register as inhabitants of a municipality in order to receive basic social services such as education and health care; also, registration is one of the few valid proofs of residence for regularization through extraordinary channels such as amnesties and *arraigo*\(^\text{10}\). The database is independent of the State security forces; as such, the national or regional police cannot access or use the information provided by immigrants. Municipal registries have shed some light on the extent and profile of undocumented population in the country and helped in the estimation of their number, location and place of origin. Also, the registry collects information about immigrants’ country of birth – not only their nationality.

Despite these benefits, the municipal registry has some important restrictions. First, it has a very limited timeframe – the data are only reliable for the period from 2000 to 2006. Second, many immigrants are apprehensive about the consequences of inscribing themselves as inhabitants of a municipality. This became a real problem in 2003, when the conservative government reformed the existing immigration law and introduced important modifications in access to municipal data for agencies of the administration and the police force. This was declared unconstitutional and immediately rejected (Peña Obiol, 2005) – but the debate in Parliament had a strong impact among the already suspicious immigrant population. The second limitation is that immigrants have to inscribe themselves and renew their status as inhabitants of the municipality every two years. It is not completely certain that immigrants are aware of this requirement – especially in the case of recent clandestine immigrants.

Finally, for the purpose of this thesis it is useful to combine information from the *Reports* and the Municipal Registries with data from Naturalization records, collected by the Ministry of Justice and published by the INE and the MTAS. Because naturalization

\(^{10}\) The figure of the *arraigo* (literally the act of “taking roots”) provides an extra-ordinary channel for the regularization of clandestine immigrants. There are three kinds of *arraigo* recognized by the immigration law (social, work-related, and familial). Undocumented immigrants who can prove to have social, family, or work-related “roots” in Spain after a period of time (dependent upon the nationality of the immigrant) are allowed to claim a regularization of their status.
is a highly institutionalized process that usually happens once in a lifetime, this source is fully reliable. Its main shortcoming is that there is no information about the profile of the people who apply for or obtain Spanish nationality other than their original country of citizenship.

The combined use of these three databases yields a relatively satisfactory picture of recent immigration to Spain. In the next pages I will draw from the most consistent source, the Reports (1996-2006), to study the evolution and general profile of foreigners with a residence/work permit. I will build on the Reports using complementary information from municipal registries (2000-2006) and the Naturalization records (1985-2006). Later, I draw from the same sources to discuss similarities and differences between the Argentinean-born and general immigrant populations.

A WORLD IN TWENTY YEARS: SPAIN'S QUICK TRANSITION TO A COUNTRY OF IMMIGRATION AND THE GROWTH OF THE LATINO POPULATION.

In 1971 there were 148,400 legal foreign residents in Spain. This meant that 0.4 percent of the total legal population was foreign born. As shown in table 3.1, the percentage of foreigners grew to 1.5 percent in 1997 and has been increasing steadily since, reaching 6.3 percent at the last available date, December 2005 (OPI, 2006, #7). More than 80 percent of the growth of the legal foreign population has happened in the last decade (1996-2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spanish Population</th>
<th>Documented Foreigners</th>
<th>Percentage of Foreigners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>39 617 477</td>
<td>538 984</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>39 700 000</td>
<td>609 813</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>39 852 651</td>
<td>719 647</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>40 202 158</td>
<td>801 329</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>40 499 790</td>
<td>895 720</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>41 116 842</td>
<td>1 109 060</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>40 847 371</td>
<td>1 324 001</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>42 197 865</td>
<td>1 647 011</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>42 931 288</td>
<td>1 977 291</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>44 708 964</td>
<td>2 738 932</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Evolution of legal foreign population in relation to the Spanish population.
The explosive growth of immigration in Spain has triggered important changes in the composition of the population. As shown in graph 3.1, in a context of low natural growth of the Spanish population, immigration is today the main factor for the country’s population growth. The increasing relevance of immigrants’ fertility will be briefly discussed later in this chapter.

Graph 3.1 Demographic Indicators: births, deaths, natural growth, and immigration in Spain, 1991-2005.


The immigrant population is larger, and also more internally diverse than it was ten years ago. The trend towards diversification – in terms of countries of origin – began after the regularization of 1991, when the inflows from developing countries started substituting for, and later outnumbering, those from developed countries (Gil Araujo, 2005). Thus, while in 1997 all but one (Moroccans) of the top-five nationalities were part of the European Economic Area\textsuperscript{11} (EEA), seven years later this pattern has reversed: in

\textsuperscript{11} The EEA is the result of an agreement between the 27 countries of the EU plus three of the four members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA; Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein).
2004 only the UK remained among the five countries with the highest number of nationals living in Spanish territory with a residence permit; the other four were Morocco, Ecuador, Colombia, and Romania. Table 3.2 shows the evolution of the largest ten immigrant groups in 2005 for the period between 1997 and 2005. The groups that were not among the 2005 top ten at the time of each count are marked with an asterisk to highlight their spectacular growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>111 100</td>
<td>140 896</td>
<td>161 870</td>
<td>199 782</td>
<td>234 937</td>
<td>282 432</td>
<td>333 770</td>
<td>386 958</td>
<td>493 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>4 112*</td>
<td>7 046*</td>
<td>12 933*</td>
<td>30 878</td>
<td>84 699</td>
<td>115 301</td>
<td>174 289</td>
<td>221 549</td>
<td>357 065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>8 412*</td>
<td>10 412*</td>
<td>13 627*</td>
<td>24 702*</td>
<td>48 710</td>
<td>71 238</td>
<td>107 459</td>
<td>137 369</td>
<td>204 384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>2 385*</td>
<td>2 385*</td>
<td>5 082*</td>
<td>10 983*</td>
<td>24 856*</td>
<td>33 705*</td>
<td>54 688</td>
<td>83 372</td>
<td>192 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>68 271</td>
<td>74 419</td>
<td>76 402</td>
<td>73 983</td>
<td>80 183</td>
<td>90 091</td>
<td>105 479</td>
<td>128 283</td>
<td>149 071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>22 638</td>
<td>26 514</td>
<td>29 871</td>
<td>30 862</td>
<td>35 647</td>
<td>45 236</td>
<td>59 745</td>
<td>72 032</td>
<td>84 853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>21 233</td>
<td>24 879</td>
<td>27 263</td>
<td>27 888</td>
<td>33 758</td>
<td>39 013</td>
<td>57 593</td>
<td>71 245</td>
<td>82 533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>17 188</td>
<td>17 007</td>
<td>16 296*</td>
<td>16 610*</td>
<td>20 412*</td>
<td>27 937*</td>
<td>43 347*</td>
<td>56 193</td>
<td>82 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>49 890</td>
<td>58 089</td>
<td>60 828</td>
<td>60 575</td>
<td>62 506</td>
<td>65 823</td>
<td>67 963</td>
<td>69 719</td>
<td>71 513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>38 229</td>
<td>42 310</td>
<td>44 038</td>
<td>41 997</td>
<td>42 634</td>
<td>43 309</td>
<td>45 614*</td>
<td>50 955*</td>
<td>59 787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>609 813</td>
<td>719 647</td>
<td>801 329</td>
<td>895 720</td>
<td>1 109 060</td>
<td>1 324 001</td>
<td>1 647 011</td>
<td>1 977 291</td>
<td>2 738 932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Evolution of the top ten nationalities in 2005 (1997-2005). Amnesties to regularize undocumented immigrants were applied the years marked with an A.


The evolution of these ten groups shows that the composition of the immigrant population has changed drastically in the last ten years: three of the four largest immigrant groups in the last Report were rather small until 2000 (Ecuador, Colombia, and Romania, marked with an asterisk). Moreover, at the same time that the number of nationalities with more than a thousand residents has increased, the largest growth has occurred among the top five national groups (at the time of each count), which accounted for 32 percent of the total immigrant population in 1997 and more than 80 percent in 2005 (MTAS, 1998; OPI, 2006, #10). The rapid growth of these groups suggests that there are strong national networks supporting further immigration.

The agreement was signed in 1994 to allow EFTA nations-states and their citizens to participate in the European market. The EU has signed similar bilateral agreements with the fourth member of the EFTA, Switzerland. Nationals from these countries enjoy most benefits of EU citizenship, including the waiver of visas to enter, stay, and work in other countries of the EU.
Table 3.3 shows the evolution of immigration by continent from 1997 to 2001. The main observation is the rapid growth of immigration from Ibero America: this group accounted for less than 19 percent of the total population in 1997; in 2005, 36 percent of the foreigners with a residence permit were Latinos (MTAS, 1997; OPI, 2006, #7). Africans (23.7 percent), EEA citizens, (20.8 percent) and other Europeans (13.3 percent) followed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent / Year</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe13</td>
<td>196984</td>
<td>50,1</td>
<td>289084</td>
<td>47,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>89300</td>
<td>22,7</td>
<td>126959</td>
<td>20,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Ibero America</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>112064</td>
<td>18,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>71292</td>
<td>18,1</td>
<td>142816</td>
<td>23,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>33878</td>
<td>8,6</td>
<td>49110</td>
<td>8,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stateless/NA</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>0,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign</td>
<td>393100</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>609813</td>
<td>118,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Latin American immigrant population was the fastest growing and by far largest group by the end of 2005. While the population of foreign legal residents grew 213.6 percent between 1997 and 2005 (from 609,813 to 2,273,932), the Latin American population grew 780 percent (from 112,064 to 986,178). From 2004 to 2005 alone, the population of Latin American legal residents grew 52 percent14 (from 649,112 in 2004 to

12 The category "Ibero America" is widely used in Spanish-speaking countries, although it does not seem to have been adopted in the Anglophone world. The term designates the countries of the Iberian Peninsula (Andorra, Portugal, and Spain) plus the areas of the American continent that were under their rule in colonial times. Due to the highly politicized implications of the term (discussed in chapter V) and the fact that the term is not used in North America, from now in my discourse on I will instead refer to this group as "Latin Americans". The term "Ibero America" will appear in tables based on official data.

13 Includes all European countries, EU as well as non-EU members.

14 The growth of this regional group came second after that of non-EC Europeans (99.6 percent); however the former group was very small in 2004. The 2005 amnesty, which regularized almost 600,000 undocumented immigrants, was a decisive ingredient in these increases.
Tables 3.2 and 3.3 highlight the reconfiguration of the immigrant population in Spain from a group largely dominated by Europeans in 1996 to one with a strong Latino component today. Yet these figures underestimate the real growth of the Latin American community in Spain, as undocumented migrants, naturalized foreigners, and most second-generation immigrants — all large groups within the Latin American population — are not included in the Reports.

Regarding the age distribution of the legal foreign population, for the period between 1998 and 2004 the group of working age (16 to 64) was overrepresented compared to the local population: 81.3 percent among foreigners and 67.5 percent among Spaniards. The proportion of this particular age group, however, varies for each of the regional clusters: among EEA nationals the figure remained steadily under 78 percent, while almost 87 percent of Latin Americans were part of this age group. The rest of the immigrant groups were somewhere in between. Not only is this figure high, but also the trend since 1996 is towards a slight increase of the proportion of foreigners of working age. Although this overrepresentation of the working age group could be interpreted as characteristic of recent flows of economic immigration, the ability of those with Latin American passports (more than one-third of legal residents) to apply for Spanish citizenship in one or two years has the potential to skew the statistics: were their claims accepted, these immigrants would vanish from the official immigration statistics within two years, leaving only the most recent members of the group to be shown. The disappearance of Spanish-born second-generation immigrants also contributes to the overrepresentation of working-age individuals among immigrants — especially among those of Latin American origin.15

As for the sex ratios, since the beginning of the immigration period women have been slightly underrepresented, comprising about 46 percent of the foreign population between 1996 and 2006. This tendency is consistent across regional groups, but there is substantive variation between national groups: the lowest female representation is among Mali legal residents (12.3 percent), and the highest is among Thai legal residents (80.4 percent; MTAS 2004). On average, the most balanced group is that of EEA residents

15 The implications of privileged paths towards political citizenship for second-generation Latin American immigrants will be explored in chapter IV.
(with almost 48 percent of women between 2001 and 2004). Latin American residents have seen the gradual de-feminization of their population between 1999 (63.6 percent) and 2004 (54.6 percent). These trends point towards a gendered labour market (with a strong demand for female Latino workers) where women act as pioneers in the immigration market, and a tendency to family migration often through reunification\textsuperscript{16} (see for example Izquierdo 2005; Martin Bujan, 2003; Pujadas and Massal, 2002; Colectivo IOE, 2001).

The educational levels of the immigrant population vary highly by national group. In their study of the data provided by the Active Population Survey (EPA), Garrido and Toharia (2004) highlighted the fact that all immigrant groups by region had an average educational level higher than that of Spaniards, with the exception of African immigrants. EEA foreigners have the highest percentage of population with university education (35.8 percent of the total). Of non-EEA citizens, Latin Americans are the group with the highest education level: almost 55 percent of these foreigners have at least secondary degrees.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, in 2004 76.5 percent of the successful claims for the recognition of university degrees by non-Spaniards were awarded to Latin American citizens, most of them (72.4 percent) recognizing titles of Bachelor, Engineer, or Architect (MTAS, 2004).

Still, the social integration of these immigrants is proving a challenging task, partially because of the characteristics of the Spanish economy. As Perez Diaz (2002) notes, the main trait of the Spanish labour market is its segmentation, with a large and precarious secondary sector characterized by short-term contracts and low wages. The large underground economy, said to account for 20 to 24 percent of the Gross National Product (Frey and Schneider, 2000), has contributed to the development of this secondary sector, where much of the immigrant population, documented or not, has found a spot.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} 30 percent of non-EU immigrants who have settled in Spain since 2003 benefited from family reunification measures (Barbulo, 3/15/2007).

\textsuperscript{17} High school diploma or higher.

\textsuperscript{18} Researchers at the Colectivo IOE (2005) estimated that more than 30 percent of the immigrants were employed under the table in 2005. The highest percentage of informal employment that year was believed to be for Argentineans (78.7 percent).
This partially explains the little impact that immigrants' higher academic achievement seems to have on their integration into the Spanish labour market. Their participation in the national economy is significant: in 2005, 8.3 percent of the employees\textsuperscript{19} were foreigners (74.5 percent men) and Latin American workers alone constituted more than 40 percent of the foreign legal working population. However, immigrants' high employment rate contrasts with the conditions in which they work. Making a long story short, their contracts are often short-term (59.9 percent for the women and 70 percent for men), part-time (36.2 percent of women and 11.4 percent of men), and largely for unqualified occupations (MTAS, 2005) Yet the conditions for immigrants' participation in the Spanish labour market seem to have improved in recent years; researchers from the Colectivo IOE (2003) observed that there has been a diversification of immigrants' occupations from the traditional niches (agriculture, restoration, construction, and domestic work) to industrial activities and the service sector.

The settlement pattern of the foreign population in Spain, illustrated in maps 3.1 and 3.2, supports the argument that immigrants are concentrated in the aforementioned economic sectors. In these maps all foreign-born individuals registered as inhabitants in the Municipal registries are considered regardless of their legal status. The areas with higher concentration of foreign-born population correspond to those provinces where agriculture, construction, and services are the most prevalent economic sectors. Moreover, there was not much change between 1996 (map 3.1) and 2006 (map 3.2): during this period the concentration of foreign-born population remained in the same areas, mainly the two biggest cities (Madrid and Barcelona) and the coastal areas. The main change is the increase of provinces with a high concentration of foreign-born individuals (more than 2 percent). But far from redistributing across the national territory, what we are witnessing is the greater concentration of immigrants in the traditional areas of attraction (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Murcia, and the Balearic Islands).

\textsuperscript{19} These data only include workers with a legal contract. There are no reliable data for Spanish and foreign workers in the informal economy.
Map 3.1: Distribution of the total foreign-born population in Spain, 1996 (quintiles)
Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadistica.

Map 3.2: Distribution of the total foreign-born population in Spain, 2006 (quintiles)
Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadistica.
COUNTING THE INVISIBLE PEOPLE: UNDOCUMENTED, NATURALIZED, AND SECOND-GENERATION IMMIGRANTS.

As previously noted, there are three large groups absent from this brief profile sketched so far: undocumented migrants, naturalized foreigners, and second-generation immigrants born Spanish under the principle of *ius soli* (attribution of nationality by birth within the national territory). Estimates about the volume of clandestine foreign population vary, and profiles exist only for specific national groups. Comparing the data of the Annual Reports (MTAS) to the Municipal Registries (INE), Antonio Izquierdo estimated that in 2002, 44 percent of the foreigners lacked proper documentation (Izquierdo, 2004, p. 52).

After the 2005 amnesty – which allowed access to regular status for 577,049 undocumented immigrants (OPI, 2006, #7) – the gap between the two databases (MTAS and INE) was of almost one million immigrants. For that year the groups with the highest rates of undocumented immigrants were Moroccans (511,294), Ecuadorians, (497,799), and Romanians (317,366). Note that in the last two cases the number of undocumented migrants is higher than the number of legal residents (357,065 Ecuadorians and 192,134 Romanians). Latin Americans as a group account for a large portion of clandestine immigrants albeit, according to the studies that have been done for specific national groups, these immigrants seem to manage to regularize their situation within a few years. For example, research sponsored by the Colombian Embassy in Spain concluded that 50.3 percent of Colombians living in Spain in 2001 were undocumented. The correlation between irregularity and time of residence in the country was extremely high: 80 percent of those who had arrived in the country within the previous year were irregular, while only 3 percent of the immigrants who had been living in Spain for 5 years or longer were in the same situation; the rest had in one way or another obtained proper

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20 According to the 2005 Annual Report (MTAS), there were 2,738,932 legal foreign residents, while for the same date the Municipal Registry (INE) recorded a figure of 3,730,610 foreigners living in the national territory. It is worth noting that INE's figures are believed to be an underestimation of the real number of immigrants for the reasons explained above.
permits to stay in the country. (Aparicio and Gimenez, 2002). Studies done for other Latin populations have produced similar findings.

Once foreigners are documented, the paths towards legal citizenship are highly dependent on their nationality: immigrants are required to reside legally and without interruption in the country for one year if they have first- or second-degree Spanish ancestry, two years if they are Latin American-born nationals, 5 years if they have refugee status, and ten years in the remaining cases. Once they naturalize as Spaniards they disappear from the Immigration Reports – but how many are there? All we know is the volume, evolution, and national origin of the naturalized immigrants. Graph 3.2 shows the evolution of foreigners’ naturalizations per year from 1960 to 2005. In absolute terms, naturalizations remained stable through the 1980s, with an average of slightly over five thousand per year. In 1997 the number of naturalizations broke the ten thousand mark, and since then the increase has been exponential (MTAS, 2001-2005). Since the beginning of the immigration era, Latin Americans have accounted for about 60 percent of the naturalizations, a percentage that peaked in 2005 (74 percent or 31 727 of 42 829).

Graph 3.2: Naturalizations of foreigners in Spain, 1960-2004. Prior to 1990 (marked with a vertical line) the figures are provided every five years.


21 The differentiated pathways to citizenship and their implications for the Argentinean population will be explored in chapters IV and VI.
Finally, the group of second-generation, Spanish-born children of immigrants is also growing. Spanish law attributes the nationality to the newborn on the base of the parents' nationality of origin. Regardless of their citizenship at birth, the percentage of births to foreign parent(s) has increased rapidly between 1996 (4.5 percent of total births) and 2004 (16.2 percent). In 2006, 38.5 percent of those births were to Latin American parent(s). Considering Spanish legislation on the issue, we can conclude that a large majority of second-generation Latino immigrants are born Spanish or acquire the citizenship at an early age (Aurelia Alvarez, 2005).

In summary, immigration is a recent phenomenon in Spain, with the bulk of immigrants having arrived in the country in the last decade. Currently this population is mostly from non-EEA countries and its profile corresponds to that of economic migrants, with an overrepresentation of working age individuals and sex ratios that reflect the demands of the domestic labour market. These workers tend to be employed in traditional immigrant niches (domestic work, construction, and hospitality sectors), although there are signs that this is changing in recent years. The geographic distribution of immigration throughout the country further supports both the hypothesis that this is mostly an economic immigration and that immigrant employment in Spain is quite limited to certain occupations.

