



*Routledge Studies in Development, Mobilities and Migration*

# **MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA**

Edited by  
Maria Damilakou and  
Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos



# Migration and Development in Southern Europe and South America

This book explores the linkages between Southern Europe and South America in the post–World War II period, through organized migration and development policies.

In the post-war period, regulated migration was widely considered in the West as a route to development and modernization. Southern European and Latin American countries shared this hegemonic view and adopted similar policies, strategies, and patterns, which also served to promote their integration into the Western bloc. This book showcases how overpopulated Southern European countries viewed emigration as a solution for high unemployment and poverty, whereas huge and underpopulated South American developing countries such as Brazil and Argentina looked at skilled European immigrants as a solution to their deficiencies in qualified human resources. By investigating the transnational dynamics, range, and limitations of the ensuing migration flows between Southern Europe and Southern America during the 1950s and 1960s, this book sheds light on post–World War II migration–development nexus strategies and their impact in the peripheral areas of the Western bloc.

Whereas many migration studies focus on single countries, the impressive scope of this book will make it an invaluable resource for researchers of the history of migration, development, international relations, as well as Southern Europe and South America.

**Maria Damilakou** is Assistant Professor at the Ionian University of Greece, History Department.

**Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos** is Visiting Professor at the University of Brasília (UNB) of Brazil, Postgraduate Programme in Social Policy/Fellow of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies (FORTH), Greece.

## **Routledge Studies in Development, Mobilities and Migration**

This series is dedicated to the growing and important area of mobilities and migration, particularly through the lens of international development. It promotes innovative and interdisciplinary research targeted at a global readership. The series welcomes submissions from established and junior authors on cutting-edge and high-level research on key topics that feature in global news and public debate.

These include the so called European migration crisis; famine in the Horn of Africa; riots; environmental migration; development-induced displacement and resettlement; livelihood transformations; people-trafficking; health and infectious diseases; employment; South-South migration; population growth; children's wellbeing; marriage and family; food security; the global financial crisis; drugs wars; and other contemporary crisis.

### **Student Migration from Eastern to Western Europe**

*Mette Ginnervkov-Dahlberg*

### **Migration and the Transfer of Informal Human Capital**

Insights from Central Europe and Mexico

*Izabela Grabowska and Agata Jastrzebowska*

### **The Politics of Migration and Diaspora in Eastern Europe**

Media, Public Discourse and Policy

*Ruxandra Trandafoiu*

### **Mapping Southern Routes of Migrant Women**

A Case Study of Chile

*Sondra Cuban*

### **Migration and Development in Southern Europe and South America**

*Edited by Maria Damilakou and Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos*

For more information about this series, please visit: [www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Development-Mobilities-and-Migration/book-series/RSDM](http://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Development-Mobilities-and-Migration/book-series/RSDM)

# Migration and Development in Southern Europe and South America

Edited by Maria Damilakou  
and Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos



First published 2022  
by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2022 selection and editorial matter, FORTH IMS, Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos and Maria Damilakou; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of FORTH IMS, Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos and Maria Damilakou to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at [www.taylorfrancis.com](http://www.taylorfrancis.com), has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-003-25040-1 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003250401

Typeset in Bembo  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

This volume is an outcome of the research project “Migration and strategies of development in the periphery of the “Western World” during the early Post-World War II period (Greece, Portugal/Brazil, Argentina)”. The project was financed by the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (G.S.R.I.) of Greece and supported by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.), under the “First Call for Research Projects to support Postdoctoral Researchers (Project 2616). The research was carried out in FORTH IMS in compliance with H.F.R.I policy and terms.



# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	viii
<b>Introduction</b>	1
MARIA DAMILAKOU AND YANNIS G. S. PAPADOPOULOS	
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>Development and migration policies in the periphery of the Western world</b>	13
<b>1 A stream of currency: the role of Spanish emigration in Franco’s development strategy</b>	15
MARÍA JOSÉ FERNÁNDEZ VICENTE	
<b>2 Migration policies and development doctrine in Greece</b>	27
GIOTA TOURGELI	
<b>3 The migration–development nexus in Argentina’s post–World War II policies: shifts and continuities from Peron to Frondizi (1946–1962)</b>	42
MARIA DAMILAKOU	
<b>4 Brazil: development and immigration in the “long exceptional period” (1929–1979)</b>	57
ROBERTO GOULART MENEZES AND ANA TEREZA REIS DA SILVA	
<b>5 Skills, genes and politics: creating a profile for desirable immigrants in Brazil</b>	70
YANNIS G. S. PAPADOPOULOS	

