

# Times of Losses: A False Awareness of the Integration of Immigrants

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## ABSTRACT

This article compares and discusses the bases of exclusion and its generational transmission in the United States and France. It explains the limits and achievements of inclusion, based on two admirable research projects. The examination of the long Spanish experience of emigration and the fact that this was forgotten in immigration policy design over the past two decades is relegated to the back of researchers' reflections. The analysis of the political and sentimental bases of this forgetfulness serves as a warning for other countries involved in migratory transition without wishing to admit the fact. Ideologies regarding integration are viewed as theories while the nature of administrative records is considered acritically as a sufficient, correct database. Multi-level, inter-regional government is a demand that reveals both the deficits and the possibilities for better public management of international migrations.

*Keywords:* 1. migratory policies; 2. perception of immigration, 3. immigrant generations, 4. exclusion of immigrants, 5. compared migrations.

## Tiempo de pérdidas: La falsa conciencia de la integración de los migrantes

## RESUMEN

Este artículo compara y discute los fundamentos de la exclusión y de su transmisión generacional en Estados Unidos de América y Francia. Se hacen explícitos los límites y logros en la inclusión, basándose en dos investigaciones admirables. El examen de larga experiencia de emigración española y su olvido a la hora de perfilar las políticas de inmigración durante las dos últimas décadas aparece en la trastienda de la reflexión. El análisis de las bases políticas y sentimentales de esa desmemoria sirve de aviso para otros países que están en el tránsito migratorio sin querer darse por enterados. Las ideologías sobre la integración se toman por teorías y la naturaleza de los registros administrativos se considera acriticamente como una base de datos suficiente y atinada. El gobierno multinivel e interregional es una exigencia que revela a la vez los déficits y las posibilidades para una mejor gestión pública de las migraciones internacionales.

*Palabras clave:* 1. políticas migratorias, 2. percepción de la inmigración, 3. generaciones inmigrantes, 4. exclusión de los inmigrantes, 5. migraciones comparadas.

## *Moderation<sup>1</sup>*

It happened in Galicia, the Spanish region that has sent the largest number of people to the American continent. And it happened in early November of 2006, at the San Estevo Monastery, set in the province of Orense. A physicist researcher employed by the Spanish Research Council (csic) explained, “It’s a good thing someone told us there that are regularities and that some events can be anticipated”. That was his reaction when he heard from a social scientist that not everything regarding the development of immigration in Spain was unpredictable.

The relative theoretical security provided by repeatable, expected events soothed the selected audience participating in the seminar on “*Migrations, diversity and coexistence in Spain*”. The speakers were sociologists, demographers, anthropologists, economists, geographers and jurists keen to share what was known about this powerful new phenomenon in democratic, post-Franco Spain. The audience was mostly “cold scientists” so to speak, who, as the reader will have grasped by now, were becoming nervous at the lack of rule-based uniformities presented by the “hot scientists”. The point is that, the session lacked the comfort provided by certainties and was instead marked by particularities and oddities.

Classifying scientists by temperature is undoubtedly imprecise but not that inappropriate. Admittedly, this often happens among migration researchers. Those who work with official statistics or seek quantitative regularities are criticized for their inadequate, insensitive understanding of the reality of immigrants. This idea, however, fails to prove that numbers have less of an influence on political and legislative decisions than speeches, even if it is only because there are more deputies that vote than spokesmen that engage in debate. Nor does it prove that “quantitative” researchers lack words. Indeed, I think that the “statistics of relationships” improve with words.

<sup>1</sup>This article takes up some of the reflections in my prologue to the Spanish edition of *Generations of Exclusion. Mexican Americans, Assimilation, and Race*. by E. Telles and V. Ortiz, 2008.

For example, in *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican-Americans, Assimilation and Race (GE)*, Telles and Ortiz sculpt words into figures, skillfully blending methods, principles and circumstances. Their contents debunk both the perception that numbers serve to cool down social reality and the assumption according to which the incorporation of foreigners is a peaceful process.

When I read Telles and Ortiz, I began thinking about Europe. When one compares the degree of integration of immigrants in the two contexts, there is a tendency to emphasize differences and overlook similarities. Academics tend to seek originality and accentuate differences. That is why it is worth making an effort to find similarities without underestimating peculiarities. The purpose of this article is to compare this American survey with another no less convincing and original study undertaken in France by M. Tribalat. The French study was undertaken through three books, the last of which is entitled *De l'immigration à l'assimilation*, which followed *Faire France* and *Cent ans d'immigration, étrangers d'hier, français d'aujourd'hui*.