Despite several amnesties (1986, 1991, 1996, 2001/2002, and 2005) and the efforts devoted to the control of borders, undocumented migrants continue to represent a high share of the total foreign population. Naturalized and second-generation immigrants account for a growing percentage of the immigrant population, although the data provided by Spanish agencies make it very difficult to establish a detailed profile of these groups. Latin American immigration is well represented among the undocumented, the naturalized, and the Spanish-born second generation.

Latin Americans are the fastest growing and currently the largest immigrant group in Spain. Unlike the rest of the immigrant groups, women represent a majority of the population. The educational level of Latin Americans is higher than the average for the total population of non-EEA immigrants, but less than that of EEA citizens. Despite this,
their insertion into the Spanish labour market differs little from other immigrant groups, with higher rates of employment in the traditional immigrant niches of domestic service (26.2 percent), hospitality (16.1 percent), and construction (15.9 percent) (Garrido and Toharia, 2004).

**HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL: POPULATION EXCHANGES BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND SPAIN.**

The history of population exchanges between Spain and Argentina is a long-lasting one, with three main landmarks: the European mass migrations of the late 19th century and early 20th century; the escape from the political repression in Argentina in the late 1970s; and the economic mass-migrations of the late 1980s and early 2000s. The continuity of these population exchanges supports the argument that there is a "migratory system" (Kritz et al., 1992) between the two countries, part of a larger migratory system that connects Latin America and Europe.

**"MAKING THE AMERICAS": SPANISH OVERSEAS MASS MIGRATIONS**

The mass migration of Spaniards to Argentina was a process that extended from 1850 to 1970, reaching its peak in 1905-1909 (Esteban, 2003). This was partially a result of the poverty and the political situation in Spain at the time, and partially a consequence of the pro-immigration policies of the Argentinean governments at the time, who promoted the immigration of Europeans in order to populate and develop the country.

The origins of these immigrants were diverse, although for the whole period two groups stand out: Spaniards and Italians constituted about one million people each in Argentina by 1914 (Esteban, 2003), while other national and ethnic groups that contributed significantly to the demographic growth of Argentina included Jews, Russians, and Poles.

During the mass migration stage more than five million people left Spain (Nuñez Seixas, 2002). They were mostly peasants, with low education and a reputation for being hard-workers. Once in Argentina they found jobs as farmers (54 percent in 1914), artisans (7 percent), small entrepreneurs (4.8 percent), and other mostly non-qualified
occupations (Esteban, 2003). The flows to Argentina were so intense and continuous that the marine companies started assigning high-capacity boats devoted to the Vigo/A Coruña–Buenos Aires passage. The extent and timing of Spanish emigration is easier to grasp in graph 3.3, which collects information on the flows to America (dark line) and Europe (light line) on a yearly basis between 1881 and 2001.

Graph 3.3: Evolution of Spanish emigration to America and Europe 1885-2001 (in thousands). Source: http://www.ciudadaniaexterior.mtas.es/estadisticas.htm

The impact of such emigration flows was immense for some regions, and their consequences can be felt to this day. The emigration of people from Galicia – the Autonomous Community\footnote{For an explanation of the term “Comunidad Autónoma” see footnote 6 in chapter II.} that occupies the North Western tip of the Iberian Peninsula – was so intense that Spaniards came to be known as “Gallegos” in Argentina; Galicia, in turn, constructed its national identity as a “land of emigrants”. This is no exaggeration considering that today, decades after the mass migrations, some districts have more than 30 percent of their voters abroad, residing mostly in Argentina and Uruguay (INE, 2006). Other poor regions such as Asturias, Andalusia, and the Basque Country also sent significant numbers of emigrants overseas during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries “to make the Americas” in times of economic hardship.
After decades of continuous population flows, Spanish emigration to Argentina came to a halt around 1965. This was principally because of the demand for an industrial workforce in the booming economies of Western and Central Europe at that time: in the 1960s Spain signed agreements to provide temporary workers to France, Germany, and Switzerland. Yet the demographic and symbolic imprint of centuries of emigration to the New World did not disappear with the shifting of the emigration flows. As we will see in following chapters, the experience of the mass migrations to Argentina created a framework of reference for inter-group and inter-personal relationships in Spain.

Leaving in a Hurry: The Arrival of Political Refugees in the 1970s

The first wave of “reverse migration” from Argentina to Spain were people who fled political repression under the government of Maria Estela Martinez (“Isabelita”, 1974-1976) and the succeeding military dictatorship of Jorge Rafael Videla (1976-1983). They were not the first ones to leave Argentina for political reasons: the period known as the “Argentinean Revolution” (1966-1972) saw the emigration of a large number of intellectuals to developed countries, mainly the United States, France, and Great Britain. The end of Franco’s dictatorship in November 1975 placed Spain on the map of possible destinations for those who wanted or were forced to leave Argentina. The flow of political refugees to Spain (often without the corresponding official status) started slowly in 1976, reaching its peak in 1979. Approximately 20,000 individuals migrated to Spain with Argentinean passports between 1976 and 1983 (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming). These pioneers contributed to making the Argentinean community one of the oldest immigrant groups in Spain.

Spain became one of the top destinations for Argentinean exiles during Videla’s regime for several reasons: existing family networks; the possibility of entering the country as a refugee; established migration flows to certain – more developed – regions such as Catalonia; the difficulties that some exiles experienced in adapting to other European countries; and the perceived proximity to their culture of origin. There is no official information on how many of these immigrants were returning Spaniards or whether or not they had social networks to rely on through the process of immigration.
However, both my findings and Margarita del Olmo’s point towards the existence of dormant social and family networks in Spain – a result of previous Spanish migration to Argentina – that were activated after their usually unplanned arrival to Spain, with uneven results. Several interviewees also mentioned that the generation of political refugees that arrived in Spain in the 1970s never thought they would be interested in emigrating – least of all to Spain, a backwards and poor country compared with Argentina. Therefore, most of the exiles arrived in Spain as tourists and overstayed their visas (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming; more evidence found in Margarita del Olmo, 2001, interviews).

The profile of the Argentinean immigration that arrived at the time was quite heterogeneous, although the percentage of intellectuals, university students, political activists, journalists, and skilled professionals was very high (Mira Delli Zotti and Esteban, 2003). The age distribution for the Argentineans who arrived during Videla’s dictatorship was markedly different from the one that was to come two decades later, with a considerable proportion of those arriving being over 45 (29.8 percent; Actis and Esteban, forthcoming). Despite the high socio-economic profile of this group, their integration was not easy: Spain was going through an economic crisis at the time, and as a consequence, many exiles, forced to take jobs as domestic workers, street vendors, etc. experienced severe de-skilling (Margarita del Olmo, 2002; Mira Delli Zotti and Esteban, 2003; interviews).

However, there was also a group of Argentineans who left the country in this period looking for better professional opportunities and did well – as is particularly the case for dentists and psychoanalysts who found a niche in the Spanish labour market. Although some of the exiles and the professionals returned to Argentina when the dictatorship ended in 1983, the majority remained in Spain. The researchers from the Colectivo IOE stated that:

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23 Some informants mentioned bringing little packages of reference letters in which their relatives and friends asked cousins, aunts, and even priests to help the exiles in such difficult moments. Most of such letters were never used, or were not accepted by the addressees who often had never met the referee personally.
Despite the origin of this community as a result of the expulsion of political dissidents by the dictatorship, the end [of the dictatorship] in 1983 has not caused a strong return. Instead, the scarce return of Argentineans to their country of origin could be described as a “leaking” of repatriations, followed, in many cases, by a second return to Spain as a consequence of the severe economic situation in Argentina. (Colectivo IOE, 1987, p. 137-139; author’s translation)


Esteban argues that economic migration from Argentina to Spain is a long-standing phenomenon covering three periods: the first extends from the 1950s to 1980; the second developed around the hyperinflationary crisis of the late 1980s; and the most recent one was a direct consequence of the economic crisis that peaked in late 2001 (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming; Esteban, 2003; Esteban and Mira Delli-Zotti, 2003).

As we have seen in the previous section, some of the Argentineans who arrived in Spain during the dictatorship were in fact economic migrants with high academic skills, looking for better work opportunities. Economic migration during this period was a very selective process usually limited to professionals who possessed skills in strong demand in the Spanish labour market. These immigrants were mostly of middle-class, urban origin, and settled in the large urban centres (Madrid and Barcelona). Argentineans “often appeared in the local imaginary as non-immigrants due to their “European” characteristics”, usually supported by [a European passport], their class origins, and the common language” (Sarribble Pedroni, 2000; author’s translation).

The initially high qualifications of Argentinean immigrants decreased during the 1980s. By the end of this decade the hyperinflationary process (1989-1990) triggered the first mass migration to Spain (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming). The middle classes, finding little or no professional opportunities in Argentina, made up an important part of this flow. As a strong economy within the EU, Spain emerged as an attractive destination for these migrants. Actis and Esteban (forthcoming) observe that the flows in the period between 1988 and 1992 were largely male, and that the academic qualifications of the immigrants were significantly lower than those of their predecessors. However, the occupations that they found in Spain were much better than other immigrant groups, with
fewer workers employed in agriculture than the total non-EU immigrant population, more
workers in professional and technical occupations, and fewer workers in low-level
services than was the case for other Latin American immigrants (Actis and Esteban,
forthcoming; Sarrible Pedroni, 2000). The geographical distribution of this group of
economic migrants also differed from that of previous years, with a stronger preference
for coastal urban areas (the archipelagos, Malaga, and Alicante).

The flow of Argentinean immigrants to Spain came to a halt around 1995; in fact, the
number of Argentinean residents in Spain diminished by 73 percent between 1993 and
2000 (MTAS, 1993-1999). Although the naturalization of some long-term residents
partially explains this, the figures point to a significant decrease in the existing
immigration flows from Argentina. This decline was a response to the temporary
stabilization of the Argentinean economy, a result of the neoliberalization project that
proved catastrophic a few years later. This neoliberalization caused the gradual
pauperization of the middle and working classes – known as the “new poor”—and
eventually the collapse of the Argentinean economy, also known as the “corralito”.

The term “corralito” is used to refer to the events that happened in December
2001, and more specifically, to a policy that limited the amount of money that citizens
could withdraw from their banks, which left some in total bankruptcy. The failure of the
neoliberal project triggered the largest mass emigration of Argentineans in history. The
crisis affected all classes of the social spectrum. Esteban (2003) uses three indicators to
explain the worsening economic situation for the middle and working classes in
Argentina between 1976 and 2002: the evolution in the distribution of income, with the
third quintile (middle income) declining almost 3 percent during this period (from 16.2 to
13.4 percent of the population) and the fifth quintile (lowest income) increasing more
than 6 percent (from 42.8 to 49.2 percent); higher unemployment (21.5 percent in May
2002) and underemployment (about 20 percent); and the evolution of relative poverty,
which peaked in 2002 (affecting more than 50 percent of the population). This means that
the poorer groups became larger at the expense mainly of the middle classes, and that
absolute and relative poverty reached unprecedented levels within a short period of time.
The 2001 collapse hit hardest those who were already vulnerable, and was especially
pronounced in the large cities. Those who could leave, did. Spain became a favourite
destination of emigrants for various reasons, mainly the cultural proximity of Spanish society and pre-existing social networks. With only one exception, all the immigrants interviewed for this thesis highlighted the key role of other Argentinean immigrants and Spanish relatives in their decision to emigrate to Spain and settle in the city where they lived.

<table>
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<th>Irregular</th>
<th>Estimated total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Italians (b)</td>
<td>Argentinian (c)</td>
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<td>1991</td>
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<td>38429</td>
<td>18841</td>
<td>57835</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>21571</td>
<td>33059</td>
<td>4039</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>22874</td>
<td>35896</td>
<td>44349</td>
<td>70491</td>
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<td>19922</td>
<td>34659</td>
<td>40039</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>40767</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>17007</td>
<td>36914</td>
<td>40767</td>
<td>64019</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>37224</td>
<td>40767</td>
<td>70491</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>38205</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>20412</td>
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<td>52607</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>50483</td>
<td>9852</td>
<td>81237</td>
<td>251380</td>
<td>251380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Argentinean immigrants by legal status.
Source: Actis and Esteban (forthcoming).

The evolution of the Argentinean population, as seen in the changing legal status of the immigrants (summarized in Table 3.4), reveals some interesting trends. Notably, economic migrants from the early 2000s were well aware of the benefits of holding European citizenship – a right to which many were entitled by virtue of their Spanish or Italian ancestry. However, their attempts to obtain it often failed, as the embassies and consulates of Spain and Italy saw themselves incapable – or unwilling – to face the avalanche of naturalization claims; many Argentineans simply left, hoping that things
would work-out once they were in Europe. This explains the spectacular growth of undocumented migration between 2000 and 2004 (355.3%). As table 3.4 shows, this group grew most rapidly, followed by Argentinean-born individuals with an Italian passport (244%), legal residents (238.3%), and Argentinean-born immigrants with a Spanish passport (57%). In 2002, right after the crisis, there were about 210,000 Argentinean-born immigrants living in Spain with different legal statuses: of them, more than 48 percent (100,820) were undocumented.

**ARGENTINEAN IMMIGRATION TODAY: PROFILE AND DISTRIBUTION.**

In summary, the flows of economic migration from Argentina to Spain built on existing social networks and drastically changed the profile of the Argentinean immigrant community: the group became more diverse, with a lower educational and professional standing, younger, and with more heterogeneous legal statuses (undocumented migrants, legal residents, Italian citizens, and Spanish citizens). Unlike other Latin American immigrant groups – more feminized, younger, and with lower qualifications – the Argentinean community stands halfway between EEA migration and that of Third-World countries, although it is gradually sliding towards the latter.

In 2005 Argentineans enjoyed one of the most balanced sex ratios of all immigrant groups, with just a small overrepresentation of men (51.7 percent). Compared to Latin American migrants to Spain in general, between 2000 and 2004 Argentineans exhibited a lower percentage of working age migrants (85.1 percent compared with 86.9 percent of the broader Latin American population) and a growing proportion of Argentineans younger than 20. Both facts seem to point to strong flows of family migration. This argument is supported by the fact that almost 57 percent of Argentineans who migrated at that time were married, a much higher percentage than for other Latin American groups (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming).

The most striking trait of this last migration from Argentina is the diversification of social and geographical origins. While the Argentineans of the “corralito” came mainly from urban centres, the relative weight of immigrants from Buenos Aires seemed to be lower in 2005 than thirty years earlier. Scholars in the field highlight the fact that the
diversification of academic skill levels (i.e. the growth of groups with lower levels of education) has been even greater than the diversification of origins, although there is no reliable source to prove these points.24

Regardless of their origins and legal status, the Argentinean-born immigrant population gravitates towards the big cities only slightly less than the general third-country immigrant population. As maps 3.3 and 3.4 show, since 1996 there has been a re-distribution of this population across the national territory, a trend that runs against the tendency of the general immigrant population, which has tended to concentrate around the traditional immigrant areas. The main change in the last decade was the decrease of the relative weight of the Argentinean-born population in and around the areas that expelled the largest numbers of emigrants to Argentina in the last century, mainly the North-western part of the Peninsula (Galicia, Asturias and part of Castilla y Leon). Today most of the Argentinean born population concentrates around the two main urban centres of Madrid and Barcelona, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, and several provincias in Andalusia.

The legal status of the newcomers is also more varied today than for previous waves: undocumented migrants, legal residents, Italo-Argentineans, and Hispano-Argentineans are widely represented. Immediately after the crisis in December 2001, Argentineans had one of the highest rates of irregular status ever seen in Spain: at least 48 percent of Argentinean immigrants did not have the necessary documents to live in the country (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming). Four years and one amnesty later, the situation has improved significantly, as more than 20,000 Argentineans managed to regularize their legal status in 2005 (Algañaraz, 2005) and immigration flows from Argentina have shrunk significantly. The decrease in rates of irregularity may point to two factors: first, the rapid (legal) integration of this group through different channels (arraigo, amnesties, and naturalization); and second, the return of many to their country of origin.25

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24 There is a database that provides information about individuals' professional skills (the Active Employment Survey), but the sample size for Argentineans was too small to guarantee reliable inferences: 437 subjects to represent a universe of 250,000.

25 Although some Argentineans may have decided to migrate to other countries (secondary migration) there is no evidence to support this point.
Map 3.3: Distribution of the total Argentinean-born population in Spain, 1996 (quintiles)
Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadistica.

Map 3.4: Distribution of the total Argentinean-born population in Spain, 2006 (quintiles)
Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadistica.
Since the entry of Spain into the European Union, access to citizenship has proved key for these immigrants. As a general rule, Argentineans enjoy the same privileges as other Latin American groups when it comes to accessing Spanish citizenship; however, the history of Spanish migration to Argentina ensures that, as a group, a higher percentage of these immigrants enter the country as Spaniards or naturalize within one year due to their Spanish ancestry. The rather lax Italian Nationality Act – where even great-grandchildren of Italian-born emigrants are entitled to apply for citizenship – also accounts for the growth of a particular group: the Italo-Argentineans or Argentinean-born individuals with Italian passports, who benefit from the right to work and move freely within the EU.

The question that remains unanswered is whether this recent wave of immigration will stay, or will instead return, or migrate elsewhere. While it is too soon to have enough information and with no indicators of population flows between Spain and Argentina, the stabilization of the Argentinean economy and the lack of opportunities in a rather segmented Spanish labour market may be fostering the return of Argentinean immigrants to their country of origin.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have aimed to produce a picture of the evolution and profile of the immigrant population in Spain, paying special attention to the Latin American and Argentinean populations. Despite the limitations imposed by the quality of the statistical data available (mainly their limited timeframe, lack of representativeness of all immigrant categories, and lack of flow measures), it is safe to make some generalizations that will frame the discussion in the chapters that follow.

First, the transition from a country of emigration to a country of immigration has happened very rapidly in Spain: virtually all immigrants living in Spain currently have arrived in the last twenty years. Moreover, the face of immigration has changed, as immigrants are increasingly from the Global South. This numerical and qualitative turnover has triggered strong reactions among the local population, as we will see in
Chapter V. One such reaction is the overrepresentation of African immigration in the public imaginary – however, as we have seen here Africans are a relatively small and slow growing group, with the notable exception of Moroccans.

Among the immigrants currently living in Spain, Latin Americans are the largest and fastest growing group. The Latin American population shows the characteristics typical of economic migration, with high percentages of people of working age and an overrepresentation of women – both of which are a response to the demands of the Spanish labour market. Like other immigrant groups, Latin Americans are concentrated in economic niches such as domestic work, construction, agriculture, and the service sector, a tendency that seems to be in decline as more Latino workers find employment in other areas. The spatial distribution of Latin Americans across the Spanish territory shows a strong correlation between settlement and availability of a labour market in traditional immigrant niches: half the population is currently distributed between Madrid and Barcelona, and there is a strong presence of Latinos in agricultural areas.

Argentineans are one of the oldest immigrant communities in Spain. While some of the largest immigrant groups today were virtually non-existent at the start of the immigration period in the mid 1990s, recent immigration flows from Argentina have built upon an established Argentinean immigrant population that supports newcomers. Since the first Argentineans arrived in the mid 1970s, the booms and busts of this immigrant community have been deeply intertwined with the cycles of the unstable Argentinean economy. The crisis of the “corralito” in late 2001 was a key trigger of contemporary migration to Spain.

However, the characteristics of the Argentinean immigrant community have changed greatly in the last three decades. While the Argentineans who arrived in the 1970s tended to be intellectuals and highly skilled workers (psychoanalysts, dentists, journalists, etc.), more recent inflows resulting from the economic crises in the late 1980s and early 2000s have a lower socio-economic profile. Still, Argentineans as a group are the highest educated and have the best occupational outcomes of all non-EEA immigrants. The traits of the Argentinean population (of European descent, relatively high educational levels, and urban and middle class origins), the existing support
networks, and the memory of previous migrations explain the relatively better migratory experience of Argentineans when compared to other immigrant groups.