<b>6</b>	<b>The role of sociology in the interpretation of migration to Brazil and its national impact in the postwar period</b>	86
	TÂNIA TONHATI, MÁRCIO DE OLIVEIRA AND LEONARDO CAVALCANTI	
<b>PART II</b>		
	<b>Migration flows from South to South: transnational impact and limits</b>	101
<b>7</b>	<b>The Spanish postwar emigration to the Southern Cone (1946–1960): reinterpretations from the perspective of gender and labor insertion</b>	103
	BÁRBARA ORTUÑO MARTÍNEZ	
<b>8</b>	<b>Portuguese migrations to South America after World War II: extending citizenship abroad</b>	116
	BEATRIZ PADILLA AND THAIS FRANÇA	
<b>9</b>	<b>Cooperation, migration and development: Yugoslavia and the Southern Cone in the postwar period</b>	132
	SARA BERNARD AND AGUSTIN COSOVSKI	
<b>10</b>	<b>Ambitious plans with modest results: Greek migration flows to Brazil and Argentina in the 1950s and 1960s</b>	147
	MARIA DAMILAKOU AND YANNIS G. S. PAPADOPOULOS	
<b>11</b>	<b>Migration as a business: organizing the transport of migrants from South to South</b>	163
	IOANNIS LIMNIOS-SEKERIS	
<b>12</b>	<b>Migration flows from Southern Europe to South America: statistical data and analysis</b>	177
	ANTONIS MASONIDIS	
	<b>Concluding remarks</b>	195
	MARIA DAMILAKOU AND YANNIS G. S. PAPADOPOULOS	
	<i>Index</i>	201

## 7 The Spanish postwar emigration to the Southern Cone (1946–1960)

Reinterpretations from the perspective of gender and labor insertion

*Bárbara Ortuño Martínez*

### Introduction

Between 1946 and 1960, more than half a million people emigrated from Spain to Latin America. The Argentinian Republic was their main destination, receiving more than 40% of the total official arrivals, which translated into some 200,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Venezuela, which for the first time was to make its appearance among countries most preferred by Spanish migration, hosted 31% of the total number of immigrants; and Brazil, which was a secondary destination, received some 84,590 arrivals, which accounted for 15% of the total of this immigration wave. Lower on the list, we find other host countries such as Uruguay (6.61%), Cuba (3.55%), Dominican Republic (1%), Mexico (0.9%), Colombia (0.7%), Peru (0.27%) and Chile (0.23%), followed by Panama, Ecuador, Paraguay and Puerto Rico.<sup>2</sup>

In general terms, the end of World War II contributed to the economic expansion of Latin America due to, among others, the demands of a Europe devastated by conflict, the need for supplies for US troops during the Korean War and the good prices achieved in international markets for regional products such as cereals, meat, coffee and oil. The influx of foreign currency due to the boom in agricultural exports and raw materials, combined with the economic and socio-political conditions of each country, led to, and in some cases accelerated, an intense industrialization process. Hence, the demand not only for specialized labor, technicians and engineers, but also for manual workers as well as potential consumers increased. Brazil and Argentina also required families to settle permanently in the cities and/or to be willing to settle in rural areas, which for a decade had suffered the effects of depopulation due to migration from rural to urban areas.

In the case of Argentina, the first Peronist government (1946–1951) perceived human resources as an indispensable factor for its economic growth plans and therefore promoted immigration (Biernat 2007). The implementation of the First Five-Year Plan necessitated abundant labor, especially in projects related to the construction of public works, industry, manufacturing and the rural sector. But it also concentrated its efforts on multiplying the number



of consumers, without which the development of an independent economy, especially from the United States, would be difficult.

For its part, Brazil tried to consolidate the industrialization process that had begun two decades previously, largely thanks to the high international prices for coffee. Its main objective was to expand its industry, and for this reason it needed to attract qualified foreign industrial workers and technicians. In contrast to what occurred during a period of massive immigration between 1888 and 1920, when following the abolition of slavery, workers were needed for the coffee and sugar plantations (González 2003; Cánovas 2005), in the 1950s, and in particular during the second term of office of Getúlio Vargas (1951–1954) and the first years of the Kubitschek government (1956–1961), the recruitment of skilled workers that the national-development project demanded, prevailed, although land settlement plans were not abandoned.

In short, the countries of the Southern Cone designed on paper a migration policy based on interventionism and selective immigration, reflecting the desires and aspirations of each country that were expressed as the requirements of certain economic and professional capacities as well as specific physical, ideological, religious and moral conditions (Devoto 2001). However, once again, a gap was revealed between migration policies and practices; in Koselleck's terms, between "expectations", as the result of the memory of what has been experienced in the past – in this case, the experience of mass immigration – and reality. As Erika Sarmiento pointed out, the Spanish and in particular the Galician immigration to Brazil, both at the end of the 19th century and during the post-war period, was spontaneous and nourished by kinship ties and migratory chains (Sarmiento 2013: 61). For this author, in the same way that mass emigration developed in parallel to the availability of subsidized tickets by the state of São Paulo, postwar Spanish immigration differed greatly from the technical profile to which the host country, and more specifically São Paulo's industrialization, aspired to.

Between 1880 and 1970, Brazil received more than five million European and Japanese immigrants, most of whom were concentrated in the state of São Paulo, and secondarily in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Salvador de Bahía and Belem de Pará. Galician immigration at the end of the 19th century, which was the most predominant group in the main American destinations, found its job niche in the service sector and, in particular, was involved in the development of small businesses in urban centers. In this sense, the labor dynamics developed by earlier immigration conditioned the trajectories of the new post-war immigration. In fact, post-war Galician immigrants were to become proprietors of bakeries, butcher shops, bars or shoe stores, or were engaged in construction, but almost never accessed the technical positions of the emerging industry sector or the administrative positions that demanded higher qualifications (Soutelo 2001: 51).