Both the American and the French project were based on solid research, involving restraint and balance. This is the sort of study that brings social and natural scientists together, since they all work with conditions. They show that when data are valid and reliable, they move us and we discover that the fact that something is predictable does not make it any less worrying ... since it is alarming that generations of people prepared to progress and hopeful about their children's future should take over a century to climb the ladder leading to integration into a society.

Let us establish some priorities to investigate the phenomenon of integration at the state, social and group level, without ignoring a comparative analysis with other countries. It would seem obvious that at least two skills are required for analyzing immigration, namely: careful handling of data and full knowledge of existing legislation. The law is the national shackle for explaining an international phenomenon. Fortunately, there are keys for releasing knowledge. State laws shape administrative records, but it is important to realize that they do not fully domesticate them.

There are also other sources that produce primary data outside the state doctrine, which happens mainly at research centers and universities.

Analyzing information and providing it with axes that are able to withstand an cross-national comparison also means that its coordination must have an explicit meaning and a larger scope. In short, it is essential to have a good command of statistics, laws and general arguments. Theory, laws and analytical techniques form a tripod capable of supporting the most solid construction. And both these studies reflect these skills and capacity.

Below is a summary of some of the basic materials showing how difficult it is to undertake balanced research within the sphere of international migrations, particularly regarding the integration of foreign immigrants. Strictly speaking, a foreigner is a person lacking the nationality of the country, but for the purposes of integration, it means the one at the bottom of the ladder. The one who is not at our level.

It is useful to note that the numbers and charts presented by Telles and Ortiz (2008) show how immigrants and their offspring behave in such key issues as whom they marry, what party they vote for, what language they use to communicate with their children and neighbors and what religion they profess. They do this by following the players throughout their lives and obtaining information on those missing. They constitute a good example of how aggregates do not devour individuals and instead, provide them with more strength without eliminating their individuality. Balanced research also makes it possible to re-establish difference within the group and speak in plural of what is also singular.

So this study will be of interest to both cold and hot scientists. It will interest the former because, after reading it, they will find that certain processes can be anticipated if not fully, at least with a high degree of probability. The latter will be interested because the detective method used to find those that have scattered and the marks left by those who died will prove extremely productive in conversations and experiences.

As we read these studies, we will be drawn to novel findings and develop a taste for nuances when we discover that the integra-

tion of immigrants and their offspring is not black and white and instead made up of shades of gray. We are in the presence of scientific research, which shows restraint regarding its findings. In particular, this study confirms the variety of situations regarding Mexican-Americans, although logically enough, its method can be applied to many other communities with their own personality, as we shall see in the French studies and the Spanish notes.

In fact, the common thread running through this reflection is Spain's experience as a society of foreign immigration during the last quarter of a century. From a generational perspective, it has been a society of constant emigration and immigration. Which has produced internal migration between nations with different languages (Andalusians to Catalonia or Castilians to the Basque Country), which has created different forms of coexistence and assimilation. Spain is multi-national country within which internal migrants have had multicultural experiences, developed transnational practices and been subjected to police control of migratory flows. It is a country with a century of well-documented migratory history and now, through the Law of Historical Memory (LHM) is recovering the grandchildren of immigrants and those of the Republican exile who wish to return. In the year and a half since the passage of the LHM, over 160 000 applications have been received from the descendants of Spanish emigrants, mainly to Latin America, who wish to recover their ancestors nationality. This suggests that sooner or later, we will reap what we have sown. In other words, comparative history expands novelties and reduces surprises.

### *A Wake-up Call*

This research proves that time is unable to cure all individual and community ills. In particular, it fails to guarantee that immigrants' social and cultural integration in the receiving society progresses smoothly. The crux of this reflection suggests that blind faith in the fact that obstacles will be eliminated over time is less of a help than a hindrance. Let's not beat about the bush: over the past two decades, "foreignness" has overtaken integration in

countries with immigration. The title of this article shows that losses are also produced during times of integration. We are wasting time during what should be a period of integration.

We can provide an explanation for this shortcoming. It is reasonable to think that a migratory model that produces and prolongs irregular situations hinders the integration of migrant families. This has been the scenario in the U.S. and Spain over the past twenty-five years. Imposing frequent or lasting frustrations does not seem to be the best way to achieve equity or enthusiasm. If empirical research shows that the keystone of integration lies in the immigrant's documentation, the proposal would be for multilevel administrations to have ordinary legalization mechanisms, not just extraordinary ones (mass legalizations or amnesties) in order to reduce processing times.