The experience of Spain’s recent transition to a country of immigration and the characteristics of the total, Latin American, and Argentinean immigrant populations have so far been sketched with numbers and tables. In the next chapters the picture will acquire more depth, as the actors involved will be given room to express their experiences and opinions. From here on, the focus will be on the ways through which Argentinean immigration in Spain is regulated, integrated and represented, and how immigrants themselves accept or resist the categories that Spanish legislation and public imagination impose on them.
CHAPTER IV:  
BRINGING ORDER TO CHAOS? IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP LAWS.  
1985-2007

In the last chapter I sketched the evolution and profile of the immigrant population in Spain, paying special attention to the Latin American and Argentinean populations. Here my aim is to build the connections between this evolution and that of the legislation in the areas of immigration and citizenship. The phenomenon of international migration and the categories used to define and manage it are socio-political constructs – the result of political decisions that change according to the perceived interest of the nation-state. In the last twenty years, two political factors are key to understanding the development of immigration-related policies in Spain: first, the shifting interests of its political leaders in the area of international relations, refocusing from Latin America to Europe; and second, the gradual decentralization of the Spanish government, with increasing authority delegated to sub-national administrations (the Comunidades Autónomas; see footnote 6 in chapter II). Other factors such as the emphasis on culture or civic values in the definition of the nation – which will not be discussed here – further influence Spain’s immigration, integration, and citizenship legislation.

To understand Spanish immigration law it is also important to consider the effects of scale. The combination of the European, Spanish, and regional scales yield what some scholars have described as a “complex multilevel governance system of immigration management” (Dietz and Agrela, 2005). Beyond this, scale has a deep impact on the everyday integration of Argentineans in Spain: their fortunes will greatly depend on the degree to which they are perceived to fit in as full members of the political community at each level. For example, Argentineans with an Italian passport are automatically upgraded in terms of their rights as EU citizens (European and national level); on the other hand, the Argentineans interviewed in Catalonia believed that their integration would always be hindered by their lack of belonging to what they see as a narrowly defined Catalanian culture (regional level).
LEGAL FRAMEWORK: IMMIGRATION LAW.

The pace and breadth of change in Spanish immigration law has followed the evolution of migration itself. Until two decades ago, the focus of the legislation was on the protection of emigrated Spaniards. From 1852 until the mid 1980s, the law that regulated immigration in Spain made no distinctions in terms of status and rights between settled foreigners and Spanish citizens (Peña Obiol, 2004). The Parliament derogated the 1852 law in 1985, as Spain was required to pass the first comprehensive immigration law of its history in order to join the EU.

The discussion of law 7/1985 —“on the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain” — brought the term “immigrant” into the political discourse for the first time. Moreover, it provided the terms that frame the discussion on immigration to date: for example, the law used the term “immigrant” to define exclusively non-EU foreigners. This use charged immigration with an array of unspoken assumptions about the meaning of “immigration” to the country; it became identified with poor, illiterate, and racialized Third World migrants. The explicit goals of the law were (ironically) to build a legal framework respectful of the Declaration of Human Rights, reorganize the institutional chaos in the field of migration, and provide a more detailed classification of the circumstances of foreigners living in Spain (Peña Obiol, 2004). According to its Preface, “the Law [7/1985] through all of its sections highlights the preoccupation for recognizing the maximum number of Rights and Liberties [to foreigners living legally in Spain], whose exercise is practically equated to that of Spanish citizens” (LOE 7/1985; author’s translation).

Notwithstanding this declaration of principles and goals – which were never achieved – the law was considered one of the strictest in Europe, more appropriate to traditional countries of immigration in Europe than to the circumstances of a latecomer such as Spain (Agrela Romero and Gil Araujo, 2004). Law 7/1985 was also badly designed: some of its key sections were unconstitutional, and others incompatible with
the Schengen Agreement that Spain joined in 1992. The feeble attempts to implement the law revealed serious technical and juridical flaws (Peña Obiol, 2004).

Some researchers have interpreted this law as “a consequence of the European dictates, under the ideology of the construction of the ‘Fortress Europe’” (Agrela Romero and Gil Araujo, 2004, p. 6; see also Huntoon, 1998). For these scholars the 1985 law was an attempt to comply with EU pressures to control migration, if only formally. The move towards the abolition of internal EU borders initiated with the first Schengen Agreement in 1985 and the resulting need to control external borders was particularly important. This would explain the excessive toughness of the law, while inexperience and lack of political commitment would explain why the measures to control (illegal) migration were unsuccessful.

Regarding Latin American citizens, law 7/1985 did not recognize, formally, special treatment to any national group. This was justified on the grounds of a Human Rights discourse and the avoidance of any kind of “ethnic favouritism.” (Joppke, 2005). However, the recognition of a special relation between Spain and Latin American countries survived in a few lines of the preface, which stated:

the preoccupation of the law for a treatment of preference [tratamiento preferencial] which benefited nationals of Ibero American countries, Portugal, Philippines, Equatorial Guinea, Sephardic Jews, and those born in Gibraltar due to the assumed cultural identity or affinity, which renders them worthy of such treatment (LOE 7/1985; author’s translation).

These privileges were articulated in legal bodies outside immigration law, in the form of visa waiver programs and preferential access to Spanish citizenship.

During the 1990s, as the immigrant population became larger and more diverse, Parliament passed some partial modifications of the law in an attempt to make it functional. But soon it became obvious that in order to control undocumented migration

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26 The Schengen Agreement’s aims are to construct a EU-wide space of freedom for the movement of EU citizens, harmonize immigration and asylum procedures among the member states, and enforce the EU’s external borders.

27 Sephardic Jews are a subgroup of the Jewish family. They were originally from the Iberian Peninsula, and had to leave Spain or convert to Catholicism under the rule of the Catholic Isabel de Castilla y Fernando de Aragon after 1492. In 1497 they were also expelled from Portugal.
and integrate the growing foreign population into mainstream Spanish society. Spain needed a completely new immigration law. This new law should, first, confront the challenges of the rapidly growing immigration, and second, comply with the international commitments acquired by Spain as a member of the EU. The Parliament passed the new law – LOE 4/2000 “On the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain and their Social Integration” – by decree against the vote of the Senate, just a few months before the general election of 2000. Immigration became key in the electoral campaign of the three major national parties (PP, PSOE, and IU).

Law 4/2000 reorganized the management of immigration issues, redistributing the responsibilities and creating new agencies devoted exclusively to it, such as the National Secretary of Emigration and Immigration. The law also recognized a wide range of rights on matters like health and education regardless of the legal status of immigrants. This became one of the main controversies in Parliamentary discussions during 2000, as the Conservative Party found that parts of the law were inconsistent with EU dictates, particularly those aimed towards the creation of a common refugee law in the Union (Tampere, 1999). Once more, Europe was held accountable for the growing strictness of the Spanish immigration law. The Conservative Party advocated a restrictive revision of the original law, while the rest of the major national and regional parties pushed to keep the original law with some minor modifications. Shortly after winning the 2000 general election, the Conservative Party started work on the modification of the law. But because they lacked an absolute majority in Parliament and were forced to negotiate with members of more moderate groups, the reforms were limited.

The first modification of law 4/2000 came in August that same year (LOE 8/2000). Among other things, it denied undocumented migrants rights that were considered basic in Spanish legislation, like the rights of assembly, association, unionization, and strike. This enraged immigrants’ associations and politicians of every stripe. Two further modifications of the law 8/2000 (LOE 11/2003 and LOE 14/2003) returned those basic rights to immigrants regardless of their legal status – but they did not challenge the original goals and categorizations of law 4/2000. For example, the complex residence permit system for non-EEA nationals summarized in table 4.1 remained unchanged. This system and the categories that it creates highlight the intertwining of the
EU and Spanish immigration regimes: the differentiation between “temporary” and “permanent” resident corresponds with the dichotomy “initial” vs. “Communitarian / EU” immigrant – i.e., only permanent immigrants and EU citizens enjoy the right to travel, live, and work across the EU. But also because the granting and renewal of residence permits are generally dependent upon the previous concession of a work permit – except in the case of family reunification, political refugees, affluent immigrants, and other “exceptional” cases – the law sanctions a deeply economistic understanding of immigration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorization type</th>
<th>Eligible groups</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Initial Temporary Residence Permit. | **Under regular circumstances:**  
- Foreigner workers with a work permit.  
- Non-lucrative residence (no work permit required).  
- Foreigners born to a foreign legal resident.  
- Underage foreign-born under custody of Spaniard or legal resident.  
**Under extraordinary circumstances:**  
- arraigo laboral (settled through work).  
- arraigo social (settled through family and social relations).  
- Humanitarian reasons; asylum seekers; refugees.  
- Minors under public custody who turn 18 with no residence permit.  
- Family members under family reunification procedures.  
- Cooperation with the administration and/or with the security forces.  
- National interest; National security; public interest. | - Initial temporary permit, 1 year.  
- First renewal of temporary permit, 1 year.  
- Second renovation of temporary permit, 2 years. |
| Permanent residency ("Communitarian/EU regime") | - Foreigners after 5 years of legal and uninterrupted residence in the national territory.  
- Retired foreigners with retirement income.  
- Foreign minors born in Spain who have lived in Spain three years prior to their 18th birthday.  
- Spaniards who lost their Spanish nationality.  
- Stateless persons and political refugees.  
- Individuals who have contributed significantly to the economic, scientific, or cultural progress of Spain or who have enhanced the image of Spain abroad. | No deadlines. |

Table 4.1: Types of residence permit, eligible groups, and duration.  
Source: LOE 14/2003.
More importantly, the Parliament never questioned the two guiding principles of law 4/2000: control of the borders and the conflation of integration and (cultural) assimilation of immigrants. The control of borders meant, foremost, the securitization of immigration. For example, the Conservative government increased the budget of the Ministry of the Interior by 186 percent in 2003 (Agrela Romero, 2002). Most of this money went to the improvement of the External Integrated Surveillance System (SIVE) to control illegal migration from Africa to the Canary Islands. The rise of the fortress walls also affected the Hispanic Community, because the law erased any reference to special treatment that survived in 7/1985. Moreover, between 2000 and 2004 the Spanish parliament cancelled visa waiver programs with several Latin American countries. Table 4.2 shows the different requirements for entry and residence for citizens of different world regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>Free, no visa.</td>
<td>Free, no permits required; automatically granted permanent residency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibero America</td>
<td>Visa needed for nationals of Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic.</td>
<td>Permit required for stays longer than three months in all cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of countries</td>
<td>Visa required for most cases.</td>
<td>Visa required for all stays longer than three months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Entry requirements for entry and stay for citizens of different world regions.
Sources: Immigration Law (14/2003); bilateral treaties.

Despite the legislation, there is growing evidence that Spanish border officers are rejecting Latin American nationals at the border if they suspect that the person has intentions to immigrate. In cases where such people are not formally required to hold a

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28 The only vestige of privilege is the exemption of payment of administrative fees for the processing of the working permit (law 14/2003, article 47).

29 Exceptions: nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Slovakia, Slovenia, United States, Estonia, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Island, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, México, Monaco, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Czech Republic, Republic of Korea, Rumania, San Marino, Vatican, Singapore, Switzerland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Hong Kong and Macao.
visa to enter the territory, this means that some bilateral laws on the protection of Latin American citizens’ rights are not being respected (Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones Argentinas en España, 2005; Casa Argentina de Madrid, 2005; interviews). In other words, the elimination of the legal privileges that Latin Americans enjoyed in the past to enter and stay in Spain is being reinforced through everyday practices of border control.

The second principle of the law 4/2000 that remained unchallenged – assimilation – did in fact benefit Latin Americans. The law designed a framework for state integration programs: the Global Program for the Regulation and Coordination of Immigration (GRECO; MTAS, 2001), which clearly conceived of immigration as a threat to the Spanish nation and culture. Echoing the underlying assumptions of the immigration law, the program contributed to the conflation of non-European immigration with Third-World immigration (poor, illiterate, and foreign). It is worth noting that this conflation is a false one: as we have seen in the previous chapter, the immigrant population is highly heterogeneous, and all groups except Africans do in fact have higher educational rates than Spaniards (Garrido and Toharia, 2004). Furthermore, the assumption is that immigrants are different and inferior due to their national origins, a point that is elaborated in the GRECO, which understands culture almost as a biological and immutable trait of the immigrant. In this discourse, the process of integration envisages a process of “acculturation” for which some national groups (e.g. Latin Americans) who are assumed to be more easily assimilable into “mainstream Spanish society” than others.

In summary, Spanish immigration law in the last two decades has changed quickly. The changes have followed (never anticipated) the evolution of international migrations to the country and have provoked parliamentary discussions that illustrate the increasing politicisation of immigration in Spain. Immigration has also become securitized, as the immigration laws have grown stricter with every modification since 1985. As part of this tendency, there has been a gradual severing of the ties with the Hispanic Community, of which Argentina is part. On the grounds of equal treatment of all foreigners without regards to their ethnic or national origins, the legislation has

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30 “National Group” is the concept used in Spanish legislation and public discourse. There is no reference to ethnic groups, visible minorities, or any other terms widely used in the Canadian context.
followed a clear-cut pattern of eliminating the privileges citizens of Latin American countries enjoyed in the past. The transition has not been paralleled in the field of integration policies, which conceive of Latin Americans as more assimilable than other non-EU immigrant groups.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK: NATIONALITY LEGISLATION.**

The rapidity of the evolution of immigration law contrasts with the stability of citizenship legislation, which has remained basically unchanged since the late 1970s. Spanish law assigns nationality or allows the individual to attain it according to three principles: *ius sanguini* or blood ties with the nation, *ius soli* or birth in the national territory, and *ius dimicili* or period of legal residence in the country (the requirements under each principle are summarized in table 4.3). In Spain, as in other countries of Southern Europe with a long history of emigration such as Italy or Portugal, *ius sanguini* prevails over the other two. Interestingly, as these countries have become countries of immigration the principle of *ius sanguini* has been reinforced in an attempt to maintain strong links with their emigrants and their descendants, while the other two paths have remained largely unchanged.

The privileges that Latin American citizens enjoy in this legislative body are an interesting departure from the primacy of blood ties, although only a partial one, as the "special ties" between the former colonies in America and the Spanish nation provide for an extended interpretation of literal ancestry. The recognition of such ties emerges mainly in the length of the required period of legal and continued residence in the national territory prior to the acquisition of the Spanish citizenship: in the absence of direct (first or second generation) Spanish ancestry, the requirement is of two years for Latin Americans nationals, ten for the rest of the foreigners, and five for refugees. The same preference applies through the principles of *ius soli*, as in most cases children born to

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31 The legislation is scattered across five legal bodies: the basic principles are in the Spanish Constitution (1978), while the specification of concrete procedures is spread between the Civil Code (title 1, articles 17 to 26), the Law of the Civil Registry (articles 1, 2, 15, 16, 18, 63, 67), the Regulation of the Civil Registry (articles 220 to 224), and bilateral agreements on dual nationality. The reforms introduced after 1978 have been very limited, affecting mostly the status of emigrants and their descendants and the right of EU citizens in the national territory.
Latin American parents receive Spanish citizenship at birth – unlike most other non-EU second-generation immigrants. The smoother paths provided to Latin Americans to access citizenship status support Joppke’s argument that since 1985 the Hispanic Community has tended “to retain, even to strengthen, its legal foothold in nationality law, while losing out in immigration law” (2005, p. 121).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle and general requirements</th>
<th>Requirement for Argentinean citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ius Sanguini</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children born to Spanish-born citizens can be naturalized at any point in their lives. In some cases dual citizenship is recognized.</td>
<td>Same requirements as other national groups. Dual citizenship recognized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ius Soli</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spanish nationality legislation grants Spanish citizenship to all children born in Spain to foreign parents whose state of origin does not recognize such children as their own nationals. Specific bilateral agreements (e.g. with Ibero American countries) also grant Spanish nationality to children born to foreign parents.</td>
<td>Children born in Spain to Argentinean parent(s) may obtain Spanish citizenship at birth and enjoy dual Hispano-Argentinean citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal and uninterrupted residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Individuals born in Spanish territory; minors under custody of a Spanish-born citizen or a Spanish official institution for two consecutive years; foreigners married to a Spanish-born citizen, not divorced or separated; their widows and widowers, proven the couple was not divorced or separated at the time of the partner’s death; children and grandchildren of Spaniards, whether they where Spanish-born or acquired the Spanish citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Individuals with Ibero American, Equatorial Guinean, or Portuguese citizenship from birth. Sephardic Jews are also considered under this provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Refugees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>All other circumstances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Access to citizenship according to main principle of application, with specifications for Argentinean citizens. Source: nationality legislation.

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32 Spanish legislation discriminates between Spanish-born citizens and individuals who have acquired the nationality later in their lives.
The main changes in the Spanish citizenship regime since 1985 are not related to the growing immigration flows, but are instead a direct consequence of the process of Europeanization—more specifically, to the need to conform to the principles of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) which institutionalized European citizenship. These changes have triggered the expansion of citizenship rights, albeit exclusively for citizens of the EU. The changes have responded to the need to create a new category, the “communitarian citizen”. Those who fall under this label are entitled to virtually the same rights as nationals, with some limitations regarding their participation in national politics. It is worth noting that the conditions under which EU nationals can access Spanish legal citizenship remain as they were prior to the Maastricht Treaty.

Combining the three elements described above—primacy of *ius sanguini*, privileges given to Latin American nationals, and the recent creation of a special status for nationals of EU member states—the result is a segmented citizenship regime based on a double discrimination: first between EU and non-EU citizens, and second between Latin American citizens and the rest of non-EU foreigners. This means that overall Argentineans have access to the most privileged categories of immigration: first, to the “Communitarian” group, as many are eligible for European (Italian or Spanish) citizenship by virtue of their ancestry; and second, to the group of Latin American immigrants, by virtue of their national origin.

Some experts have criticized Spanish citizenship legislation for clinging to its outdated premises and refusal to integrate the growing pool of immigrants as full members of Spanish society—and not just taxpayers (Alvarez, 2005; Cano Bazaga, 2004). They argue that the extremely limited changes introduced in 2003 and 2007 are not properly responding to the needs of a growing immigrant population in Spain. Immigrant associations, lawyers, and politicians have lobbied for a unified Nationality Act that addresses the reality of Spain as a country of immigration without giving up the protection of Spanish emigrants and their descendants. Among the advocates of the cause are Aurelia Alvarez, Professor at the Universidad de Leon, and several immigrant associations.

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33 These changes were limited to the reinforcement of the ties with emigrated Spaniards (recognizing, for example, their right to run in the general election). They did not affect the grandchildren of Spanish emigrants or immigrants living in Spain.
associations interviewed in this study. However, immigrant lobbies do not challenge the institution of citizenship – which some Autonomous Communities are pushing for.

"A Complex Multilevel System of Migration Management": The Role of the "Comunidades Autónomas".

As the last sentence suggests, the administrative structure of the Spanish nation-state further complicates the discussion of immigrants’ integration. Spain is a multinational state, despite the long-standing attempts to homogenize the diverse nationalities within Spanish borders (a project that lasted since the early 16th century until Franco’s death in 1975). Since the end of the dictatorship and more so since the 1980s, decentralization has become a key component of the national democratic project. Yet at the moment the potential for further decentralization is limited, as the Constitution explicitly forbids the creation of a federal state of Comunidades Autónomas.

Governments at the level of the Comunidades Autónomas have fought for and obtained a great deal of autonomy from the central state, especially in Catalonia, the Basque Country, the Comunidad Valenciana, Galicia, and Andalusia. The Communities cannot – and will not be able to unless the Constitution is modified – have jurisdiction in nationality and immigration matters, which are under direct and exclusive sovereignty of the central state (Constitución Española, 1978, art. 149). However, within the framework of the national program for the integration of immigrants (GRECO) the Communities hold most of the responsibility for running regional integration programs. These programs are consistent with the diversity of histories of immigration to and emigration from the regions, and with the diverging interpretations of the role that immigration has in the regional/national project. But more interestingly, the Communities have used the integration plans to appropriate the concept of citizenship and assert their resistance to state policies.