The migratory reality in Argentina, at least as far as the Spanish community is concerned, also proved to be very different from the requested technical profile – represented in the popular imagination by the figure of Italian *ingenieri*

and embodied in different agreements and conventions. Even so, early studies that defined the post-war flow, refer to the high composition of adult individuals, mostly men, who when embarking declared themselves, as industrial and agricultural workers; 41% and 42%, respectively (Palazón 1995: 304–305).

However, when studying postwar emigration from a transnational perspective, in bringing together studies on migration and exile conducted in both Europe and the Americas, and taking into account the contributions of social, cultural, political and women's history from a gender perspective, we can verify that heterogeneity is the main peculiarity of the last migratory wave that was destined for the Southern Cone during the 20th century (Ortuño 2018).

When the first emigration measures were enacted in Spain in 1946, among which the reestablishment of the Emigration Law of 1924 was foremost, the Franco dictatorship, imposed after the end of the Civil War, had already been implementing a regime of violence and terror for more than five years (Casanova 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that within this flow, which was considered not only technical but also “apolitical” by the traditional bibliography, were included economic, political migrants and late exiles (Ortuño 2016; Núñez 2020). Despite the hackneyed argument that this migrant flow developed in a regular manner, we now know that anyone who had the opportunity to flee from a country devastated by poverty and political violence, did so. In order for this to happen, and disregarding whether it was legal or not, they resorted to whatever support and means was offered to them by the migratory chains.

Both men and women were part of this postwar flow, and if we look at the representation by gender, we see that the participation of the latter was much higher than in the first half of the 20th century. In total, Spanish women represented 43.5% of the total emigration to Argentina during the post-war period. Through their testimonies, presented in this chapter, it was revealed that due to gender issues, they experienced dissimilar integration to that of their male colleagues both in the public and private sector.

### **The reactivation of migratory chains; effects of the agreements with Argentina; the regions of origin of the new emigration**

Following almost two decades of restrictive policies, the arrival to power of Juan Domingo Peron in June 1946 led to, among others, the reopening of Argentina to overseas immigration and the emergence of three novelties with respect to the previous period, between 1930 and 1946: an increase in annual arrivals; the simultaneous appearance of a wide variety of migratory typologies, including economic and political migrants, refugees, fugitives and war criminals; and the placing of migration under the auspices of bilateral agreements and international organizations (Devoto 2004). In this sense, it was not fortuitous that two Latin countries such as Spain and Italy, both very important to each of Peron's mandates, were chosen to sign the most important migratory

agreements. If the objective was for the new immigration to merge with the “popular masses”, which consisted mostly of the Creole population and earlier immigration from Southern Europe, then it was necessary to select those who could integrate in a more expedient fashion.

On October 30, 1946, the precursor to the 1948 migration agreement with Spain was signed. The Commercial and Payment Agreement signed in 1946 in order to regulate commercial exchanges set out, in Chapter VI, a section on migration. According to this section, the Franco dictatorship would undertake not to erect obstacles that would hinder emigration to Argentina; and the Peron government would take the necessary measures so that Spanish emigration in general, and specialized emigration in particular, would enjoy the privileges granted to those of other countries and be equal to the national labor force, in terms of the labor regime and working conditions.<sup>3</sup> Two years later, on October 18, 1948, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alberto Martín Artajo, and the Spanish Ambassador to Buenos Aires, José María de Areilza, ratified the Migration Agreement between Spain and Argentina. It authorized “free emigration” and established three types: first, one that required a “letter of invitation”; secondly, “contracted emigration”, which necessitated an individual or collective employment contract signed prior to the departure; thirdly, “collective migration for colons and industrial workers”, who would work in rural areas or in industries, for which engineers, technicians and workers had to be hired by the government or by private companies.<sup>4</sup>

Needless to say, the Francoist authorities were not exactly enthusiastic to receive plans for the resumption of emigration designed by the South American country. In fact, it is very common to find in historical documentation on the elaboration and management of migratory agreements, accusations leveled at the Peronist government, and in particular against the Argentinian delegation in charge of managing emigration from Europe (Ortuño 2018: 94). But Franco’s Spain, politically isolated following the outcome of World War II, ruined and with a mounting debt to Argentina, had few options. In fact, although the Ministry of Labor was in charge of managing a migration policy, which was often at odds with their social and labor expectations, for practical purposes it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-opted by the regime’s propagandists, which imposed the diplomatic vision of the agreements signed with Argentina in 1946 and 1948 (Fernández 2005).

However, faced with a criterion as interventionist and selective in immigration matters as that adopted by its South American counterpart, Spain would under no circumstances facilitate the departure of all those specialized workers, technicians and professionals that were necessary for General Peron’s plans for the industrialization process. Along with the bureaucratic obstacles imposed to control the population that wanted to leave Spain was the lack of control and coordination of the government agencies of both countries, the high price of tickets and the limited places on the boats. As a result, the migration agreements did not have the expected results. In fact, even though both countries attempted to regulate the migratory flows in accordance with their political

objectives and economic development needs, the process was largely carried out independently of government policies. Nevertheless, once signed, these agreements offered people who had the necessary material and intellectual resources the opportunity to face the migratory adventure, to leave Spain and move to a country where the largest Spanish community abroad was located.