The facts, however, fail to reflect all the dimensions of this assumption. The legal criterion of irregularity fails to explain the real mechanisms that produce or solidify it. The labor market breaks the law. It is also possible to compare irregular groups of immigrants that are not treated as illegal aliens in all social spheres, thereby proving that there are different rates of integration. Respecting the accumulated evidence, the importance of legal illegality varies according to the spheres in which this integration is evaluated and the variables that describe the process. In short, there are institutional spheres where there is no room for illegality and other social contexts where it fits in smoothly.

Several excuses have been given to justify the fact that host societies do not think about everyone but rather in terms of "them and us". One of the excuses is the scope of the flows, which is used to explain divisions in society. The accumulated evidence proves, however, that the composition of the flow is more important than the amount for integration as a process. The policy of national preferences, in other words, the cultural trap, is what governs public opinion.

The fact is that in most OECD countries, foreignness has outstripped citizenship, in other words, democracy has proved weaker than xenophobia. Moreover, suspicion has outweighed trust in

societies while protectionism in access to education and health has stirred up sentiments against outsiders. Integration mechanisms have not been able to de-identify the natives or absorb foreigners. A battle continues to be waged between natives, the next and neighbors. The mechanism that operates is predilection.

In this article, we will not be thinking about the regulation and composition of entry flows but rather about their dregs. We are concerned with the desires and frustrations of people that come from elsewhere to settle in a host country. The aspect we will focus on is integration. The flows of migrants towards countries that give a lot of coverage to opportunities to improve their lives are real. However, for some time now, the profile and magnitude of these flows have been used as a decoy to ask for patience regarding the failure of policies that strive to achieve a lack of distinction and equality in basic aspects. A powerful obstacle, which contributes to this failure, is the design of administrative records. The data they compile do not help public integration policies. That is why it is useful to find out about the expectations and ambitions of migrants who change more and more quickly than musty official documents. All this means that the democratic instruments designed to achieve equal opportunities arrive late, thereby reducing their reliability and potential for identification.

This chronological and social time will be dealt with throughout this article. Telles and Ortiz' research is a wake-up call forcing us to open our eyes. Social scientists will be astonished to find how long they have been sleeping. This study and Tribalat's forces us to acknowledge the fact that immigration has not faded and can be perfectly distinguished from the outside and even more importantly, from the inside. Several researchers have been laboring under the illusion that integration had set its own time limits and costs. Three generations was the period of time implicitly agreed on to carry out the process ranging from otherness to objective equality of status. But this period was established when the Internet was not used to measure social time. Nowadays, all social processes are shortened, interrupted and modified, so there are no convincing reasons to exclude the path of integration from this

acceleration. What is true is that something as atavistic as external appearance lengthens the process. In some cases, this involves the color of one's skin and in other contexts, it is public prayer.

*Generations of Exclusion* (Telles and Ortiz, 2008) brings us face to face with "how long will you lend it to me for", meaning that some readers will become impatient while others will resign themselves to its results. To paraphrase Marx, it has been shown that social life does not proceed in a straight, upward line, and besides that it does not always do so everywhere in the best way. When we finish reading the study, we feel the need to rethink the perspectives of integration and their links with immigration policy. The book proposes a change of perspective after finding that foreigners' exclusions may run aground or even slide down the slopes of exclusion. Not in all migratory communities, and not at all levels, but certainly in some of the most important ones. And what is even worse, the cracks that destroy the social soil continue to be active and have been prolonged for four or more generations. Research proves that the wounds of exclusion have still not healed in the fourth generation of Mexican-Americans. Conclusions are based on a detailed longitudinal analysis that links generations of immigrants that are distant in terms of space and time. The strength of this quantitative evidence is what enables our authors to test the most noticeable poles of the theory of assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, and Alba and Nee), contributing a nuanced, coherent and creative explanation for this vital issue. This research plunges us into the era of differences, pointing out the meanders and limits of race and the importance of racial group in relation to the labyrinths and delays in integration. *Generations of Exclusion* offers extraordinary results in the array of studies on the assimilation of foreigners and their heirs. It undertakes the longest journey we have heard of so far in the itinerary of integration and stops at the most important stations along the way. It distinguishes the basic fuels that push or stop this process and the way they lose force or are worn out during the trip, showing how "strangeness" can be reduced but also how it is revitalized and reformulated.