34 The degree of autonomy from the central state is different for each Autonomous Community, depending on the degree of “uniqueness” and the history of forms of self-government prior to Franco’s dictatorship.

35 There are at least six regional integration plans (Andalusia, Balearic Islands, Murcia, Aragon, Basque Country, and Catalonia).
This resistance is justified on the basis of ambiguous definitions of responsibilities regarding the integration of immigrants at different scales of government. These ambiguities allow for different interpretations of regional responsibility and make it possible for regional governments to go well beyond their formally defined duties in the application of the immigration law.\textsuperscript{36} Differential treatment of equivalent cases emerged strongly in my interviews in Catalonia – one of the regions with the highest degrees of autonomy – where immigrants, associations, and lawyers expressed their frustration with the arbitrary ways in which the regional governments applied federal laws.

The different practices of integration relate to regional discourses of "self" and "otherness" that often differ from the same representations at the national level. If, as some authors have suggested, integration policies need to be studied in relation to the nation-building project (Brubaker, 1992; Favell, 2001), then in the Spanish case the different integration programs must be analyzed as attempts to strengthen the difference of peripheral, stateless nations (see Gil Araujo, 2006). The cases of Catalonia and the Basque Country clearly show how immigrant integration serves as an instrument of resistance and nation building. The "self" in these regions' immigrant integration plans is defined more in opposition to an oppressive and reactionary central state than to the "immigrant other" (cf. with the GRECO program at the national level discussed above).

In the case of Catalonia, the integration of outsiders has a long history. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, immigrants from poorer regions such as Andalusia and Extremadura migrated to Catalonia responding to the labour demands of the region's industrial revolution. These earlier migrants, who were perceived as foreigners, presented challenges similar to the ones brought by international migration today. The integration of Andaluces and Extremeños led to an early understanding of the meaning of being Catalanian and the development of several options for the integration of "foreign elements" into Catalanian society. By the mid 1950s Jordi Puyol (an eminent figure of Catalanian politics throughout the last half century) had already outlined a "Catalanian doctrine towards immigrants' integration" (Puyol, 1958; cited in Gil Araujo, 2006, 242;\textsuperscript{36} Although the immigration law emanates from the central government, all the paperwork is processed in regional and local offices and the specific integration policies are implemented by the local and regional governments.)
author’s translation). Puyol based his “doctrine” on a definition of “the Catalanian being” (el ser catalán) heavily influenced by arborescent metaphors – roots, hybrids, and transplants. In this discourse, language (Catalán) had the leading role in the conservation of the regional nationhood37 – a trait that survives to date and that acts against the interests of Latino immigrants in the region.

In all cases, nationalist leaders defined Catalonia as a welcoming society with a specific cultural identity that needs to be preserved (note that “immigrants” in this discourse are seen as potential allies, not threats). However, in the public political discourse there are also references to “race” and the phenotype that support the argument that there is a strong ethnic component in the understanding of the Catalanian nation. This ethnic bias is even stronger in the Basque context, where references to the ethnic definition of the nation are constant among nationalist leaders. Thus, just a few years ago the then head of the main nationalist party and president of the Basque Parliament, Xavier Arzalluz, publicly supported the hypothesis that “real” Basques have negative blood types, and that “the blood issue only confirms that [the Basque people] has its own roots, identifiable since prehistory” (quoted in El Mundo, 2004; author’s translation). Just like the Catalanian case, the discourse on the nation is full of parallels to the natural world: the name given to the Basque Country in the local language is Euskadi, literally “plant where Euskeras [Basques] grow”. Immigrants, in this case, would be considered cultural hybrids.

The main problem for the Communities is that they are not the keepers of such a world of roots, trees, and hybrids where regional identities seed and grow: the central state is, since only Madrid decides the flora (i.e. types of immigration) that are worth cultivating. On the other hand, the concept of immigrants’ citizenship, vaguely defined, presents opportunities for Spain’s stateless nationalisms, which appropriate, manipulate, and question it in open opposition to the central state. For example, the Basque Immigration Plan highlights that the Spanish Constitution

37 “... the permanent factor, the steady rock, is the Catalan. If one day that changed, men who inhabit this part of the peninsula, whatever their origin, would stop being a people. (...) This means that the integrating core, culturally and mentally, is Catalan.” (Puyol 1976, p. 36; quoted in Gil Araujo, 2006 p. 244).
... does not mention the concept of citizenship. On the contrary, the concept of citizenship (or the citizen) is used in the [national] legislation ambiguously and with several meanings. Such concepts must be put in relation to an array of rights, as much civic and political as economic, social, and cultural, which affect [the region’s] competences such as education, health, housing, and social well-being, all of them under the competence of the Basque Autonomous Community as regulated in the Community’s Estatuto\(^{38}\) (...) and in a broader sense [competences] exclusive to the Basque institutions. (Plan Vasco de Integración 2003-2005, p. 55; author’s translation).

Although each regional immigrant integration plan has its own traits, in general they share a much more positive view of immigration than the national program (GRECO). Also, as in the example used above, regional plans adopt differential understandings of citizenship, calling for a further clarification of its multiple meanings as a necessary step in the way towards the emergence of more inclusive forms of citizenship. Mainly, the regional integration plans aim to build forms of belonging that overcome citizenship’s bondage to the central government – and that conceive of the immigrant as a potential political, economic, and cultural member of the society of reception regardless of their nationality of origin and their legal status.

In summary, the administrative structure of the Spanish state – organized in three basic vertically inter-dependent levels: the local, the regional, and the national – leads to a “complex multilevel governance system of immigration management” (Dietz and Agrela, 2005). Because some competences on immigration management are not clearly defined in the national legislation, immigration has emerged as an area of struggle in the efforts to gain both greater independence from the central state and the assertion of differentiated regional identities. The regional plans for immigrant integration are fruitful spaces for this struggle. These programs highlight (and construct) the unique identity of each region in relationship to the integration of immigrants. Moreover, these plans frequently uncover specific national projects that diverge from the central state’s plans in core issues such as the definition, status, and rights of the members. There is a clear willingness on the part of the regions to overcome the conceptual limitations imposed on

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38 The Estatutos de Autonomía are the equivalent to the state Constitution at the level of the Communities. Only the Communities with highest degree of self-government have Estatutos.
the category of the citizen by the national state — a willingness that goes beyond social integration programs and steps into areas under the strict sovereignty of the state.

Particularly, Communities aim to break with the state-bounded legal category of “the citizen”. The aim is to achieve recognition of the immigrant — and indeed of all the members of the society — as individuals with social, political, and economic rights derived simply from their condition as human beings. This new understanding of the meaning(s) of citizenship may not always benefit Argentinean immigrants: emphasis on the region’s cultural uniqueness in fact strips Argentineans of the privileges they enjoy at the national level, assimilating them with the broader immigrant population.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS: HIERARCHY OF OTHERNESS (I)**

In this chapter I have explored the ways in which three fields of public policy (immigration, citizenship, and integration) have evolved in Spain since 1985. These three areas construct the framework in which the Argentinean population is managed and integrated into Spanish society.

Since the Parliament passed the first immigration law in 1985, the trend has been towards more restrictive laws that complicate the legal immigration of Latin American immigrants. The possibilities of legally migrating to Spain at the moment are virtually non-existent (except in the case of family reunification). Residence permits depend upon working permits, which in turn depend upon the existence of a job offer that takes between one and two years to be processed. Another option considered in the immigration law (worker quotas selected in the country of origin) remains undeveloped. As a consequence, the Latin American community in general, and Argentinean immigration in particular, are gradually losing their privileged place in Spanish immigration law. As special privileges afforded to Argentinean migrants are rescinded in Spanish legislation, immigrants from this country are increasingly forced into illegality and more precarious migratory experiences than used to be the case.

In contrast to the evolution of the immigration laws, citizenship legislation has remained stable during the last two decades. At the national level citizenship has maintained a definition of the nation that accepts Latin Americans as *almost* Spaniards,
granting them exceptional privileges in their access to citizenship. Argentinean immigrants in many cases also have the benefit of European ancestry, which allows them to enter and stay in the country as EU citizens (generally as Hispano-Argentineans or Italo-Argentineans).

The program for the integration of foreigners (GRECO) builds the growing gap between immigration and citizenship legislation at the national level. In the GRECO, cultures are understood as quasi-genetic attributes of the immigrant, stable, natural characteristics that place the foreigner at the outskirts of the national community by virtue of their national origins. The “cultural fundamentalism” of the Spanish integration plan shows clear ethnic favouritism, and helps us to uncover the ideological underpinnings of a highly discriminatory citizenship regime. Regional integration programs, however, challenge the national framework for the integration of (non-European) immigrants. These programs provide for different models of integration, and more importantly, reject the national definition of membership, albeit in their own ethnocentric terms.

In summary, the changing legislation on entry, integration, and access to citizenship in Spain, together with a deeply culturalist discourse of the immigrant other, have contributed to the legal, political, and economic exclusion of a large portion of the immigrant population. The legislation has produced a hierarchy of immigrant otherness. In this hierarchy Argentineans occupy a privileged space secured by citizenship laws and the national framework for the integration of immigrants. But that space is also challenged by the evolution of immigration law and the regional integration programs, which tend to homogenize the categories of immigration and eliminate considerations of national origins.
CHAPTER V:
ARGENTINEAN IMMIGRATION IN POPULAR DISCOURSE

... it's something like institutionalized... that Latin Americans are closer to us (...) You find that in any colloquial conversation, in the radio, even among academics. We take Latin Americans for granted. But imagine, such a category! From which country? Where? Which social class? This thing, being Argentinean, where does it come from? From drinking mate? What do Argentineans have in common? These stereotypes work even in [academic] research, so that at the same time, I believe that the same research somehow reinforces [such stereotypes] in some cases, because it carries along a full exercise of self-reflection on the own ways we look at the world (...). We are saying: “the cultural is there”, but what is the cultural? (...) We are reinforcing already existing attitudes of cultural fundamentalism, and we're saying that's ok. (Academic 2, Madrid).

In the previous chapter I argued that the growth and increasing diversity of Spain’s immigrant population and its entry into the EU have contributed to the toughening of immigration laws. Latin Americans, who have traditionally enjoyed exclusive benefits to enter, live, and work in Spain, have been most affected. The loss of footing in immigration laws contrasts with the maintenance of the group’s privileges in citizenship legislation – but given that in most cases immigrants must reside legally in the country prior to the acquisition of citizenship status, that does not mean much.

A series of deeply entrenched popular attitudes towards immigration in general, and more particularly towards the Latin American and Argentinean immigrant population, can help us understand the coexistence of these two strands of legislation and the underlying assumptions of the national program for the integration of immigrants (GRECO) outlined in chapter IV. Since the late 1990s – and especially since the general election of 2000 – immigration-related issues are debated on the newspapers’ front pages, in Parliament, and in everyday bar conversations. There is a differentiated and layered discourse on immigration – a discourse where each type of migration has a predetermined place in the mind of Spaniards: some immigrants are “like us”, and some are “different”; some fit, and some do not, and will not. I argue that the integration of Argentinean immigrants in Spain cannot be understood without reference to these stereotypes, categories, and hierarchies that Spanish imaginations impose on immigrants
and that make institutionalized discrimination, including discrimination in integration policies and citizenship legislation seem natural, and thereby logical.

In the following pages I will focus on public discourse on and popular representations of Latin American and Argentinean immigration. My sources are the mainstream national press (El País, La Vanguardia, El Mundo, ABC), some public speeches by politicians, and several conversations collected during my fieldwork. All of these discourses are, generally speaking, in tension with the gradual elimination of benefits for Latin Americans in immigration law. In fact they situate Latinos, and more so Argentineans, within the boundaries of the imagined Spanish nation.

**ON BOATS, “INDIANOS”, AND STORIES AROUND A COFFEE TABLE**

I got my first voice recorder in 2001 to interview my grandma, a great storyteller, about the fortunes and misfortunes of our family. Her favourite stories are always those of the civil war and its aftermath, between 1936 and the 1950s. She lived in a town by the sea, a seaport on the Mediterranean severely hit by the war because of its strategic value for both sides of the conflict – the republicans and the nationals. She told of murderers and hunger, extended families divided by their political allegiances that more often than not depended upon non-political factors, such as the street where they lived and ill-intentioned rumours. So much hunger when the war ended, she told me, so many children to feed yet so many men were gone, gone forever. Then, like in a dream, she said, those big boats arrived to the port, and in front of the astonished eyes of the town-dwellers the military unloaded wheat, tons of wheat, dried meat, cereals. “We heard the cousins from Argentina are sending us food, the government and our cousins heard about our difficulties and are helping, and people would say, ‘God bless our cousins, God bless the rich land of Argentina’”.

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39 This food was not really given, but sold to the Spanish government between 1947 and 1955. The supplies included wheat, corn, meat, and cooking oil that the Argentinean government agreed to sell to Franco’s government at a low price, despite the opposition of the international community. Voices against this trade warned that this was a form of support towards the dictatorial regime. International pressures and the worsening of the relationships between the Spanish and the Argentinean governments led to a decrease in the trade after 1950 and its final cancellation in 1955 (Cisneros and Escude, 2000).
Some of those “cousins” returned: they were known as Indianos, a term meaning the Spaniard who left Spain poor and returned from Latin America (especially Argentina) wealthy (Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española, 2001). According to some of the people I interviewed, the image of the indiano was still very powerful in the early stages of the Argentinean immigration to Spain in the mid and late 1970s. This image did not necessarily lead to good relations, especially when the first Argentineans arrived to a post-dictatorship Spain only barely within the periphery of Europe, both economically and culturally. At that time, Argentineans were viewed as arrogant and judgmental towards Spaniards. As an academic who studies the Argentinean collective put it,

Spaniards rejected Argentineans because they were so arrogant, they thought themselves better [than Spaniards] (...) In symbolic terms, it was as if the master came here. I mean, instead of what happens now, now the hierarchy has changed, the hierarchy back then was [different], middle class Argentineans [came], with university degrees, with a cultural baggage, with an educational level similar to that of Northern Europe, they came to Spain and of course, Spaniards said: “they look down on us! They are criticizing us!” (Academic 1, Barcelona).

But there was also something else, a feeling of empathy and attachment. For example, political refugees often describe moments of intense emotional recognition upon their arrival in Spain in the 1970s:

... people that didn’t know me, people, the common people, let’s say (...) those were the people who gave the real solidarity, people who showed nobleza,40 and ... the true Spanish spirit that I had read in my grandfather’s books, because I read Castelar, books that my grandfather left when he died. (Interview 4 in Margarita del Olmo, 2001, p. 83; author’s translation).

More recent immigrants also described similar feelings of being welcomed: “at work Spaniards talk very well about Argentineans, ‘they are very polite people, highly skilled’ (...) and they smile and tell me, ‘my grandpa went to Argentina’” (male immigrant, >45, arrived in 2001 and undocumented until the amnesty in 2005). In fact, experiences of discrimination are rare, usually limited to women working in the domestic service. But in general interviewees’ experiences support the results of a survey carried

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40 The Spanish term “nobleza” brings together the qualities of nobility, honesty, and uprightness.
out a few years ago that stated that Argentineans are the immigrant group preferred by Spaniards – even before other EU immigrants (“Argentina and its citizens are the favourite for Spaniards”, M.P., 12/24/2003).

Maybe because of this open preference it is surprising to hear some of the stereotypes that mediate the interaction between Spaniards and Argentineans. My Spanish interviewees described Argentineans as liars, “smart-asses”, and womanizers, as well as being flaky, arrogant, racist, stubborn, and proud; interestingly, they were also seen as “very similar to Spaniards” (police officer, lawyer 1, lawyer 2, conversations). The juxtaposition of the perceived similarity and preference for Argentineans against such harsh prejudices uncovers the complexities of a long-term relationship, and the continuity of inter-group categories of reference, inherited from the times of the great overseas migrations. There is a feeling of self-recognition in the eyes of the other, a relationship of empathy shaded by stereotypes that have been constructed through the generations. In the interviews, I found that vague notions of familiarity survive in interactions between Argentinean-born immigrants and Spaniards, something that is consistent with the analysis of two other strands of popular discourse: the press and politicians’ speeches.

ARGENTINEANS IN THE MEDIA, OR HOW THE “INDIANOS” BECAME “PIBES”

The role of the media in the creation of collective representations of the “self” and the “immigrant” other is crucial for the emerging frameworks of understanding and interaction such as those described in the previous section. Given the lack of day-to-day interactions between Latin American immigrants and most Spaniards who do not live in the main metropolises, Retis (2004) argues that Latinos are often ‘known’ by the images that the media provides. According to her, images of Latin America and its people in the media are characterized by a strong correlation between the region and negative events; the idea of a coherent Latin America (a “community of Ibero American nations”) that pays little attention to the different realities of the region, between and within its countries; and a marked contrast between the “European Spain” and the “Third World

41 In Argentina, slang for “kid”, i.e., anyone.
Latin America" that focuses only on the present and ignores the historical relations between the former and the latter.

Retis' analysis of the treatment of the Latin American immigration in the Spanish media and the different ways in which Ecuadorians, Colombians and Argentineans were portrayed in the national press between 2000 and 2001 is very enlightening. Here, I build on her section on Argentina and expand the time frame from the 1980s to date. I argue that there is a "before" and "after" in the image of the Argentinean immigrant, and that the 2001 collapse marks the transition point, something that, due to the temporal limitations of Retis' study, escaped her analysis.

Between 1985 and 2000, news on Argentina mainly covered the judiciary processes against people responsible for political repression during the late 1960s and the 1970s, the corruption of the Argentinean political class, and later on (1989) the causes and consequences of the hyperinflationary crisis. Throughout this period the news appeared mainly in the International and Economy sections of the major Spanish newspapers. This helped construct the image of Argentina as a developing country far ahead of its Latin American neighbours.

As the economic decline of the country sharpened in 2001, news about Argentina mushroomed in the Economy section of Spanish newspapers. Interestingly, the concern about Argentina's economy was paralleled by a growing discussion of Spanish companies' involvement in the crisis and the ways that this implication could impact the relationship between the two countries. Between the lines, it is easy to read a sense of guilt for the betrayal of a long-term ally. In June, an article in El País informed readers that the Argentinean Parliament considered passing a decree to block the withdrawal of Spanish companies from the country ("Argentinean MPs threat to block Spanish investments", Galindo, 1/6/2001). The tension built up as Spanish investors retreated from Argentina, triggering violent attacks on Spanish private and public property. In June, several articles referred to a general strike—one of the many that would happen—which was especially virulent against Spanish owned property ("The general strike in Argentina becomes a day against Spanish [private] companies", Ralea and Ares,
An article unambiguously titled “Go away Gallegos\(^{42}\), thieves” (A.C., 6/9/2001) described some of what happened:

The walls of the buildings in Buenos Aires identified with Spanish capital collected demonstrators’ anger with spray paintings. “Ollas populares\(^{43}\)” happened in front of the [Spanish] banks headquarters and companies (...). With signs glued onto the fences (...) they also threw eggs and stones at one of Telefónica’s headquarters in Argentina. In the press release by the Union [which organized some of the demonstrations] could be read: “the fight will continue until the Spanish state assumes its responsibility” (author’s translation)

News in the following months talked about the Spanish government’s intense efforts to maintain Spanish investments in Argentina, but also of private companies that withdrew from the country. The IMF offered Argentina a loan in return for the implementation of a strict structural adjustment program, which resulted in escalating violence and rampant poverty. But no one understood the full extent of the crisis until the very last days of the year 2001, when the economy collapsed.