Informal networks and migratory chains were the main routes to Argentina during the post-war period. The testimonies of those who immigrated to this country between 1946 and 1956 convey a rather confused understanding of the migratory agreements signed between Franco and Peron in 1946 and 1948. Almost all accounts refer to the relationship established between the two leaders, which was made popular by the shipment of food products – represented in wheat – and the visit to Spain of the First Lady and President of the Peronist Feminine Party, Eva Duarte. Not one account indicates reliable knowledge of the signed agreements but simply points out that, at that time, people returned to Argentina, as had been customary since the Civil War (Ortuño 2018: 94–95). This is explained because many people left Spain when very young, some in early childhood, and in most cases the procedures were carried out by third parties, returned relatives who knew the bureaucracy or had contacts with the emigration agents, but even more so, by the relatives or compatriots who were in Argentina and sent the “invitation letter”.

It is therefore not surprising that among the chief concerns of those wishing to emigrate, standing out from all the rest, was the obtaining of an invitation letter and finding a way to pay for the boat ticket, the price of which was between 3,000 and 7,000 pesetas at the time. This is corroborated by the testimony of Ysabel Caravera Orovio. This Asturian, born in Gijón in 1920 and who immigrated to Argentina in 1949, remembered – when she was 93 years old – that when she wanted to leave Spain, her biggest problem was finding the amount to pay for the ticket. She managed to achieve this through an informal agreement with “some wealthy friends” of her husband, who, in her words, “had land and the government was bothering them”. They would pay for the couple’s boat tickets in exchange for an invitation letter that Ysabel’s husband, Manuel Femenías, would send them from Argentina in the name of his uncle, inviting them to work as settlers on his lands in the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>5</sup>

The first figures referring to postwar Spanish immigration in Latin America indicate that the vast majority came from Galicia (45.84%), with a substantial difference from the Canary Islands (12.31%), Catalonia (9.32%), Andalusia (5.58%), Asturias (5.41%), Madrid (4.85%), Castilla y León (4.43%), the Basque Country (3.3%) and the Valencia Community (2.93%) (Palazón 1995: 294). It has been confirmed that certain regions such as Extremadura and Castilla la Mancha, which in past times had sent large migratory contingents to America and later to Europe, had barely participated in this wave, due to the extreme poverty of a large part of their population and the difficulty they had in accessing the most important ports. Not all host countries received immigrants from these regions, as was the case of Venezuela, where the majority of immigrants came from the Canary Islands (Banco 2019).

Brazil, for its part, continued the trend of massive immigration waves witnessed at the end of the 19th century, when at destinations such as São Paulo, the majority of the immigrants living in its capital and in the interior were from Andalusia; while in cities such as Santos and other urban enclaves, in Salvador de Bahía or Rio de Janeiro, Galician immigration was predominant (Sarmiento 2013: 64, 65). In fact, it is estimated that 91,500 Galicians settled in Brazil between 1950 and 1959, and some 62,296 people settled in the state of São Paulo. Of the 120,000 arrivals from Galicia between 1956 and 1960, an estimated 75,000 settled in São Paulo and about 45,000 were distributed between Rio, Bahia and Pará (Soutelo 2001: 54).

In Argentina, the figures referring to the 1950s indicate a composition similar to the immigration that went to Brazil, with Galicia and Andalusia being the main postwar sending regions. Although the origin of 15% of the total arrivals is unknown, 59,506 people came from Galicia (41.4%), mostly from the provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra; and 15,559 (10.8%) came from Andalusia, with Almería topping the list, followed by Granada and Málaga (Cózar 2012: 90–91). If we look at other secondary destinations, we observe the same trend with slight variations. Thus, for example, in the city of Comodoro Rivadavia, postwar Andalusian immigration was predominant within the Spanish community. In this Central Patagonia enclave there was a particular phenomenon of attracting mainly Andalusian immigration, as a result of the influence of the migratory networks woven during the 1920s, and, above all, of the possibilities of labor insertion in oil extraction companies based in the area, in particular YPF (Dos Santos and Beleiro 2014).

For its part, Mar del Plata, a city in the province of Buenos Aires, presented a composition very similar to that of the federal capital, as it was home to a Galician community that doubled in number after the addition of the Republican exiles and post-war immigrants (Da Orden, Ortuño and Derbiz 2014: 48). But here we detect a curious phenomenon, related to the visibility or invisibility of certain migrant groups, and in particular the Asturian community, which, although it represented just over 10%, had acquired a conspicuous visibility within the group due to its workforce participation in the service sector. In this city, the proportion of merchants and employees of Asturian origin was higher than that of the rest of the community. The opening of its own shops, bars and hotels, with names such as “La Asturiana” or “Cabralés”, boasted of their origins and were proof of upward social mobility marked by hard work and sacrifice. But, as we know, such trajectories were rarely available to the bulk of immigrants, least of all women.

### **Life experiences and labor insertion of Spanish immigration: the case of Mar del Plata (Buenos Aires province)**

The documents that Argentina demanded from prospective Spanish immigrants during the 1940s and 1950s were numerous and difficult to obtain. In order to leave Spain, it was necessary to have a departure visa and a passport, as

well as other papers such as an invitation letter or contract from the country of destination. To enter Argentina, it was necessary to present a disembarkation permit, an employment contract, a certificate of good health, good conduct and no begging, and a visa to enter the country. Of course, relatives and friends played a fundamental role in processing this documentation, as demonstrated especially in the case of social networks that played an important role in aiding their compatriots – the strength of “weak ties”, in Granovetter’s terms – and their importance for the opening of opportunities for individuals and for their integration into communities.

In regard to the help that was offered by the already-established immigrant families, it becomes evident through the testimonies collected that this aid was not always disinterested, particularly if we consider the economic and personal debts that resulted from contracts that condemned a portion of the new post-war immigration to a regime of “semi-slavery” with respect to their relatives, at least for the first few years. Many women experienced even more complex situations, because due to interpretations of traditional gender discourse, on the one hand, they were overprotected in terms of being considered “eternal minors”; but on the other hand, they were used as personal maids, often falling victim to harassment and sexual violence in the reception homes (Ortuño 2018: 133–135). This aspect, which deserves a thorough investigation, tended to be hidden by the immigrants themselves, both out of shame, since in many cases the perpetrators were men respected by the immigrant community and admired by the family that had remained in Spain; and due to the fact that there were no means available to seek redress. In particular, they pointed out shortcomings related to the lack of support networks other than that of the abuser’s environment and insufficient financial means to move elsewhere – in some cases not even to other neighborhoods, much less to return to the homeland, as expressed in deep pain by the daughter of Encarnación Valeiro, who arrived in Buenos Aires from A Coruña in September 1946.<sup>6</sup>

The habitation patterns of post-war Spanish immigration showed a general trend towards the peripheral neighborhoods of Buenos Aires and its municipalities, that together with the capital, made up Greater Buenos Aires. Many people settled in the Buenos Aires suburbs, especially in southern enclaves such as Avellaneda, Quilmes, Lanús or Lomas de Zamora, where the Galician community predominated (Fariás 2010). The Peronist government’s rules also urged immigrants who arrived during the 1950s to settle in areas at a distance of at least 100 kilometers from the capital. However, once again, decisions made on arriving at destinations were conditioned by the human and material resources that each person possessed. In addition to migratory networks, the lower cost of rent in certain areas of the capital and the provinces exercised a strong influence on determining where people would live, and in particular concerning the settlement of postwar immigrants in slums. In fact, a fairly substantial portion of the testimonies collected agree on the precariousness of the houses that they had access to during their first years; houses located on dirt streets, built with rudimentary and improvised materials, without running

water or sewers, which made them feel like they were going backwards instead of forwards, in relation to the living conditions in their places of origin (Ortuño 2018: 136–138).

Joaquina Calo Gaciño, who was born in 1933 in a village in Porto do Son (A Coruña) and who arrived with her parents in Argentina in 1950, a few days before turning 17 years old, has good memories of her first days in her uncle and grandfather's house in Avellaneda; she also fondly remembers the bus trip through the Buenos Aires plain and the natural spectacle of cows grazing in immense meadows under a shimmering sky. However, the evocation of her arrival is cut short by negative emotion when she remembers the port of Mar del Plata, her final destination; "There I got off a tram that was old and broken, and I started crying".<sup>7</sup> This situation experienced as real drama by an adolescent who did not consider herself either an emigrant or an exile, but rather as having been "kidnapped" by her parents, worsened when her aunt – a former immigrant, and the author of the invitation letter that had allowed them to enter the country – showed them the wooden and tin shack where they would live. In fact, the neighborhood of the port of Mar del Plata, inhabited since the beginning of the 20th century by immigrants from southern Italy and Andalusia, as well as by Syrian-Lebanese and internal migrants, was often conspicuous in the press of the 1940s and 1950s precisely due to its squalid housing, which contrasted with the splendor of the mansions and newly constructed buildings downtown (Favero 2011).

The fact that at the end of the 19th century the Argentinian upper classes chose this coastal enclave, located in the southeast of the province of Buenos Aires, about 400 kilometers from the federal capital, as a leisure resort, led to a notorious transformation of the environment. In general terms, what was once an area for the export of agricultural and fishing products was to be radically transformed into an area of economic diversity linked to the leisure of the elite, experiencing huge changes in infrastructure and building that demanded abundant labor. The democratization of this vacation destination at the end of the 1940s through "social tourism" promoted by the first Peronist government, whose ultimate objective was to extend the welfare state to the working and popular classes, exponentially increased its industrial and urban development, as well as the economic activities linked to the secondary and tertiary sectors (Da Orden 2011; Pastoriza Torre 2019).