Two shifts took place on the media coverage in December, 2001: first, as the extent of the crisis became clear, coverage of the involvement of Spanish capital in the crisis was less prominent: the situation was too severe for Spain to take responsibility for it. Second, as the political relations with Argentina settled, attention shifted towards the impact of the crisis on the population. More and more news about Argentina talked of starving children, organized assaults on supermarkets and trucks transporting cattle, and soaring levels of poverty – all images of a quasi civil war that brought up memories of Spain’s own post-war period. The situation did not improve much for a long time: a year after the “corralito” the Argentinean Statistics Institute reported that 50 percent of the population lived under the poverty line and 27.5 percent of urban dwellers were indigent (EFE, “Poverty strikes one out of two Argentineans”, 11/17/2001). In 2002 the

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\(^{42}\) Spaniards are (pejoratively) known as Gallegos in Argentina, due to the fact that a high percentage of Spanish immigrants were from the Community of Galicia, in the Northwestern tip of the Iberian Peninsula. These immigrants are generally perceived as very hard workers, but ignorant and closed-minded.

\(^{43}\) The ollas populares (“people’s pots”) were demonstrations where citizens would go and bang their pots in front of government buildings, asking for political responsibilities and the end of the crisis.
newspapers stated that in a country where cows were far more numerous than people (37 million people, more than 50 million cows) at least 40 percent of the Argentinean population lived under poverty levels and 20 percent of the population of working age was unemployed. The same article, titled “rats, toads, cats, and horses to eat in an Argentinean neighbourhood” (EFE, 6/6/2002) described new and intense forms of poverty.

The pictures that accompanied some of the news shared the dramatic tone of the articles, showing crowds assaulting supermarkets or begging for food; massive demonstrations with thousands of Argentinians banging their pots and pans in front of the Pink House;44 children dying of starvation in the northern region of Tucumán; and violent confrontations between the civil population and the national security forces in all major urban areas.

The coverage of the crisis by the Spanish media helped shatter the former image, rooted in the 1950s, of Argentina as a dreamy land of abundance. Instead, in the popular imagination Argentina moved away from Europe and closer to Latin America; in other words, the country and its inhabitants now fell under the label of the “Third World”.

Initially the press paid little attention to flows of migration from Argentina to Spain. A rare article appeared 2001, just a few months before the “corralito”, was titled: “The Indianos return home”. It collected the testimonies of some Argentinians who, in view of the worsening economic situation in their country of origin and taking advantage of their Spanish ancestry, were considering migrating to Spain. A woman interviewed by the journalist said:

I just have the last savings left and I don’t want to gamble them here [in Argentina]. In Spain, yes. There I will put the money to work, and I know I’ll be well off. I am going to open a restaurant; I am in contact with my cousins in Barcelona and Alicante. I know the concerns there are different, you don’t have to worry about your pocket money. Here things are not getting any better, and I am fed up of seeing decay. I have sold everything: a house, the gym. I bought a small apartment, but I won’t come back. Luckily, my dad left the citizenship issue solved before he died. And there [in Spain], if you show the burgundy passport, they don’t even open it to see if your face is the same as the picture. (Giardinelli, 4/1/2001; author’s translation).

44 The Casa Rosada is the governmental palace. It is located in downtown Buenos Aires and was one of the strategic centres for demonstrations during the 2001 crisis.
The article was rich with references to the cardinal points of Argentinean immigration to Spain around 2001 that will be further explored in chapter VI: an illusion of overseas prosperity (implicit throughout the article is the idea of Europe as partially responsible for such wealth); the key importance of family networks in the migration project; the despair and hopelessness that triggers the decision to permanently move elsewhere; and the benefits granted by “the burgundy [Spanish] passport”. Argentinean immigration was described as emigration that returned to its origins – Argentineans were the *indianos*, the children and grandchildren of the nation coming back home.

Later articles used the same underpinning assumptions and built on the idea of “return”. The news explained the increase of Argentinean immigration as a consequence of the economic crisis, and expressed concern for the endless lines Argentinesans endured in Spanish Embassies and Consulates in order to obtain their passports. Argentinean immigrants were described as “young, enterprising, and capable (...) artists, intellectuals, psychiatrists, architects, advertisers”, or as “older Spaniards (...) who had to leave the country during the civil war” (“Spain, the pibe’s⁴⁵ dream”, Muñoz, 1/13/2002; author’s translation). A year after the crisis, another article titled “The motherland forgets her children” supported the Argentinean community’s complaints that the Spanish government was not respecting its bilateral treaties with Argentina.

They were looking for Eldorado and expected to find a country of open doors, but so far they’ve only received slams. “The Spanish government is acting miserably with Argentineans. Don’t they have memory? They’ve forgotten [our] cultural ties and the opportunities that Spaniards enjoyed there”, (El Mundo, 11/15/2002; author’s translation)

The representation of Argentinean immigrants as relatives – a direct consequence of the former Spanish colonial practices and overseas migration – and the comparison between how Spaniards where received in Argentina when they migrated and how Argentineans are received nowadays stands in sharp contrast to the coverage of other Latin American migration flows. The growing evidence that Spanish border officials are sending Argentineans back home is described in the press as “outrageous”, as it contrasts

⁴⁵ See footnote 41 in this chapter.
with the belief that Argentineans deserve better treatment. An interviewee elaborated on this, and said that these opinions were shared by some police officers who would do what was within their reach to avoid Argentineans being refused entry or deported. Other interviewees said they were aware that immediately after the crisis, in 2002, the Ministry of the Interior gave orders to border officials to be lenient in the control of immigrants from Argentina (lawyer 1, lawyer 2).

Going back to the press, the media is recently reversing this tendency to treat Argentinean immigration as separate from other Latin American and non-European flows. As the volume of news specifically on Argentinean immigration decreased, more and more articles present Argentineans as immigrants (a growing number of articles use that term to refer to Argentineans, instead of “returnee”) and as accomplices in crimes with other Latin American immigrants: crimes such as tax evasion, human smuggling, document forgery, and so forth. The occasional publication of articles that portray Argentines as returnees contrasts with the increasing tendency to represent these immigrants as outsiders, and the tension between the two representations of Argentinean immigration – one that is special and Spain’s own; another that is foreign and problematic – tends to be solved in benefit for the latter. It is becoming common for Argentineans to be portrayed in the press as neither rich nor cousins, but simply as “immigrants.”

**POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

_It isn’t just about the 240,000 Spaniards – most of them, at the same time, Argentineans – who live in Buenos Aires (the [Spanish] Consulate here is, according to its activity, the third Civil Registry in Spain) with no need of a psychoanalyst to solve their identity dilemmas. It’s something much more sophisticated and deeper. Of course, there are huge differences between us [Spaniards and Argentineans] (...) but it’s impossible not to recognize oneself, as if in a mirror, sometimes distorted, in the Argentinean people. One has to acknowledge that the Hispano American community, diverse, unequal, exists with_}

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46 This interviewee discussed some practices that he described as “normal”. For example, he admitted that he had “put the file [of an Argentinean student who was not meeting the requirements to stay] at the bottom of the heap of files to be processed” hoping that the final resolution would come too late and the student could stay.
all its power, and that, with Benedetti, in a globalized world. “arm in arm we’re much more than two.” (Rafael Estrella, Spanish Ambassador in Argentina, in his personal blog http://estrella.lamatriz.org; 1/24/2007).

While the media tends to carefully identify immigrants’ nationality, Spanish politicians tend to make much rougher distinctions, drawing the boundary only between general immigration and Latin American immigration. Among politicians, what is interesting is the gap between the terms that frame the general immigration debate and those used for Latin American immigration; references to the Argentinean community in particular are scarce.

The discussion in one of the panels of a law conference held in Malaga in 2006 provides a good example of the distance imposed between Latinos and all other immigrants. On a warm Thursday night, four men sat onstage around the table to talk about the challenges that immigration posed to contemporary Spain: two elected politicians from the socialist party, a representative of a large union, and an academic. In a four-minute introduction, the discussant opened the conversation on “the challenges of immigration.” In that time, he mentioned the word “challenge” once; the expression “the problem(s) of immigration”, nine times; and “concern” three times. With this, he set the tone for the discussion on immigration and the possible actions that Spain and Europe could take in order to solve them. Maybe not surprisingly, three of the panellists had very bleak pictures of immigration to share with the audience: immigration was framed in terms of security threats, emerging racism, and unfair competition with native workers. All panellists made references to other European countries (France, Germany, the UK) to illustrate that increasing immigration could only lead to trouble.

Don Fernando Pignatelli y Meca, a member of the Centre for Advanced Studies in International Human Rights law, member of the Red Cross, and juridical co-advisor at the Ministry of Defence was the only speaker who regarded immigration with optimism: he expressed his conviction that “the topic of immigration must be approached from a positive perspective”. He mentioned some of the ways in which immigration benefited Spain, a country otherwise doomed economically and socially due to the rapid aging of

47 Semana Jurídica Malacitana, November 2006. Conference organized by the Law School, Malaga University.
the native population. The army, he said, had been working since 2002 to improve the conditions in which foreigners could join the professional army, increasing the percentage of foreigners that could be employed and the forces that they could join, and allowing them to have long-term contracts. These tendencies crystallized in new legislation passed by Parliament in 2004 and 2006, where foreign workers in the army were given a similar status (in terms of employment rights) as nationals. Only at the very end of his talk did it become clear that he was not talking about all immigrants:

Recently, the law 8/2006 (...) allows [foreigners] first to enter the three armies; second, they can sign a contract renewable up to 6 years. It even allows them all this (...) under the same conditions as those for Spaniards. This is real integration. The only requisite is that they are legal residents in Spain (...). Of course, it is limited to nationals of those states with traditional, or special historical, cultural, and linguistic ties with Spain, this is, Ibero Americans (...). This may be inspired by UK’s recruiting system, which allows [the army] to recruit nationals of the Commonwealth and even Ireland. Hum... Why, well, because these people’s integration is way easier, it requires less resources, it is more appropriate for them, and no doubt it’s easier for these people to understand their constitutional duties as members of the armed forces. [Emphasis added]

The fact that the speaker found it “obvious” that such efforts towards the full integration of foreigners into the army should be limited to Latin American citizens demonstrates the strength of mainstream representations that conceive of these immigrants as existing in a border-space between the Spanish “us” and the foreign “other” – they are almost Spaniards. Furthermore, previous European experiences (in this case, the UK’s) justified such discrimination.

Support for this position towards Latino immigrants often crosses political lines in the Spanish public discourse. A closer look at the terms that frame the political debates can be of great help here – in particular, the concept of “Ibero America”. In everyday life, only the government uses this term in Spain, while Hispano America or Latin America are preferred in other realms such as the press and informal conversations. The choice of the term – which may just be based on tradition – carries a heavy burden. While it is true

48 This speaker was referring to the Law 32/2002, from July 5, “regarding the Personnel regime of the [Spanish] Armed forces, in order to allow foreigners access to the position of professional military in troops and navy”.

89
that all three terms (Ibero America, Hispano America, and Latin America) reference Spain’s colonization of the American continent, the term “Ibero America” was heavily used by colonial authorities to refer to the territories under Iberian rule (i.e. under the control of either the Spanish or the Portuguese authorities). It was on those grounds that the emerging independent states of the 19th century opted instead for more neutral terms such as Latin America or Hispano America, which defined a trans-national cultural community but severed from a tradition of the Spanish imperialist government (for a discussion on this topic, see Rojas Mix, 2004). The survival of the term in contemporary Spanish policy circles suggests memories of a past of colonization, which could – and does – translate into patronizing attitudes towards Latin American immigrants.

This uncovers the arrogance with which Spanish politicians approach Latin American immigration – and more generally, all immigration from the global South. This was clear in the declarations of the President of the National Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants in a radio interview some years ago:

“[Spain’s] superior morality rests on human dignity. We have thought that all the people are the same but this doesn’t work the same in any tribe [sic] … the immigrants’ children have to be like ours, they have to learn the same and eat the same.” (Mikel Azurmendi quoted in Belen Agrela, 2002, p. 17; author’s translation).

The comment would stay within the realm of the anecdotal, if not for the fact that Azurmendi was at the time the person in charge of designing and implementing the national plan for the integration of immigrants (GRECO). It is not surprising then that his own ethnocentric assumptions and his belief that cultural assimilation is the appropriate integration strategy informed GRECO’s policies.

In short, the terms in which Spanish politicians frame immigration are first, condescending; and second, markedly pro-assimilationist. In this context of reception it should come as no surprise that in the hierarchy of immigrant otherness that classifies immigrants by their origins, Latin Americans are considered the “preferred immigrants of 21st century Spain” (Izquierdo Escribano, 2004). Argentineans are the first among Latin Americans, because they are imagined as the most similar to “us” (or to what “we” want
to be): not only are “they” Hispanic (shared history, culture, religion, and language), and have European descent (i.e., they are white), but they also fit the stereotype of the model immigrant (urban, skilled, and enterprising). In summary, the discourse of Spanish politicians marks a clear preference towards Latin American immigrants, and especially to a model of immigration that fits the popular representation of the Argentinean immigrant community. This discourse impacts general images of immigration, which show a marked preference for Latin Americans over other immigrant communities.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS: A HIERARCHY OF OTHERNESS (II)**

The interaction between Spaniards and the Argentinean immigrant population in Spain is mediated to a great extent by a series of images and stereotypes resulting from the collective memory of past interactions and the daily representations of the group in popular discourses. In this chapter, I have brought together these images as they are reproduced in daily conversations, the media, and politicians’ speeches to understand the main characteristics of the mainstream representations of Argentinean immigrants in Spain since 1985.

My conversations with Spaniards and with Argentineans who have lived in Spain for two decades or longer showed the stability of the representation of the Argentinean as a returnee, as an almost-Spaniard. Collective memories of Argentina as a land of prosperity that helped Spain in times of hardship (e.g. after the Spanish civil war) and the images of the *indiano*, the “cousins” who are still overseas, and the general perception that Argentineans are “a distorted image of Spaniards” keep alive the representation of the Argentinean as a returnee.

The Spanish political class re-reproduces similar images in their speeches. Politicians tend to insist on the existence of a sisterhood of Spanish nations – a community of history, culture, language, and religion that spreads across national borders on both sides of the Atlantic. The memories of a golden and long gone past of Spanish colonial power emerge strongly in the language and attitudes of Spanish politicians. Latinos are perceived in this discourse as culturally closer and easier to assimilate than other immigrant groups, an image which is promoted in the cultural fundamentalism that
characterizes Spanish political discourse on immigration. Of all Latino immigrants, Argentineans are presented here as the fittest immigrant group for assimilation into the Spanish nation. Thus, they enjoy a position of privilege in the hierarchy of immigrant otherness that exists in the Spanish context.

Finally, the media coverage of Argentina in Spain since 1985 brings some shadows to this image. I argue that the representation of Argentina and its citizens went through a turning point during the 2001 economic collapse, also known as the “corralito”. If prior to that date Argentina was perceived as a land of prosperity steadily approaching the developing world, after 2001 it became associated with the Third World. The representation of Argentinean immigrants in Spain experienced a similar turn, and despite the persistence of the image of the Argentinean as a returnee who comes back to his or her motherland, there is now an increasing tendency to assimilate this group into the broader Latin American and general immigrant populations. More and more often, Argentineans appear in the Society section of the Spanish newspapers associated with other immigrants in criminal activities.

In short, the popular and public discourses in Spain – interpreted through interviews, the media, and politicians’ speeches – yield a hierarchy of otherness that matches the one created through the national integration and citizenship regimes analyzed in chapter IV. The image of Argentineans as returnees and as the group with the strongest historical, blood, and cultural ties to the Spanish nation grants them a position of privilege in this hierarchy. However, this position of privilege that Argentinean immigrants enjoy today as “returnees” is not secured, as recent events in Argentina and the lower socio-economic profile of newer immigrants from that country tend to bring Argentineans closer to the broader Latin American and general immigrant populations.
Yo adivino el parpadeo
de las luces que a lo lejos
van marcando mi retorno...
Son las mismas que alumbraron
con sus pálidos reflejos
hondas horas de dolor..
Y aunque no quise el regreso,
siempre se vuelve al primer amor..
La quieta [vieja] calle donde el eco dijo
tuya es su vida, tuyo es su querer,
bajo el burlón mirar de las estrellas
que con indiferencia hoy me ven volver...

Volver... con la frente marchita,
las nieves del tiempo platearon mi sien...
Sentir... que es un soplo la vida,
que veinte años no es nada,
que febril la mirada,
errante en las sombras,
te busca y te nombra.
Vivir... con el alma aferrada
a un dulce recuerdo
que lloro otra vez...

Tengo miedo del encuentro
con el pasado que vuelve
a enfrentarse con mi vida...
Tengo miedo de las noches
que pobladas de recuerdos
encadenan mi soñar...
Pero el viajero que huye
tarde o temprano detiene su andar...
Y aunque el olvido, que todo destruye,
haya matado mi vieja ilusión,
guardo escondida una esperanza humilde
que es toda la fortuna de mi corazón.

I can almost see the flicker
Of the lights that in the distance
Mark the way of my returning...
They’re the very ones that lit up,
Their reflections pale and misted,
Many hours of deep pain.
Though return was not what I wanted,
First love makes one always come back again.
The quiet [age-old] street where once the echo told me:
Her life is yours, her love is yours to earn,
Under the stars that mockingly look on me,
And now in their indifference see me return.

Return... with my forehead all wrinkled,
My temples turned silver by time’s falling snow...
To feel... that one’s life is a twinkle,
Twenty years hardly reckon,
And two fevered eyes beckon,
In shadows forestall you
And seek you and call you.
To live... with the soul firmly clinging
To one sweet remembrance
That makes me weep so.

I am frightened of the meeting
With the past that is returning
To confront my life all over.
I am frightened of the nighttimes
When my dreams are linked and fleeting
And old mem’ries come to stay.
And yet the trav’ler who’s fleeing
Sooner or later must stop on the way...
And though oblivion, which destroys all being,
Has killed my old hopes, ripping them apart,
Yet I keep hidden a humble hopeful glimmer
That is the only fortune there is in my heart.

Volver ("Return"), Argentinean tango. Lyrics by Alfredo Le Pera, translation by Coby Lubliner.
In the previous chapters I have explored how the combination of Spain’s new experience as a country of immigration, conflicting and rapidly evolving laws in the field, and a generalized feeling of affinity with Latin America (and more specially with Argentina) put immigrants from this country in a paradoxical space – somehow within, somehow without, the Spanish nation-state. In this chapter I will work with the immigrants’ own narratives to understand how this context shapes their immigration experiences, and in particular, their social and legal integration.

The characteristics of the immigrant sample were discussed in detail elsewhere (chapter II). For this study, I interviewed twenty-five Argentinean immigrants, some of whom were in one degree or another involved with immigrant organizations. The sample was representative of the general Argentinean population in terms of sex ratio, age, geographical distribution, and the heterogeneity of legal status. However, neither the selection method nor the sample size guarantee that the experiences of these immigrants are representative of other Argentineans. Indeed, the uniqueness of each of their experiences shatter the assumption implicit in the sources used so far (statistics, laws, and mainstream discourses): there is not one, but a variety of “Argentinean migrations;” there is not one, but many paths to integration as well. Gender, age, legal status, social and family networks, phenotypical characteristics, and education are among the intersections of integration that often arose during the interviews.

It is a daunting task to summarize and organize stories of immigration, for it is an all-encompassing experience that colours and modifies the perception of the self and the world around the immigrant. In the interviews we talked about ancestry; the reasons for emigrating to Spain; the process of integrating into a new society; the feelings of being “in between” Argentina and Spain; the several legal statuses that most of these immigrants went through, and their consequences; and the perception of other immigrant communities in Spain. We were really talking about being in the world as a gendered and racialized stranger and the struggle to fit in. Most fought this struggle by claiming to belong – by manipulating the same discourse that Spanish politicians use to exclude “immigrants”. Instead, they constructed themselves as “returnees”; the song that opens this chapter became the chorus for many of the interviews.
An important part of the interviews focused on the experiences of citizenship. Here, while social and cultural citizenship was a given for most of these immigrants (who rarely felt excluded by Spaniards), the meanings of legal citizenship varied: it was interpreted as an official recognition of their feelings of belonging, an instrument for further integration, or a historical debt that Spain has towards Argentina. I do not assume that these are all, or even the most common, positions within the Argentinean community – but these are the ones that have emerged during my fieldwork. In any case, for the participants of this study there is a very strong correlation between EU citizenship and a positive immigration experience, which explains the density of the discourse around citizenship in terms that range from the instrumental to the emotional.