The primary ties also influenced the labor insertion of new immigrants. The efforts of family and compatriot social networks contributed to reinforcing certain work sectors. At the beginning of the 20th century, more than half of the Spanish women employed in Buenos Aires, and in general in Argentina, were concentrated in the domestic service sector. A notable second on the list was manufacturing, with sewing, generally done at home, being the most important, followed by the tobacco and footwear industries. Beyond these sectors, we find them occupying positions as shop assistants or salespeople in their community. Both men and women tended to work in jobs that in some places were already considered typical of the Spanish community, with some regional variations. And although the participation of

Spanish female immigrants in the labor market was higher when compared to other groups, the gender division of labor, still present – and persistent – on a global scale restricted employment options and confined women to the lower rungs of the occupational ladder. This aspect, added to lower wages than those earned by men within the same employment category, determined their social mobility in the destination countries (Moya 2009: 111–112).

Likewise, married women with children, regardless of the migratory wave that had brought them to Argentina, were forced to combine paid work with family care, without which, among others, progress and integration of both first and second-generation immigrants would have been inconceivable. In fact, it was precisely during the transition between the 19th and 20th centuries that the ideal of female domesticity was established – which identified women as “the home angel” – and of male production and power, which decisively influenced the formation of ideas of complementarity – particularly the one that portrays women’s work as secondary, and leading to their receiving lower wages than men. Although it is true that this situation would continue to change throughout the 20th century, due to the political commitment and efforts of various women’s organizations and associations (Lobato 2007), the testimonies of post-war Spanish immigrants coincide in pointing out endless working days, in many cases without any payment. This was the case of Consuelo López de Álvarez, an Asturian from Luarca, who emigrated to Argentina in 1952 at the age of 21. After working as a seed seller, employee in a bar owned by relatives and in a kiosk in the Buenos Aires capital, along with her husband she decided to move to Mar del Plata and invest all their savings in a taxi and an old lodging house. In Consuelo’s own words:

Everything we earned was invested in it. We never had a vacation. . . . As I stayed there, I worked at the reception desk, and if they wanted a coffee, I immediately prepared it in the kitchen, the washing machine was always full . . . then, I was doing more things . . . Sometimes it was one in the morning . . . but there were sheets, towels, all upstairs on the 5th floor . . . and I would come through the annex, where the clients could not see me, because the first thing they would say is: “Just look at these Galicians! . . . they cannot even afford a maid!” . . . The truth is I broke my back working . . . Nothing came free in Argentina.<sup>8</sup>

The jobs held by Spanish immigrants in Mar del Plata, therefore, follow the same pattern as the capital, Buenos Aires. However, in regard to the former, an additional aspect is revealed: a labor insertion of women working in hotels, mostly as cleaning and cooking staff, and to a lesser extent as managers or owners.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, many of them were employed in textile and fish canning factories, where they were the main workforce. In fact, within anarcho-syndicalism, which had a long tradition in this sector, the presence of women in the workers’ struggles of the 1940s was of crucial importance for the Mar del Plata labor movement (Laitano and Nieto 2019: 64).



The combined testimonies of post-war immigrants in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata collected so far – especially of the youngest – focus, apart from the struggles in trade unions, on their own mothers’ strongly negative attitude against their working in the factories. Other grievances included difficult coexistence within the workplace, with specific reference to tensions with the native population, as well as the harassment they were subjected to. Instances of abuse, approached from an intersectional perspective, includes gender, class, age and ethnicity, as the words of Joaquina Calo testify; she stated that in the fish factory where she began to work a few days after her arrival, “The worst jobs were given to me, an Italian girl and a brunette girl from Santa Rosa la Pampa – an internal migrant”. According to her testimony, although the minors could not touch the fish, and the Peronist discourse spoke of the need to promote the well-being of the working class, the three of them spent their days scrubbing floors and tiles and ended up so wet and dirty that it was the same as if they had handled the fish. Faced with this situation, Joaquina denounced her situation and demanded to know why she was being given the worst jobs. In reply, the forewoman called her pretentious and described her as “a starving Galician”. That same day, Joaquina left her job at the factory of La Campanola and began to work as a clerk in different shops in the city, until she married and together with her husband managed to become owners of a kiosk.<sup>10</sup>

### **By way of conclusions**

During the 1940s and 1950s, the main countries of South America, including Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, experienced industrial development that required an abundant national and foreign workforce. To this end, selective and interventionist migration plans were formulated that sought to attract, once again, the population of Southern Europe, which had been devastated after the Second World War. In the case of Spain, the content of Peron’s migratory plans for Argentina put the Franco dictatorship in a difficult position. On the one hand, the reactivating of emigration channels would involve opening the country’s borders, leading to a loss of a section of the working population vital for its own incipient development plans. But above all, it meant giving the enemies of the regime – that is, the militants of the left and sympathizers, or those suspected of being such, of the democratic principles of the Second Republic – who up until then had managed to survive repression, a chance to flee and be saved.

On the other hand, accepting the migratory agreements of 1946 and 1948 would allow an influx of capital in the form of remittances and compensation for debts incurred by Spain from contracts with Argentina, as well as population decongestion which would help alleviate possible social conflicts. In addition, and just as important, the signing of economic, commercial and migratory agreements with the South American country meant, in the eyes of the world, the gaining of an ally, which Franco believed would allow them to proceed with a “racial policy” that went hand in glove with the colonial imagery of their regime, and would permit them to continue the surveillance/

persecution of dissident voices at the main destinations of the Republican exiles in the Southern Cone.

However, beyond the ambitions which informed the planning and signing of these agreements, their main impact on the Spanish population was the reactivation of migratory chains. Participants of earlier migration flows, as well as those exiled after the Civil War, offered the necessary resources to their relatives and compatriots who wanted/needed to leave a Spain devastated by hunger and violence. As was the case for all migratory waves, from the moment they reached their country of destination, lifestyle and employment options were conditioned by class, ethnicity, age and gender.

In relation to the insertion of Spanish migrant women in the labor market, if we are referring to the physical space for the production of goods and/or the supplying of services in exchange for wages, then it should be noted that women tended to be studied outside of this area. This stems from the fact that studies on labor have been linked to the “male” sphere, due to the greater visibility of male presence in certain labor market segments, and to the association of immigrant women with reproductive functions in biological terms and naturalized domestic tasks. Furthermore, we should also take into account that women had no agency in the process of emigration (López 2014: 115–116).

In recent decades, the history of women and gender studies have grown exponentially in the Ibero-American space, especially through the work of historians committed to feminism, women’s movements and diversity. This has undoubtedly put the androcentrism of our discipline into question, demonstrating, in the words of Andrea Andújar and Débora D’Antonio, “the incidence of women and their agency in social development, the historicity of the meanings of the sexual division, the particularities that operate within that division, as well as its influence on the historical process” (Andújar and D’Antonio 2020: 94). In the case of postwar Spanish emigration to Latin America, and especially Argentina, by observing this phenomenon through focusing on its “other” protagonists – that is, the women involved – but also on alternative destinations other than the federal capital, it becomes easier to delve into the process with greater precision. It allows us to corroborate that postwar Spanish emigration was motivated not only by economic but also by political, psychological and social issues, foremost among which were the harsh living conditions women had to endure during the Franco dictatorship. Likewise, from additional sources, mainly the testimonies of the protagonists of the last migratory wave from Spain to the Southern Cone during the 20th century, we can verify that this wave had not only a distinct family structure but also an intergenerational imprint, due to its links with both earlier immigration and second-generation immigrants, as well as to the low rate of return.

In examining the issue of the postwar insertion of Spanish female immigrants into the labor market, special attention should be given not only to the factories of Greater Buenos Aires, but also to other provincial cities, taking into account their specificities. Although the transnational approaches have been very important for analyzing the migratory phenomena, the re-evaluation of

the role of micro-history can have only a positive influence on advancing our knowledge of immigration in the world of work. It is also important to revisit sources that have already been analyzed and to valorize those that, until now, have not been given the attention they deserve or were difficult to access. But such a contribution would be incomplete without incorporating a comparative and gender perspective that would allow us to continue dismantling clichés, such as the belief that postwar Spanish emigration consisted of a regulated flow of a masculine and economic nature. Only in this way will it be possible to reconstruct and disseminate the complete history of a country in which class, sexist and xenophobic discourses and attitudes have become sharpened, largely fueled by the lack of memory of a recent past deeply marked by emigration.

## Notes

- 1 For graphs and gross figures that refer to the period 1946–1948: Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, España, (AMAE), R. 2318/ Exp. 51.
- 2 Detailed figures in Palazón (1995: 302).
- 3 AMAE. R. 2434 / Files 11, 12, 14, 16 and 18.
- 4 Ibidem.
- 5 Personal interview with Ysabel Orovio Caravera, Mar del Plata (Argentina), August 8, 2013.
- 6 Personal interview with María del Carmen Somoza Valerio, Buenos Aires (Argentina), October 23, 2008.
- 7 Personal interview with Joaquina Calo Gaciño, Mar del Plata (Argentina), November 5, 2012.
- 8 Personal interview with Consuelo López de Álvarez, Mar del Plata (Argentina), July 23, 2014.
- 9 For a further analysis of this aspect, see Garazi (2020).
- 10 Personal interview with Joaquina Calo Gaciño, Mar del Plata (Argentina), November 5, 2012.