EMIGRATING, IMMIGRATING, INTEGRATING: THE USE OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY NETWORKS.

Most of the interviewees of this study (21 out of 25) were economic immigrants who had emigrated to Spain during periods of economic hardship in Argentina. These immigrants tended to see themselves as "economic exiles": in their discourses the feelings of disaffection, despair, and resentment towards the Argentinean state emerged strongly. Overall, interviewees gave one or several of the following reasons for leaving the country: the economic crisis, the lack of trust in the political system, insecurity, experiences of discrimination and, in a few cases, the search for adventure. The reasons for leaving were closely related to their integration experience.

Many participants had gone through a process of gradual impoverishment prior to the collapse of the Argentinean economy in late 2001. They had to work longer hours or accept second and third jobs, they saw their businesses go bankrupt, or they lost their employment. In general the interviewees described a feeling of hopelessness in a country where all "projects" were doomed because of the economic instability of the national economy. During the months, and even the years, that this process of impoverishment lasted they managed to endure until "something" happened that triggered a decision they had been playing with, usually for quite a long time. This "something" could be the birth
of a first child, the loss of their job at a late age (40 or older), the death of a close relative, a life-threatening experience, or the loss of all savings in December, 2001.  

For those who said that the main reason for leaving the country was the economic situation, the term “project” (which seemed to refer to any plan aimed at improving one’s status, from repairing a washing machine to starting an export company) was key. Spain’s stable economy, backed by the EU, created a fertile soil for “projects” to grow and happen, something that contrasted with Argentina. In fact, “projects” made emigration worthwhile:

In Argentina (...) projects are doomed (...). I grew up with my parents always giving up their projects, changing them, because they could never happen, and I grew up with that in mind, that it was not good to have so many ideas and ambitions, because it’s impossible economically, it’s impossible socially, it’s impossible. Except if your family is well off (...). Then talking with some Argentinean friends that were here, some cousins and stuff, what they had planned had actually happened, and they didn’t even have to complain!! And for me, that was magic, it was magic, a different thing. And sure, I got here with 18 projects and the 18 happened, more or less, and so I keep making projects every year and they happen. And that’s the problem [in Argentina]: money. This country [Spain] is in the EU. Europe is giving like... magic solutions to all [the countries] that belong to the EU. (#3, male, <45, arrived in 2002 with Italian citizenship).

But the rationales for emigration generally involved a combination of factors. The lack of trust in the political system was often cited, mostly among men. Economic instability and the entrenched corruption among the Argentinean political class – not likely to change anytime soon – were perceived by the interviewees to go hand in hand. Again, there was a lack of hope, and the decision to emigrate was regularly justified as the search for a better future for the next generations.

I came after the [2001] crisis. My jobs decreased and my salary was cut down to half, (...). Anyways, we were not too bad, but it was a decision mainly to renew ourselves a bit, to change the context of insecurity, and of deception, because of how things work, how the state institutions work, how the elections work, the politicians, and how the politicians who have sunk the country in misery remain in power. After the 2001 chaos, then it seemed that the people had taken the

49 As a consequence of the crisis in late 2001 and the public financial policies forced on the banks, many people lost part or all their savings.
streets and that it was going to be a radical change, and nothing changed at all. (...) Everything is rotten there. The institutions, the politicians, everything is rotten. And that generates inside me, to put it somehow, a lot of violence. So I preferred to step aside, leave, my daughter was six months old and it generates so much violence and anyways it’s not going to change, so why tire yourself about that. (#18, male, arrived in 2002 through family reunification and obtained Spanish citizenship in 2006)

The crisis further enhanced feelings of insecurity. There was a vivid sense of physical violence: between 2000 and 2002 in Argentina, half the members of the sample had witnessed or been part of a shooting, had been robbed or kidnapped, had their houses burgled or their cars stolen. This sense of insecurity interacted with class, gender, and racial lines. Working class neighbourhoods with a higher percentage of visible minorities were the most common locations of these events (rich people had private security) and women usually felt more anxious about their physical security than men. The experiences of insecurity for women were in fact more diverse than for men, from racial discrimination which resulted in beatings for the women who had “darker skin”, to sexual abuse within the family that worsened with the crisis, to in most cases, an increased sense of vulnerability when in public spaces. A young woman, for example, described her anxiety as she moved around the city of Buenos Aires: “after 10 pm you don’t even stop in the red traffic lights, because I’ve heard that guys wait to break into the car if there’s a woman driving alone”. But her toughest experience happened when she moved to her own apartment.

The day I moved by myself, the next day ... a couple went into the building where I had just moved and in the hall, when they went into the elevator, there were two people inside, hiding, and they forced the couple to take them into the apartment with a gun. I don’t know what they took. It doesn’t matter if they rob you, the problem is if they do something to you ... you know what I mean? (...) I remember the panic. I had just moved alone. I mean, imagine two guys take me into my apartment, they can take whatever they want, but if they do something to me, I mean, I... And that’s always in your mind, I cannot... like, if now I had my papers, I wouldn’t even hesitate, I’d stay, I feel so much safer here. (#14, female, <45, arrived in 2006, undocumented).

For this and other women, security had been a main reason for emigration. A more complicated story was that of a woman, aged 61, who had been abused as a child by
her stepfather, and later by her husband. This woman made the decision to emigrate after a failed suicide attempt, taking four of her six children with her. She justified emigration as an escape from continuous abuse from the men around her, an abuse that she interpreted as being deeply entrenched within definitions of manhood in Argentina. Another young woman who was still breastfeeding her baby had been taken to Spain by her parents, who saw emigration as the only escape from their son-in-law’s continued acts of abuse. The whole family (parents, daughter, and grandson) had emigrated together and were undocumented. In these two cases the abuse had been long-term, but the decline of the economy made it worse: in a very literal sense, these women saw emigration as the only way to save their lives. These and other women referred to sexism and physical violence towards women as a trigger of their emigration. In their minds, Spain represented an escape to a more egalitarian society – although in these cases their expectations were not fulfilled.

The three main reasons that the interviewees gave to justify their emigration (economic hardship, corruption of the Argentinean political class, insecurity and sexism) were perceived as structural rather than transitory. Spain, by contrast, was perceived as a country where the economy was stable (mainly due to the interventions of the EU), the politicians were more reliable (or at least more controlled), and there was less violence and sexism. Collective memories of the historical ties between Argentina and Spain, a shared language, a culture perceived as “similar”, and above all social and family networks were the mediating factors between the pushes in Argentina and the pulls in Spain, facilitating migration.

THE RISING ROLE OF NETWORKS IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

The emigrants who had left Argentina for economic, political, or security reasons (and often a combination of the three) had been considering emigration for some time, usually for more than a year. This contrasts with the political refugees’ experiences, who were forced to leave however they could to go, wherever they could (four in my fieldwork, eight interviewed by Margarita del Olmo, 2001). During their “periods of reflection”, the migrants had time to contact other Argentinean immigrants in Spain,
relatives, and Consulates and Embassies to get information about the possibilities of emigrating to Spain, and the legal requirements of doing so. These initial contacts were key for the rest of their migration experience: with no exception, social networks provided room after arrival, influenced decisions to settle in one location or another, helped the immigrants find a job and their way around the city, and guided them through the complicated rigmarole of paperwork for legalizing their status. Embassies and Consulates were less useful in helping immigrants, and stories of civil servants providing misleading information were disturbingly common. As there are de facto no actual channels for legal migration from Argentina to Spain, immigrants either already had citizenship (Spanish or Italian) or had nothing, and became undocumented after three months; only one immigrant had benefited from family reunification policies. In no case had immigrants expected the icy reception from Spanish government bodies upon their entry in the country – but in general all felt welcomed by the population. In this context, the networks became key for the survival and integration of the immigrants.

The more recent the immigrants’ arrival, the more crucial was the role played by their networks. This seems to be related to two different processes. The first is the growth of the Argentinean community in Spain: between 2000 and 2005, it grew significantly, from 93,872 to 251,380 members. Therefore, newcomers usually had more than just a few acquaintances or distant relatives in Spain. There seemed to be a pattern of increasing use of the networks, building from the political refugees (who usually arrived in Spain with no personal contacts), to the economic immigrants who had arrived in the 1990s (with a handful of friends), and finally the newcomers of the early 2000s (who usually had friends and close relatives in several Spanish cities). Consistent with network theory, the social and economic costs of migration to Spain diminished over time (Massey et al, 1993).

The second process that has made the use of networks more crucial for recent arrivals is the increasing difficulty for undocumented immigrants to live, and more especially, to work in Spain: political refugees and immigrants who had arrived prior to 2002 considered that it had been easy for them to find work without the proper permits, 50

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50 As mentioned before, the quota system has so far been useless and job offers take more than a year to be processed, if they are processed at all. There is no information about the use of family reunification procedures among Argentinean immigrants.
while more recent immigrants said that the high fines and threat of inspections had made employers wary of hiring undocumented workers. Both processes (the growth of the Argentinean community and the narrowing opportunities for undocumented workers) made the networks vital for newcomers.

Still, the characteristics and roles of these networks varied greatly. In a few cases the networks only provided shelter during the first weeks after the immigrants’ arrival; often they went much farther. For example, there is evidence of what one interviewee labelled “regularizing marriages”: four participants justified previous marriages as “the only way” their friends or short-term partners could regularize their situation in Spain. (Two of them were women with Spanish citizenship and the other two were men with Italian and Spanish citizenship). Also common were immigrants who had close relatives in Spain (uncles and cousins). These immigrants had it the easiest, since the strength of their family ties cushioned them during the first months of their stay.

*We came because of economic reasons and to see... other ways of living. And our roots also pulled us. (...) Also my whole family was in Andalusia, and I said, at least emotionally we’re not going to be alone. And they helped us a lot, so much, big time. We arrived on a Saturday, and on Sunday the whole family came [to town] with diaper boxes, they brought clothes [for my daughter], and I’m never going to forget this, when they were getting into the car and I was saying goodbye, my cousin got a handful of one hundred euro bills and stuck them into my handbag. “For your daughter, for your daughter.” And it was a whack of money. With that we felt more relaxed, we thought, [our daughter] is going to have all she needs. Because we didn’t have a thing, we had the plane tickets and less than a thousand euros, so we had to work (...). Then we stayed at a cousin’s vacant apartment for the first six months, we didn’t have to pay the rent, and then [my husband] got a job through one of my cousins’ friends. (...) I don’t even want to imagine what people who don’t have anyone in Spain have to go through. (#19, female, <45, arrived in 2002 with Spanish citizenship).*

This woman’s experience, although not an exception, is different from most of the other immigrants who had weaker networks in the country, and less resources. More common were the cases when the immigrant had close friends in Spain who provided shelter, food, and guidance for a few months after arrival and then emotional support for the rest of their stay.
INTERSECTIONS: WORK, GENDER, AND LEGAL STATUS.

Even for those who had strong, close networks, the process of integration was far from smooth. Their social interactions with Spaniards were mostly fluid and they glimpsed familiar elements in the traditions and worldviews that they found in Spain. However, things changed as these immigrants tried to integrate as workers and saw that their careers in Argentina were not worth much. Friends could help them find a job cleaning, delivering pizzas, or working in a kitchen, but when it came to resuming their careers from Argentina, they found a labour market incapable (or unwilling) to recognize previous educational and professional experience. They also found that the laws changed continuously, or even varied from one police station to the next, making it harder for them to have a work permit. Working experiences in occupations that were well below the immigrants’ skills emerged as a highly emotional issue that the interviewees struggled to rationalize. Gender played an important role in influencing migrants’ experiences in the Spanish labour market. Women had it hardest: four female participants of this study were former university professors who had become cleaning ladies upon migration, and had no hopes or expectations to find a job in their field. While sad, this was hardly surprising, since these women belong to all three of the most marginalized categories in the Spanish labour market: those older than 40, women, and immigrants. Only one of them was undocumented (although the other two had been previously). On the other hand, the worst case that I found among Argentinean men was that of an undocumented immigrant in Barcelona who worked at a restaurant as a waiter for 800 euros a month (twice as much as his female counterparts made cleaning houses).

In general, more moderate forms of de-skilling were common for most of the immigrants of the sample. Interestingly, the only ones who had a job according to their qualifications and previous experience were those with Spanish or Italian citizenship. One of the most fascinating cases was that of an independent singer (by no means a burgeoning profession in Spain) who had seen his career explode since his arrival thanks to his Italian passport.
My experience has been terrific, terrific. I don’t know if I’ve got a horseshoe on my forehead or what, but I had lived 24 years in a way, and suddenly my life changed radically. I arrived with nothing, I had 200 euros, a handful pesetas back then (...) I started working wherever, that’s what I’d always done, and playing music on the side. Because I was an independent singer and composer, I was starting to make my own songs. (...) I left resumes everywhere, and two months after I arrived I recorded my first demo (...), and the demo opened the doors to independent music contests, and the first one I went to at the national level, I won it. (...) You had to have the citizenship and be younger than 30 to participate. (...) And next thing I know, in a concert there were people from [a big multinational music company], and we signed a contract and recorded an album with Ismael Serrano and Ana Belen [two major Spanish singers]. And then I said, “thanks, Spain.” (3, male, <45, arrived in 2001 with Italian citizenship).

Other experiences were not that positive, and even those with citizenship admitted it had taken them “a while” (at least three years) to find a job where they felt comfortable. The immigrants without citizenship, even if they had a permit, felt that there was a mismatch between the discourse on the kinds of immigrants that Spain wanted (highly skilled) and the kinds of jobs that were available for them. They felt that the discrimination in the labour market acted strongly against them, especially when their qualifications were high.

I have presented my resume in a million places, and they’ve never called me. I thought that maybe in private schools, as a tutor, giving talks, as a consultant, and no one gives you the opportunity to do so. And as I was telling you, I am very professional cleaning the house where I work, but sometimes I think, how unfair is this, I enjoy it, but I could be doing something else, right? (#15, female, >45, arrived in 2006, undocumented; 15 years of experience as a university professor in Argentina).

It’s very hard, I remember [a friend] told me, I can get you a job... cracking stone... or paving the streets, or cutting trees: And I’ve never done such things: I’m a bank manager! I mean, I work there and in two days I’m in disability because my back is broken, I just can’t do it. I don’t mean to ... find a job in a high-level managerial position, but at least related to what I know (...) But there’s nothing, I’ve wasted six years sending my resume everywhere, and there’s nothing. (#1, male, >45, arrived in 2000, regularized in the 2005 amnesty; 12 years of experience as a bank manager in Argentina).

When I went to the church to apply for the nanny job, [the employer] asked me: “which studies do you have,” and I say, university level. “Do you know how to
use a computer?” yes, yes. “Do you know how to read?” ...yes. “Can you speak English?” a bit. “Do you know how much I am going to pay you? 150 euros a month” Sure lady, you know what I say? That you can keep looking for a nanny, because you can’t count on me. And she blushed and said, “who do you think you are? How do you dare to talk to me like that!?”. (...) Because when they want to talk about salaries here in Spain we [the immigrants] shrink, see, we do. (...) But that’s it, there’s nothing better for me, I’ll clean houses and paint walls and live here, I’ve had it. (#17, female, >45, arrived in 2002, regularized in the 2005 amnesty and previously undocumented; 14 years of experience as a university professor in Argentina)

Similar experiences were echoed in virtually all of the twenty-five interviews with immigrants. Few were satisfied with their current working situation, but there was a tendency to interpret it as a consequence of the malfunctioning Spanish labour market (segmented, gendered, and rather stagnant) more than to discrimination per se. In all cases, work emerged as central to immigrants’ experience in Spain: work opened the doors for regularization (it is worth noting that all participants who were not EU citizens or who were not married to one, regularized their situation through an amnesty), helped them keep their status as an immigrant (which would be withdrawn if the applicant has not been employed for a certain period of time), and eventually allowed some of them to obtain Spanish citizenship. Thus, the pressure to find a job – any kind of job – is not just an economic concern, but a requirement on the part of the state to remain in the country.

The emphasis on employment and economic integration was a sore spot for many Argentineans, especially those who were better informed about the legislation or were involved with immigrant associations. These interviewees (some of whom were not immigrants themselves) considered that the requirement to have and keep employment was a way of blending Argentineans into the general immigrant population, and a transgression of at least one bilateral treaty between Spain and Argentina. This treaty establishes that Argentineans in Spain and Spaniards in Argentina are given equal rights to live and (if desired) work within either’s national territory; the requirement is limited to some formal paperwork.⁵¹ Argentina still respects this legislation, but Spain does not. Interviewees who were aware of this treaty thought that Argentina was not reacting as

⁵¹ For more on this bilateral treaty see Seploy, Lopez Rodriguez, and Belgrano, (2005), and Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones Argentinas en España (2005).
strongly as it should be – and interpreted it as one more piece of evidence of the Argentinean government’s lack of interest for the well-being of its citizens.52

Despite these experiences of discrimination from Spanish institutions, two of the interviewees who had previously emigrated elsewhere (the United States and Italy) said that immigrants were much better treated in Spain (especially when they were undocumented) and that they were not exploited as much as they were in those other countries. Puzzled by their struggles with the system, I asked the interviewees whether migration was worth it and if they would do it again: all the participants answered with a categorical yes. The most common reasons given were: “here I can make a difference”, 53 “I can send money home, and save and buy a property for my retirement”, “I have more freedom, I can go home walking in the middle of the night and not worry about a thing”, “I can afford sending my children to school and to university”, “I don’t have to worry about losing my job, because I know I’ll get another one”. These justifications, as well as the reasons given for leaving Argentina and their experiences in the labour market, situate Argentinean immigrants very, very close to other economic migrants. However, later in the interviews, clear differences emerged, both in the way Argentineans are treated by Spaniards and in the way most of them perceive themselves as part of Spanish society.

“EXCUSE ME, BUT I’M NOT BLACK”: ARGENTINEANS’ CLAIMS FOR BELONGING TO THE SPANISH NATION.

I think I am integrated. Like, multiculturally speaking I am a part of this society. When I got here, I was not. I remember (...) when I went to the employment office to see if I could find ... some courses or whatever, well, hmmm... there was like a line of immigrants that went all around the building (...). And... well, I skipped it and asked the security guard where should I go, and he answered: “See this line of people, that’s were you have to go.” But wait a second: I’m not black! “But some of them are also Ecuadorians,” but I am not an indio! Anyways, with time I realized that he was right, I’m just like them, or they are just like me, it doesn’t

52 Margheritis (2007) has written an illuminating article on the Argentinean government’s efforts to reach its citizens in Spain. The interviewees were generally aware of at least some of these efforts, but considered them “insufficient”. There was a lot of distrust and resentment towards the Argentinean political class.

53 The expression (“to make a difference” or “to make an economic difference”) means to be able to earn more and save more than one would in Argentina.
As in the case of this immigrant, most Argentineans that I interviewed refused to see themselves as “real immigrants” – i.e., they did not see themselves in the pervasive image of immigration described in chapter V. Even when they had absolutely no blood ties with Spain, they conceived themselves as “returnees.” Four main reasons account for this refusal to situate themselves within the general immigrant population: they did not feel discriminated against by the local population (though they perceived this happening to other immigrants); they did not feel part of the Latin American immigrant community; they were white and could claim to be European by ancestry and family name (a fact that all of them admitted opened many doors in Spain); and many of them actually enjoyed Spanish or Italian citizenship. In other words, the “immigrants” that politicians and the media talked about had nothing to do with them.

The lack of experiences of discrimination was remarkable. Only women working in domestic service reported having felt rejected by police officers, real estate agents, and their own employers, and in their accounts it became obvious that the discrimination happened after they had been identified as “immigrants.” Through comparison with other immigrants’ experiences, several interviewees acknowledged that being white helped them avoid the label of “immigrant.”

This perception of the discrimination suffered by other Latin American immigrant groups may trigger the refusal to identify with the general Latino population noted above. An academic who has done comparative research between Argentineans and Ecuadorians in Milan and Barcelona highlighted that this clear-cut differentiation between
Argentineans and other Latin Americans is specific to the Spanish context: according to this researcher, the Latino dimension is much stronger in Italy than it is in Spain, because, he said, “in Spain we differentiate between Argentineans and Colombians, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Chileans; in Italy they just speak Spanish, like the rest of the Latin Americans” (Academic 1). This researcher and another immigrants that I interviewed agreed that part of the reason for the difference was that in the Italian context there was a sharp distinction between documented and undocumented immigrants, with the latter being totally marginalized from mainstream Italian society. In such a constricting environment where immigration is strongly stigmatized, Argentineans did not occupy a place of preference: they shared status with the rest of Latin American groups. According to this, discrimination is based more on the immigrants’ legal status than on their national origin, which may have forced Argentineans to look for support within and share networks with other Latin Americans. In Spain, where Argentineans have a place of their own, they tend to refuse to ally themselves with the Latino population and instead mix with Spaniards. This way, they avoid being racialized as “Latinos”.

However, a significant number of interviewees highlighted that in Argentina there also is an entrenched racism against indigenous-looking minorities. Thus, the tendency to draw a boundary between the Argentinean/self and the Latino/other may be brought from the home society. This idea, explained clearly by the interviewee quoted below, was shared by half the sample.

…I think we Argentineans are very racist, we’re the first discriminators of Latin America, because they [other Latin Americans] have a darker skin colour, for stupid things. (...) I have many arguments about that with other Argentineans. The other day I was here arguing with a woman, I said that [Argentineans are racist] and she said “no, we’re not racist!” Because she said that [in Spain] she felt discriminated against. And I said, ”they don’t treat me badly, or at least less than we would do if I was an immigrant in Argentina”. But she was not convinced, no, no, and no. And then I said, “sure, let’s see, if a Bolivian woman goes [to Argentina], what can she do, apart from cleaning low class houses?” And she said “oh, well, but you’re not going to compare me with a woman from Bolivia!” I laughed so hard: you’re saying you’re not racist but please, don’t compare me with an “inferior race”! (24, male, arrived in 2002, arrived through family reunification and obtained Spanish citizenship in 2006).
Interviewees rationalized such differentiations between Argentineans and the rest of Latin Americans through appeals to ethnicity (their direct European ancestry and cultural proximity) and a discourse of higher skills, better education, and middle-class urban origins, which made it easier for Argentineans to fit into Spanish society.

Apart from the sympathy perceived on the part of the Spanish population and the feelings of disenfranchisement from the rest of the Latino population, another way through which Argentineans claim a space for their own within the imaginary of the Spanish nation – and outside of the imaginary of the immigrant – was history. Sometimes, it was History with a capital H: impersonal, general, inter-state history:

Spain has forgotten many things. Argentina opened the doors to Spaniards and Italians. They were part of society, but as equals, and Argentina at some point helped. We sent meat when Spain was having trouble. Then, well, I don’t want to use this argument because I don’t like it, because it’s like reproaching that I once gave you and now you have to give me, but I think the Spanish government is not being empathetic with the people that at some point, directly or indirectly, have helped Spain. (5, male, >45, arrived in Spain in 2004, undocumented)

And sometimes, history was more personal: it became stories of places, people, intimate relations that linked individuals on both sides of the Atlantic at the level of affections.

My grandma raised me, she was from [Galicia], she didn’t want to go to Spain but felt really attached to Spain, and she raised me dancing the jota and the muñeira [regional dances from Galicia], with our eyes turned towards Spain. My grandpa, every time a Spanish artist came, we would go to the theatre and in the midst of silence he would cry “Viva España!!” fighting the tears (organization representative living in Argentina).

My whole life I’ve heard stories about Spain, I loved to go to my grandma’s place and ask her for the pictures, and spend hours asking her “who are these people?”, “what is this?”, hearing them talking about this [Spain], right, and mainly about [the town where I live now], the fairs, the parties, but they never renounced their lives in Argentina. (...) They said “gee, we’re living in Argentina yet we spend our lives missing Spain, talking about Spain.” (...) But when I got here it was really easy for me to adapt to [the city where I live], because... well, the first year I lived with my aunt, and [this city], the geographical, physical place wasn’t strange at all to me, I had spent my whole life hearing about it so I loved it, right, I felt comfortable from the beginning. (#20, female, arrived in 2001 with Spanish citizenship).
These close-knit relationships built through History as well as through personal stories supported the conceptualization of Argentinean migration as a "return migration." Even when interviewees had distant or no Spanish ancestry, they tended to interpret their experience within the framework of return migration. Sometimes, in the lack of direct family ties, interviewees turned to deeper feelings of belonging, such as an immigrant with distant family ties in Spain (a paternal great-grandfather) who said that "internally we all carry a part of our ancestors, and the blood is where they push us to return to the place they couldn’t return to”.

The use of "blood" (conceived as a profound connection that runs through family ties) in the discourse was in fact very strong. Often, “European blood” or “Spanish blood” was meant to be a status symbol in the representation of Argentina, supporting the argument that Argentina is imagined as more a part of Europe than as a part of the rest of Latin America. To have European blood was more than just a genetic attribute – attached to it were also some intrinsic cultural traits that were rarely challenged: Argentineans, who had “European blood”, were more like Spaniards because they had been raised as such. Thus, the link between ancestry, culture, and ethnicity was constructed as unproblematic in all but three of the twenty-five conversations. The importance given to the Europeanness of Argentineans could be related to pre-conceptions brought from Argentina. However, there is something else at work here as well. I believe that the context of Spanish policy, dominated by cultural fundamentalism and assimilationist discourses (chapter V), and the daily routine of integration, characterized by discrimination towards non-European minorities, encourage such fundamentalist arguments. In other words, this Euro- and ethno-centric discourse fits well with pre-existing rationales of belonging.

To summarize, Argentineans in Spain actively claim their inclusion within the realm of the imagined Spanish community. The most common arguments in this discourse are literal or extended blood ties with Spain and, more generally, with Europe (“we are Europeans”), and the use of common history (both as a cause of a shared ethnicity and as a debt that Spain has with Argentina). The lack of experiences of
discrimination in most cases and the possession of a European passport (usually Spanish or Italian) further support these claims. Moreover, claims of belonging revolve around the same axis as the official mainstream discourses, uncovering a sophisticated understanding of the Spanish imaginary of nationhood.

**THE MEANINGS OF (LEGAL) CITIZENSHIP.**

The last section gave an idea of how the increasing Latino population in Spain (chapter III), the narrowing of the legal privileges for Argentinean immigration (chapter IV), and the feelings of affinity on the part of the Spanish mainstream society (chapter V) have impacted interviewees' experiences of immigration and integration into the receiving society. The trends towards the toughening of immigration law and the stricter enforcement of border control practices have, in fact, not been able to stop flows of undocumented immigrants from Argentina – instead, these two processes have forced most of these immigrants into the shadows, making them more dependent on their social networks and the sympathy of the Spanish population. The strength of the discourses of belonging is, at least partially, a reaction against immigrants' increased vulnerability.

The only way to secure a safe position within Spanish society is through the acquisition of legal citizenship. We have seen that the norms that regulate access to legal citizenship in Spain greatly favour Latin American citizens and those with first- and second-degree Spanish ancestry (chapter IV). However, the application of such laws is deficient, at best; in some cases there is a clear indifference on the part of the Spanish government, which translates into lack of funding for the agencies that grant the documents necessary for the process and citizenship certificates. This institutional apathy is in sharp contrast to the importance that legal citizenship has for the immigrants.

For the Argentineans who participated in this research, legal citizenship encompasses much more than just an official recognition of the immigrant’s belonging to the political community in the society of reception: for them, citizenship was emotional, pragmatic, and in some cases, perceived as a right.
Those participants with direct Spanish descent (five children and eight grandchildren) tended to be emotionally attached to their Spanish citizenship. That was certainly not always the case, but whenever these feelings emerged, they were very strong. Most of the interviewees who had acquired citizenship through *ius sanguini* provisions had done so during their youth, many years before they even thought about emigrating.

*When I applied for citizenship* I was 15. It was just a sentimental thing, something that I felt I needed to do. (...) It was also thinking that one day I'd like to come to know my roots, because my father, although he'd never met his cousins [in Spain], always mailed and phoned them. (#19, female, <45, arrived in 2002 with Spanish citizenship)

I laugh when they talk about integration here [in Spain], my family [in Argentina] is just the perfect example of perfect endogamy, because my mum and my dad lived three blocks away [before they emigrated to Argentina]. (...) I mean, at home for example, in our family dinners [all but two uncles] are married to Spaniards, most of them Gallegos (...) and they have a very close relationship with the Galician community, especially the women. They all danced muñeira [a regional dance], and my mum is the president of the Galician Association in Buenos Aires⁵⁴, and before it was my grandpa. (...) Then, when Franco died I got citizenship. In my family no one set foot on the Spanish consulate until Franco died. But it was just... normal, you know, just normal [to get the Spanish citizenship]. (#11, female, <45, arrived in 1992 with Spanish citizenship)

Another interviewee proudly joked that he was “as Spanish as the King [of Spain], who was born in Rome. Like him, I am Spaniard by birth, because my parents inscribed me in the Consulate as soon as I was born” (#2, male, >45, arrived in Spain in 1974 with Spanish citizenship).

This sense of emotional belonging was further enhanced by Spanish policies towards “returned migrants.” These policies are especially important on the part of the regional governments. For example, a young woman who acquired Spanish citizenship

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⁵⁴ This is not the real name of the association.
when she was twenty as a “cautionary measure” described that after she received her new passport, the government of the Community of La Rioja:

“found” me, and they started to send heaps of communications (magazines, information about scholarships, information about the regional centre in Buenos Aires ...). And thus I learnt about a scholarship for descendants of emigrants from La Rioja living abroad. (...) I was shocked by how much effort the government of La Rioja put into it. (...) Today [from Argentina] my relationship with Spain is through the regional centre in Buenos Aires, and when the President of La Rioja comes me and my mum will go to see him. (#32, female, <45, arrived in 2004 with Spanish citizenship and returned to Argentina in 2005; email interview).

From the national government the recruiting activity seems to be less intense, but there are policies, such as subsidy programs, that help “returnees” (i.e., descendants of Spanish emigrants who are Spanish by birth) integrate into Spanish society. Three of the interviewees had benefited from such policies, and recognized that having returnee status had helped them integrate economically. More importantly, it made them feel welcomed by the authorities.

The discourse of emotional attachment to citizenship resonated over and over in the interviews with the children of Spanish emigrants (who in all cases had been raised by two Spanish parents). However, it was less common among grandchildren of Spanish emigrants, and affective attachments among immigrants who had obtained Italian citizenship through *ius sanguini* provisions (five cases) were hardly mentioned. All interviewees, except for the children of Spaniards, conceived of legal citizenship as more of a pragmatic issue – an instrument towards full integration.

**Pragmatic Citizenship.**

More often than not, legal citizenship (whether it was Spanish or Italian) meant the end of a precarious situation: living with immigrant status. Most of the interviewees

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55 Citizenship legislation does not allow adults to acquire citizenship through *ius sanguini*. In Argentina citizens become of age at 21, and this woman acquired it just before the deadline thinking that she might want to emigrate to Spain or any other country of the EU at some later point.
did not feel that having a Spanish or Italian passport would change their identities, but they equated status as a legal citizen with freedom, increased opportunities to grow in Spain, the chance to participate more actively in the political arena, and the end of the endless rigmarole that dominates the life of the immigrant. In general, all the participants who did not have citizenship planned to apply for it as soon as they could. For example, this interviewee shared the opinion that citizenship would make life easier without challenging their loyalty to their homeland.

*First, I can work for the government. And then, today, as a resident, there are certain requirements that I have to meet, right? For example, to renew my permit the first year I must have been working full time for six months within a year and paid my taxes. And now, to renew [the residency] for two more years as well. Maybe those are minimum requirements (...), but ... it’s that kind of thing that you, a national, don’t have to meet those requirements, you’re a Spaniard. And also you can vote. (...) Besides it doesn’t change the fact that I am Argentinean, because I can have dual citizenship, they recognize dual citizenship with Argentina. (#9, male, <45, arrived in 2002 and regularized in the 2005 amnesty)*

However, when I asked him if he would feel the same should he be required to give up his Argentinean citizenship, he replied: “Ah, see, that’s an ugly question: never.” This strong reaction, also voiced in other interviews, supports the argument that the Argentinean citizenship has a much stronger emotional burden than the Spanish one, as refusing the nationality of origin would mean a “betrayal” of one’s own nation.

Living with immigrant status was in all cases perceived as a precarious, vulnerable position that pervades the migratory experience, especially among the undocumented. The stress that this vulnerability produces can have a very deep impact on immigrants’ lives. The most extreme example of this that I found during my fieldwork was, once again, the case of a woman: the stress of being undocumented and without a job triggered the abortion of her twins when she was already four months into her pregnancy. While recovering in hospital, an Adventist sect recruited her, and to date this cult keeps part of her meagre monthly salaries in exchange for some badly needed

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It is worth noting that the interviewees gave identical value to Italian and Spanish citizenship. Even immigrants with Italian citizenship who could have applied for a change of status thought it was not worth it, because they already had all the rights they wanted to have.

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emotional support (#29, female, <45, arrived in 2002, undocumented). Other interviewees had less dramatic, but equally illuminating experiences to share:

For me, obtaining the Italian citizenship was a relief. I was anguished! I felt very uncomfortable, and I couldn’t (...) find a job that was related to my studies. First I had the papers [a study permit] and was working illegally; then I was illegal altogether. (...) Until you don’t get a [European] passport the concern is always there. It’s like... yeah, a worry, you feel uneasy, you’re restless, because, I don’t know, I was not going to do something crazy and be deported, right? (...) [But] when they give you the [Italian] passport it’s like... you forget everything, all that happened, right? It’s like a heavy backpack you get rid of, and you’re not thinking about the same thing all the time. I even danced in the Civil Registry in Italy!! (#6, male, <45, arrived in 2001 as a student and obtained the Italian citizenship in 2003)

Both immigrants and lawyers highlighted that part of the stress derives from the inefficiency of the Spanish bureaucracy and the constant changes in the requirements for obtaining and renewing permits. (One of the lawyers said that he regularly submitted the documents to more than one municipality, in order to increase the likelihood of having them accepted). One immigrant who entered in 2000 as a tourist, spent a few months undocumented, regularized in the 2001 amnesty through a fake job offer, became undocumented again in 2005 because he did not have a full time job, and had successfully filed a claim to obtain Polish citizenship, summarized the feelings of many of the interviewees:

I’ll receive the Polish passport soon, and I am sooo pleased to be able to do what I want! [Obtaining EU citizenship through my family] is also a matter of pride, right, I mean they broke my balls [in Spain] with so much paperwork, with the line ups that I had to put up with, and with all the formalities that I have done, and all the money and the time that I have wasted with lawyers and other things, it’s like now I can do it through my family, that’s much more fulfilling. It’s not like... vital for me, but it’ll be awesome to be free to come and go, to travel, see, wherever I want to go. (#13, male, <45, arrived in Spain in 2000, undocumented at the time of the interview).

This was the most common approach among those who were not direct descendants of Spaniards: for them, obtaining legal citizenship was a desired and secure destination. Once there, they would be able to forget about the government’s
requirements, look for a job in a broader labour market, participate in the politics of the communities of which they were already a part (some interviewees declared their intention to get involved at the municipal level), and travel to Argentina and within the EU as much as they wanted. For these immigrants, the less stringent requirements for attaining Spanish citizenship that they enjoyed as Argentineans were considered "convenient" but meant nothing for their immigration experience. Like any other immigrant group, the lack of channels for legal migration to Spain had pushed them into illegality, and they had to rely on amnesties meant for the general immigrant population to regularize their situation. This absence of support for Argentinean immigrants – and in particular, to grandchildren of Spanish emigrants – is the main criticism articulated by at least two associations of descendants that are not limited to but are run by Argentineans. The next section explores how these associations, Nietos Esperando ("Grandchildren Waiting", recently re-named International Organization of Descendants of Spaniards or OIDE) and Hijos y Nietos de Españoles argue for the recognition of citizenship as a right for Argentinean immigrants with Spanish ancestry.

CITIZENSHIP AS A RIGHT

In 2003, when the Socialist party was part of the opposition, the current Immigration Secretary, Da. Consuelo Rumi, presented a legislative proposal in Parliament asking for the modification of article 20 in the Civil Code. This modification would have eliminated the requirement for one year of legal and continued residence in Spain on the part of the grandchildren of Spanish emigrants to obtain legal citizenship. That first proposal was further elaborated in the promises made by the Socialist party both in the 2004 electoral campaign in Argentina, as well as in the party's electoral platform. However, when the Socialist government came to power in March 2004, they back-tracked and to date nothing has changed. The two associations (OIDE and Hijos y Nietos de Españoles) demand that those promises be fulfilled. The activity of these groups has been intense, and interestingly, the government has not ignored them. Indeed,

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57 Because of the volume of voters who live in Argentina, Spanish politicians regularly carry out electoral campaigns there.
their meetings with elected politicians in top positions of power are continuous (from both the Conservative and the Socialist party, including the President of the Government, and several ministers). This does not mean that the government actually responds to their demands – but it is an indicator that politicians are interested in having the support of the descendants of Spanish emigrants. After all, these descendants could actually account for a few million extra votes were the article 20 of the Civil Code modified.\textsuperscript{58}

The associations of descendants form a powerful lobby and are fully aware of the intricacies of Spanish history, the hopes it creates, and the ghosts it calls up. An example of this is the quote translated below. It is a fragment of an open letter to Da. Consuelo Rumi, signed by one of these associations. In it, the informed reader will appreciate the references made to the history of economic migration and political exile to Argentina during the dictatorship, the position of Spain within the EU, the model set by the Italian citizenship regime, and the comparison between Franco’s repression and the current denial of citizenship rights to the grandchildren of emigrants. However, these references are so subtle, and the connections constructed in such a sophisticated manner, that for someone who knows little about Spanish history the following paragraph would hardly make any sense:

[The reform of the Civil Code to grant Spanish nationality to all grandchildren of Spanish emigrants] is a crucial historical opportunity for [the Socialist party] to demonstrate how a European nation who respects its children must be governed. Many of these children left their homeland for the same intolerance that today prevents us, their descendants, to return with the status that we consider ourselves to have: that of Spanish citizens of full rights. (Letter from Hijos y Nietos de Españoles to Consuelo Rumi, head of the Secretary of Immigration in Spain; partially reproduced in Lukor, 5/5/2005; author’s translation).

Here again, as in the claims for belonging explored earlier in this chapter, history (incarnated in “cultural ties” and “the history of previous acceptance of Spanish immigration in Argentina”, according to the OIDE) is used as a key argument for the modification of the current legislation on immigration and citizenship. On a more

\textsuperscript{58} According to the representatives of the organizations interviewed for this study, there is no reliable account of how many grandchildren are currently living abroad.
personal note, a representative of the OIDE expressed her disappointment with the way the government is treating Argentinean immigration, also using history as an argument:

... this treatment that we are receiving hurts me. Because I lived through what happened when Spaniards emigrated to Argentina. And... there were problems, but I think it was easier for them. For example, in the 1950s there was a great immigration from Spain. And the only requirement on the part of Argentina was that they had to have a formal invitation from someone in Argentina, and that they settled anywhere but in Buenos Aires. (...) It was a different time, it was a different Argentina, a different Spain, I don't even think my grandmother had a passport, see? But... I don't think Spain is treating its grandchildren right. (OIDE representative 1).

There was a tendency among the representatives of this organization and the public communications of Hijos y Nietos de Españoles to hold up Italian nationality legislation as a model to follow. In this legislation, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Italian emigrants are entitled to receive Italian nationality automatically (provided that the claim starts with the children of the emigrant and moves on to the youngest relative). Italy’s generous citizenship regime helped many Argentineans who wanted to emigrate to Spain to do so with a European passport, and therefore reside and work within the national territory with rights that are almost identical to those of nationals. This positive discrimination towards Italo-Argentineans was interpreted as unfair and illogical by grandchildren of Spanish emigrants, who looked at Italian laws as the model to follow by Spain.