## Bibliographic references

- Andújar, A., D'Antonio, D. (2020). “Chicas como tú”. Género, clase y trabajo en la Argentina reciente: un balance desde la historia social. *Archivos*, 16, 93–110. [www.archivosrevista.com.ar/numeros/index.php/archivos/article/view/246/242](http://www.archivosrevista.com.ar/numeros/index.php/archivos/article/view/246/242)
- Banco, C. (2019). La inmigración española en Venezuela: una experiencia de esfuerzo y trabajo productivo. *Espacio Abierto*, 28, 1, 123–137. [www.redalyc.org/jatsRepo/122/12262976007/html/index.html](http://www.redalyc.org/jatsRepo/122/12262976007/html/index.html)
- Biernat, C. (2007). *¿Buenos o útiles? La política inmigratoria del peronismo*. Buenos Aires: Biblos.
- Cánovas, M. (2005). *Hambre de Tierra. Inmigrantes espanhóis na cafeicultura paulista, 1880–1930*. São Paulo: Lazuli.
- Casanova, J. (2013). *España partida en dos. Breve historia de la Guerra Civil española*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- Cózar, M<sup>a</sup> E. (2012). *Inmigrantes andaluces en Argentina durante la Guerra Civil y la posguerra (1936–1960)*. Sevilla: Centro de Estudios Andaluces, Junta de Andalucía, CEMLA.
- Da Orden, M<sup>a</sup> L. (2011). *Una familia y un océano de por medio. La emigración gallega a la Argentina a través de la memoria epistolar*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- Da Orden, M<sup>a</sup> L., Ortuño, B., Derbiz, W. (2014). *Historia(s) de la inmigración asturiana en Mar del Plata*. Mar del Plata: Eudem.
- Devoto, F. (2001). El revés de la trama: políticas migratorias y prácticas administrativas en la Argentina (1919–1949). *Desarrollo Económico. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 162, 281–304.

- Devoto, F. (2004). *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana.
- Dos Santos, S., Beileiro, A. (2014). Generaciones, género y pertenencias de los andaluces en Comodoro Rivadavia. En S. Dos Santos, S. Torres (coords.). *Los españoles y sus descendientes en Patagonia Central en el Siglo XX. Huellas culturales y experiencias identitarias*, 137–162. Rosario: Prohistoria.
- Fariás, R. (2010). La inmigración gallega en el Sur del Gran Buenos Aires, 1869–1960. Tesis doctoral. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.
- Favero, B. (2011). La conformación de una identidad en el barrio del puerto de Mar del Plata a través de sus protagonistas: inmigración, iglesia y beneficencia. *Antítesis*, 7, 61–80.
- Fernández, M<sup>a</sup> J. (2005). En busca de la legitimidad perdida. La política de emigración del régimen franquista, 1946–1965. *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, 56, 3–29.
- Garazi, D. (2020). *El revés de las vacaciones: hotelería, trabajo y género. Mar del Plata, segunda mitad del siglo XX*. Quilmes: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.
- González, E. (2003). *La inmigración esperada: la política migratoria brasileña desde Joao VI hasta Getúlio Vargas*. Madrid: CSIC.
- Laitano, G., Nieto, A. (2019). “Muñecas bravas en un nido de ratas”. Notas sobre la representación masculina y el protagonismo femenino en las luchas gremiales de la industria del pescado, 1935–1975. *Ejes de economía y sociedad*, 4, 56–80.
- Lobato, M. (2007). *Historia de las trabajadoras en la Argentina (1869–1960)*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa.
- López, A. (2014). ¿Trabajos masculinos y “tarear” femeninas? Mujeres migrantes españolas de primera y segunda generación. Comodoro Rivadavia, segunda mitad del Siglo XX. En S. Dos Santos, S. Torres (coords.). *Los españoles y sus descendientes en Patagonia Central en el Siglo XX. Huellas culturales y experiencias identitarias*, 115–136. Rosario: Prohistoria.
- Moya, J. (2009). Mujer, moral y trabajo en la emigración española a la Argentina. En X. Liñares (coord.). *El protagonismo de la mujer en las corrientes migratorias españolas*, 101–122. Vigo: Grupo España Exterior.
- Núñez, X.M. (2020). Sobre diásporas, exilios e identidades en el siglo XX. En M. García y X.M. Núñez (eds). *Hacer patria lejos de casa. Nacionalismo español, migración y exilio en Europa y América (1870–2010)*, 15–39. Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza.
- Ortuño, B. (2016). Redefiniendo categorías. Emigrantes y exiliados en los flujos de posguerra desde España hacia Argentina (1946–1956). *Signos Históricas*, 18, 35, 66–101. <https://biblat.unam.mx/es/revista/signos-historicos/articulo/redefiniendo-categorias-emigrantes-y-exiliados-en-los-flujos-de-posguerra-desde-espana-hacia-argentina-1946-1956>
- Ortuño, B. (2018). *Hacia el hondo bajo fondo . . . Inmigrantes y exiliados en Buenos Aires tras la Guerra Civil española*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Palazón, S. (1995). *Capital humano español y desarrollo latinoamericano. Evolución, causas y características del flujo migratorio (1882–1990)*. Alicante: Instituto de Cultura Juan Gil-Albert.
- Pastoriza, E., Torre, J.C. (2019). *Mar del Plata. Un sueño de los argentinos*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa.
- Sarmiento, E. (2013). Breve recorrido pela historiografía da imigração espanhola-galega: estudos para o caso do Brasil e alguns países da América Latina. En VV.AA. (eds.). *Migrações ibero-americanas. As Migrações Espanha-Brasil (final do século XIX até a atualidade)*. Huelva, Río de Janeiro: LABIMI, CIM.
- Soutelo, R. (2001). *De América para a casa: correspondencia familiar de emigrantes galegos no Brasil, Venezuela e Uruguay (1916–1969)*. Santiago de Compostela: Aquivo da Emigración Galega, Consello da Cultura Galega.