Furthermore, the OIDE and Hijos y Nietos de Españoles, network of Casas Argentinas in Spain claim that the Spanish government is not respecting the law, mainly the Tratado General de Cooperación y Amistad entre el Reino de España y la República Argentina (“General Treaty for the Cooperation and Friendship between the Kingdom of Spain and the Republic of Argentina”), signed in June, 1988. As explained earlier, this treaty requires that following some simple paper work, Spaniards living in Argentina as well as Argentineans living in Spain will enjoy a status equivalent to that of the native

59 The interviewees admitted that the Italian laws, although generous in practice, had a limited impact for current emigrants because the Embassies and Consulates are overwhelmed with people who want to obtain the citizenship. For example, the Italian embassy in Buenos Aires currently does not give appointments because all the available officers are busy for the next four years.
population. The Treaty is based on three legal concepts ("preferred nation," "free emigration," and "reciprocity") that are not being respected (Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones Argentinas en España, 2005).

Not only that, but the Spanish government has also not implemented two channels for legal immigration from Argentina that exist in immigration law: regular quota systems for workers in occupations with a high demand, and a six-month initial work visa for all grandchildren of Spanish emigrants. These two elements of the law are legislated but not implemented, resulting in the assimilation of Argentineans (grandchildren and not) into the general immigrant population. The six-month initial work permit for the grandchildren is actually a major concern for the two organizations that I studied, and eventually it brought a schism between them (OIDE and Hijos y Nietos de Españoles). While the former accepted initial work visas for grandchildren as a way of "helping out" some immigrants, the latter considered these visas as acceptance that Argentinean are "immigrants" and not "returnees".

More importantly, associations of descendants are lobbying that the differentiation between Spaniards by birth and Spaniards by acquisition be eliminated (currently only the first group can pass the nationality to their children through *ius sanguini* procedures) and that grandchildren’s applications follow a separate procedure. The goal of these demands is to eliminate discrimination among grandchildren themselves and to secure the respect of the law. As it is right now, grandchildren’s claims are considered regular claims and take at least three years to be processed. Not only that, but there is an evident lack of knowledge on the part of the people who have to accept and submit these claims. For example, the police officer that I interviewed (who is in charge of assessing the nationality claims for a whole Autonomous Community) did not know that there was a specific procedure with lesser requirements for grandchildren of Spanish emigrants.

In short, several organizations comprised of descendants of Spanish emigrants are fighting to have citizenship recognized as a right for at least the second-generation descendants of Spanish emigrants; the bulk of these descendants are Argentinean. The associations that articulate their claims demand that citizenship for the grandchildren must be recognized as a right. They base this argument on history, on the citizenship
regimes of other European countries (mainly Italy), and on the existence of legislation that gives special rights to both Argentineans and grandchildren (even if it is being systematically ignored by the Spanish government).

**CONCLUDING REMARKS: ASSERTING ARGENTINEANS’ PLACE IN THE HIERARCHY OF OTHERNESS.**

A series of assumptions and misconceptions have led many Argentinean emigrants to choose Spain as their destination country. These emigrants thought that Spain, a country who had sent millions of its nationals to Argentina, would welcome or at least tolerate Argentinean immigration. They based this assumption on collective memories of mass migration to Argentina from Spain, the cultural proximity between the two nations, and their European ancestry.

The reasons why the interviewed immigrants left Argentina show a process that is consistent with other economic migrations: they left because the economic situation prevented them from advancing in their goals, because they felt unsafe in a context of increasing violence which worsened after the economic collapse, and because they saw the Argentinean political class as corrupt and untrustworthy. Also, like other economic migrants, their main goal was to improve their opportunities as workers. Argentineans’ difficulty in integrating with the labour market and their heavy (and increasing) reliance on social networks further contribute to the parallels between this and other incoming flows of economic migration.

The uniqueness of Argentinean immigration emerges when we look at these immigrants’ social and legal integration. Here, the two conflicting positions observed in previous chapters emerge again: on the one hand, the general population, the mainstream political discourse, and the citizenship regime support the argument that Argentinean immigration has a place of its own within the symbolic borders of the Spanish nation; on the other hand, the evolution of immigration laws pushes them into the general pool of immigrants from the Global South. But Argentineans actively refuse this assimilation and articulate their resistance around a key issue: they are not “economic immigrants,” but “returnees”. The maintenance of this discourse is crucial and generalized among the
sample, although some groups insist on it more than others. Most of the Argentinean interviewees used history and their European ancestry to claim inclusion into the imagined Spanish community. Furthermore, they appropriated the public discourse and highlighted the close fit between the declared “desired immigration” and the profile of the Argentinean community.

Important in this construction of the Argentinean immigration as “return migration” is the refusal to join ranks with the broader Latin American population. Latin American immigration tended to be constructed in the participants’ discourse as the opposite of what Argentineans are: they are uneducated, mostly of rural origin, visibly different, and more distant from “the Spanish way of being”. I argue that this attitude has to be seen more as a defence strategy than as sheer racism: in a context where immigration is first racialized and then discriminated against, avoiding association with the closest visible immigrant minority is a way of guaranteeing one’s own safe position.

For these immigrants, legal citizenship emerged as a “haven” from the precariousness of immigrant status. Given the strong correlation between citizenship and well-being, the density of the discourses around citizenship and the variety of meanings attached to it should come as no surprise. In the interviews, citizenship emerged as an institution that harbours deep feelings of belonging to the Spanish nation, an instrument towards successful integration, and a right. Moreover, citizenship is a battlefield for associations that work for the protection of Spanish emigrants’ descendants’ rights.

The strongest lesson to learn from the interviews that I carried out in Spain is that Argentinean immigrants are not passive recipients of the definitions and categories imposed on them by the state: they accept, resist, subvert, and lobby for and against specific legislation. The main instrument in their struggle is the construct of Argentinean immigration as “return migration,” which guarantees a symbolic and legal space differentiated from, and privileged in comparison to other (economic) immigrant groups.

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60 For example, Argentineans living in Autonomous Communities with a strong cultural identity clearly differentiated from the central state elaborated this discourse much more strongly, while women perceived as “immigrants” because of their occupation (domestic service) did not.

61 I have used the level of satisfaction with the current situation declared by the interviewees themselves and the fit between education levels and current occupation as proxies to measure interviewees’ well-being.
Their general argument is backed up by their warm reception on the part of the civil society, popular discourses that highlight a model migration that corresponds to the profile of the Argentinean population in Spain, and the citizenship regime.
CONCLUSIONS

"Have some wine", the March Hare said in an encouraging tone. Alice looked around but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any wine", she remarked. "There isn't any", said the March Hare. "Then it wasn't very civilized of you to offer it", said Alice angrily. "It wasn't very civilized of you to sit down without being invited", said the March Hare.

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*.

*Tierra: tierra en la boca, y en el alma, y en todo.*

Miguel Hernandez, 1937-1939.

The goal of this thesis has been to understand how two interdependent processes – Spain’s entry into the European Union (EU) and the country’s transformation from a country of emigration to a country of immigration – have impacted Latin American migration to Spain since the mid-1980s. Here I have focused on the immigration and access to legal citizenship of a specific group, Argentineans, in an attempt to contribute to the theorization of immigration in Spain and to do so bringing space to the centre of the analysis. I have interpreted the abundant empirical material through a theoretical framework that brings together concepts and theories on immigration and citizenship from across disciplinary and linguistic boundaries, at both the Spanish and international levels. Before summarizing the conclusions of this study and their implications, I will briefly introduce the way in which “immigration” and “citizenship” – the two main concepts that ground my research were used, and made to fit the Spanish context.

International migration has been conceived in this thesis as the moving of people across national boundaries. Yet these boundaries are imagined as contingent, not absolute: they are the result of the modernization of politics (Chakrabarty, 2000), or the “national order of things”, or the ordering of people, government, and territories in nation-states. Nation-states create the illusion that the relationship between the individual and the territory is a given and pathologize the movement of people, especially refugees and Third World immigrants (Malkki, 1992). Without the institution of the nation-state,

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62 “Soil: soil within the mouth, soil within the soul, and within everything”.

121
international migration would not exist. The emergence of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) such as the EU does not challenge this stigmatization of the migrant, but further constructs spaces of privilege for the citizens of the Global North, while reinforcing the institutionalized exclusion of immigrants from the so called Third World. In Spain, two categories are of special significance to understand this exclusion: one, born from the Spanish popular discourse, is “immigrant”, which refers to the racialized foreigner from less developed countries; the other one, a result of the Europeanization of Spanish immigration laws, is the category of the third-country immigrant (the citizen of any nation-state outside the borders of the EU). These two categories combined mediate the relationship between Spain (its citizens as well as its government) and the immigrant population in the country.

In the European and Spanish context, where immigration is stigmatized, politicized, criminalized, and securitized (Huysmans, 2006), national citizenship remains and even reinforces its status as a safe haven for the international migrant. In this thesis I have focused only on legal citizenship, largely ignoring its social, cultural, and economic aspects. Legal citizenship is the government-sanctioned recognition of the rights of a person by virtue of his or her membership to the national polity. My findings contradict post-national theorists who argue that as we witness the demise of the nation-state under the auspices of globalization, national citizenship becomes less relevant and new forms of post-national and egalitarian forms of membership emerge. Instead, I argue that legal citizenship remains key to immigrants’ integration, providing both a secure position within Spanish society and the access to the full array of rights administered by the state (at least formally). Citizenship, both Spanish and European, still works as a very strong instrument for excluding specific groups, notably immigrants. The increasingly high barriers that the EU is raising against incoming flows from the Third World in fact reinforce the differential access to resources and rights that already exist between citizens and non-citizens.

So conceived, immigration and citizenship have formed the skeleton of the thesis; empirical research, obtained through a variety of methods and sources, has helped flesh it out. The main sources used in the preceding pages are official statistics on the immigrant population, government documents (notably immigration and citizenship laws), Spanish
media, politicians’ speeches, and ethnographic fieldwork. These sources have allowed me to study the evolution and profile of the total, Latin American, and Argentinean population; the changes in immigration and citizenship laws since Spain’s entry into the EU; the conflicting representations of the Argentinean immigrant in the popular and public discourse; and the ways in which Argentinean immigrants themselves accept, resist, or manipulate the categories that the Spanish state has imposed on them since 1985.

The immigration and legal integration of Argentineans into Spain has to be analyzed in the context of the rapidly growing and increasingly diverse immigration in the country since the mid 1980s and, especially, since the mid 1990s. Spain’s emergence as the favourite EU destination for third-country immigrants in recent years (Valero, 2006) means a turn of Spain’s long-standing status as a country of emigration since the 16th century. This turn has happened very rapidly, with at least 80 percent of the current immigrants in Spain arriving in the last decade (MTAS, 1996-2006). A large percentage of the newcomers are citizens of nation-states that were once European colonies. Among those, Latin Americans are currently the largest and fastest growing immigrant group. Gender ratios, age distributions, and settlement patterns of the non-EU immigrant population in Spain support the argument that these are flows of economic migration, gravitating towards the areas where immigrant economic niches (agriculture, construction, services, domestic work, etc.) have a stronger hold.

In this context, the Argentinean community enjoys the benefits of a long-standing settlement in the country (this is arguably the oldest immigrant community in Spain, dating from the late 1970s) and the privileged historical, cultural, and personal links to the Spanish nation-state and its citizens. These links have been established through centuries of mass migrations of Spaniards to Argentina, with families still extended across the two countries, institutional relations between the Spanish and the Argentinean government, and a perceived sense that Argentineans are the immigrant group that is ethnically and culturally closest to Spaniards; this explains that Spaniards today consider Argentinean the most similar and desirable immigrant group, ahead even of other European immigrants (M.P., 12/24/2003). The Argentinean immigrant community has traditionally been more successful than other immigrant groups in securing better
positions in the Spanish labour market by virtue of the higher educational and professional skills, its white urban middle class origin, the strong and well established social networks, and the legal privileges that its members enjoy, for example, when they are to claim Spanish citizenship. But whether Argentineans will remain a model immigrant group after many of their privileges are removed by virtue of the Europeanization of the Spanish immigration law and the socio-economic status of Argentinean immigration to Spain continues to decrease (Actis and Esteban, forthcoming) remains to be seen.

The mainstream favouritism towards Argentineans has for long been supported by a legislation that promoted barrier-free immigration of Latin Americans, as well as by a bilateral treaty that established that Argentineans in Spain and Spaniards in Argentina were to enjoy the rights of nationals, including the waiver of permits to enter and live in either country. Such institutionalized positive discrimination towards Latin American immigrants and especially towards Argentineans dated from the pre-democratic era, when the concept of the Hispanic Community (a community of sister nations related by history, culture, religion, and language) became key for the definition of Spanish nationhood. The entry into the EU, however, required a change of alliances – and, according to the interpretation of the Spanish legislators, the elimination of the treatment of preference towards Latin American citizens in the immigration laws. Since 1985 the rapidly evolving legislation in the field has promoted the gradual removal of the ethnic favouritism towards Latin American immigrants in the country, including the automatic visa waiver for citizens of several countries of Latin America since the late 1990s.

The gradual removal of the traditional privileges for Latin American countries in the Spanish immigration laws of the last two decades promote the representation of Latin Americans as outsiders to the Spanish nation-state, as just one more flow of economic immigration to the country. This contrasts with both the mainstream discourse and the citizenship law, where Latin Americans, and especially Argentineans, maintain their position as quasi insiders, and in many cases as returnees. This fits with Joppke’s (2005) assertion that since 1985 Spain has yielded to the EU eliminating ethnic favouritism in the immigration law, while maintaining it, and even reinforcing it, in the access to citizenship. In the meanwhile, nationality laws have failed to provide a response to the
challenges and demands posed by a growing immigrant population that has made Spain their home – a population that is asked to fulfil citizenship duties, but is deprived from citizenship rights.

These two strands of legislation (immigration and citizenship) promote different, even contradictory, representations of the Argentinean immigrant in Spain. In other words, the traditional acceptance of the Argentinean national as a potential Spaniard, maybe a returnee, that is spread through popular discourses and legislated by the nationality laws is gradually being replaced by an vision of Argentineans as “immigrants”: racialized outsiders from less developed countries who migrate to Spain to compete for local jobs and, by virtue of their difference, bring disorder, crime and trouble with them.

Maybe because of the close relationship between the territories, histories, nations, states, and peoples of Argentina and Spain, the transition towards the representation of the Argentinean immigrant as a stranger has emerged as a project burdened by tensions and contradictions. The first set of contradictions emerge from the need to redefine Spain, previously Hispanic, now European. At its root, the conflict is about the need to anchor Spanish identity in relationship to other spaces and places. As the allegiances of the Spanish nation-state evolve – away from the Hispanic Community and towards the EU – we witness history in the making: the past is re-written to conform to present objectives and future expectations that mark the political, economic, and identity parameters on which Spain (the territory, the state, the people) is defined. The need to establish a single source for the rooting of a territorialized national identity (Karmis and MacLure’s “monistic authenticity’) continues.

The struggle, the negotiation, the conflict, emerges between two ways of defining Spain and Spanish nationhood. On the one hand, one definition – still fresh in the collective memory and in the rather stable citizenship legislation – is articulated around the values of honour, blood, and loyalty that surrounded the discourse of the Hispanic Community. On the other hand, a second, more recent, definition of Spain insists on the relationship between Spain and the EU. In this case, the values that underlie Spanish nationhood are not its past, but its future progress; not honour, but rationality; not blood, but civic principles; not loyalty, but economic, political, and social modernization.
These two definitions of the Spanish nation-state are perceived, to a great extent, as irreconcilable. Each of them imposes a different definition of the territory: in the case of Hispanic Spain the extended boundaries of the country would include the Latin American former colonies; in the case of European Spain, the Schengen space. More importantly, the drawing of administrative borders imposes a new definition of the limits of the imagined national community. Entry into the EU has triggered the elimination of privileges for Latin Americans to enter and live in the country, a privilege that ratified the preference towards Latinos and meant that they were not, or not completely, strangers in Spain. Today, only EU citizens enjoy such benefit. Yet the transition towards a Spain that defines itself around and within the European project has neither been easy nor free of conflict. The re-definition of international allegiances and the sealing of the borders with Latin American has been a rather fast process that has confused and enraged many Latin Americans. Gabriel Garcia Marquez gave voice to such frustration:

A Colombian novelist wrote once: “when I enter Spain I don’t feel I’m arriving, but returning”. (...) This is the feeling that the creoles, the indios, the colonizer or the colonized born in these [American] territories share. If we dare to claim to that great nation [Spain] that we were taught, reasonably or without reason, as our Motherland, is because of the deep conviction that we have of belonging to Spain. (...) Explain to your European associates that towards us you have a duty and a historical obligation that you cannot ignore. The wheel of the wealth of the nations is similar to that of fortune; it is not wise to close the doors on the nose of your poor relatives in days of opulence. Maybe one day we—in this extremely rich territory that you as well as we have worked, suffered, and enjoyed—will have to open the doors to the sons and daughters of Spain, like has been the case so many other times in the past. (García Márquez, 2001).

In this letter, cited in many of my conversations with both Spaniards and Argentineans, there is an acute awareness that there is a bond (an “umbilical cord” in García Marquez’s words) that is being severed.

Argentinean immigrants, however, are not passive recipients of the categories that the Spanish government and citizenry impose on them. On the contrary, the empirical evidence that I have collected for this thesis support the argument that Argentineans are very active in elaborating discourses, lobbying, and participating in Spanish politics in order to manipulate and resist their blending into the general pool of third-country
economic immigrants. At the level of the discourse, this resistance means the articulation of claims for belonging that draw from historical duty, ancestry, and unfulfilled political promises. At the level of political action, Argentineans have managed to exert their influence in Spanish politics, for example, by putting together a working group in the Spanish Parliament to elaborate a draft for a new citizenship law that would grant citizen status not only to the children, but also to the grandchildren of Spanish emigrants. Underpinning these discursive and political actions is the feeling that they deserve the treatment that they were promised – they, like Alice, feel they were offered wine that is not on the table. Spain, for its part, seems to be divided as to whether the invitation it once extended to them is still open.

Whether the transition towards the assimilation of Argentineans into the non-specific non-European immigrant population will be completed or not remains to be seen. Also uncertain at this point are the results of Argentineans’ pressures to modify the citizenship law. In any case, the goal of this thesis has not been to predict the future, but to study the past and the present of Argentinean immigration and access to citizenship in Spain since this country entered the European Union. To some extent, this thesis leaves more questions to explore than answers. Many aspects of the immigration and access to citizenship of Argentines have remained unexplored, either for lack of space, time, or knowledge. The present research highlights, for example, that future research on immigration in Spain would greatly benefit from a deeper understanding of the role of imagination and discourse in the integration of foreigners into the Spanish society. Here, possible questions that we may want to ask refer to who is left outside of the symbolic borders of the imagined Spanish nation, and why.

A second aspect that remains largely understudied in Spain is immigrants’ agency. As the case of Argentineans shows, immigrants are active political agents that can and do impact the national legislation. Further research on this topic would help overcome the institutional(izing) approach that seems to characterize most of the studies on immigration in Spain, including this thesis, and take a step forward to the recognition of immigrants as significant members of Spanish society. The acceptance of immigrants as fully valid members of Spanish society and the imagining of ways in which they can
contribute to it is crucial to the dialogue that, again and again, fails to happen when immigrants in general and Argentines in particular try to function in Spanish society.

To close the circle and finish where we started, with an adventurous traveller in a baby-blue dress and the importance of imagination, in order to bring this dialogue into existence Spaniards (and especially Spain’s political class) should be willing to dream of ways to sit down together around a table where immigrants are treated with respect, governed by fair and consistent laws, and given at least as much as they are asked for.
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APPENDIX I

Certificate of Approval from the Ethical Review Board
APPENDIX II

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