In post-industrial and service societies, the social and economic bases of exclusion often dwarf the impact of rights that have been seriously debilitated. Social exclusion advances more deeply and firmly than nominal integration. Immigrant communities achieve varying results depending on the weight of the restrictions placed on them institutionally. The three types of locks are: social or class locks, the compensating lock related to access to welfare services and the cultural lock related to identities. Telles and Ortiz (2008) disprove the theoretical hypothesis of constant assimilation and show the retrogression of the integration process in some of the key aspects for its successful progress. The platform for upward social mobility is educational progress but when teachers, corporate organizations and governments cut the strings of this catapult, they reduce the training of generations of immigrants that are Mexican by birth or by descent. Children's and grandchildren's failure to progress in the labor market in relation to their parents and grandparents continues, evincing their concentration in the lower rungs of the job ladder. Nowadays, the labor market resembles a frozen lake, cracked in a thousand places by the neoliberal model and set adrift by the speculative financial wave.

Another sphere related to this work is the firm commitment to the *longitudinal and intergenerational perspective*. This enables us to identify the zigzags in integration and clarify why assimilation illuminates its dark areas by advancing at varying rates. And lastly, this research also provides arguments to undertake a criticism of the categories and statistics that cloud our understanding of integration. This happens with the classification of "foreign" as opposed to "immigrant" or a national label as opposed to classification by identity. In order to be able to understand the process of integration of people of the same origin in the host society, it is more appropriate to use a generational perspective, and to distinguish foreign immigrants from their descendants and to be determined not to succumb to the dogmas of political correctness regarding the orientation of what is measured and its level of disaggregation. The concern expressed by the title of the Ameri-

can study provides a bridge between European and American researchers as well as surprising us with its results. Let us focus first on the agreements and in the second part of the reflection, let us mention some of the disturbing aspects as regards thought and work. To conclude, we will devote a section to the line this study marks in the field of immigrants' integration. We will focus on the temptations that encourage us to sin by default or excess in the current situation in which the financial, business, political and social powers are settling accounts. Let us begin the dialogue with what links us or at least brings us closer to the Europeans and Americans.

### *Circumstance Detectives*

The first survey that challenged political hegemony yet used a methodology that was scientifically appropriate for the purpose of evaluating integration was carried out in 1992. In Los Angeles, which was experiencing violent racial conflicts that year, boxes containing a survey that had lain dormant for an entire generation were discovered. On the European side, we had a carefully planned research project that challenged the ruling dogma; on the other side of the world, a chance find took place within an atmosphere of discontent.

Research reduces the distances in scientific language and continental experiences. In order to illustrate these differences, one can read Telles and Ortiz in the U.S. and Tribalat in France in parallel. The results of these two studies were based on vast surveys with a similar purpose. In addition to sharing methodological principles, the researchers made good use of the circumstances. The circumstances were, in the case of Telles and Ortiz, the good luck to find some boxes that had been saved from a paper shredder while work was being done to remodel a university library. At the other end of the scale, Michèle Tribalat wished to make up for the lack of consistent research in the sphere of immigrants' integration in France. He used ethnic origin as a variable that had thitherto been denied and penalized by the dominant ideology in

France. These researchers on either side of the Atlantic grasped the fact that the nature of integration is not based on belief (Tribalat) or objectives but rather on a demanding, generational process.

Both surveys made a virtue of necessity and obtained clean energy although only pollutants were used. They created a novel design to overcome difficulties and limitations and convinced their respective institutions that the costly financing involved was worth it. Lastly, the researchers involved coped with the academic risks that such an undertaking entailed. French academia treated Tribalat worse than its U.S. counterpart did Telles and Ortiz, which is no trivial matter. The U.S. survey was conducted with the same respondents on two dates (1965 and 2000) and included their offspring on the second occasion. The French survey is extremely broad ranging and retrospective. We have already said that both were pursuing the same goal, in other words: to analyze the factors that prevented immigrants' integration by separating the effect of the initial cohorts from that of successive generations.

*Generations of Exclusion* breaks the spell in two immigration countries (the U.S. and France) with over a century of experience. They are two societies that have achieved comparable results, although they preach different ideologies (a false awareness) of assimilation. These ideologies are expressed in arguments over concepts and doctrines and in subjection to tradition and dogma. Assimilation or integration? Affirmative action or generalized intervention? The two studies show that these arguments are unimportant and that sooner or later, the facts would destroy the verbal fantasies created.

The comparable realities include the stops, descent to the bottom of society and in any case, the snail's pace of the social elevator offered to the most significant minorities in the U.S. and France. And this no longer affects immigrants but also their offspring who have been overlooked. More than an elevator, it resembles a service lift in which racial prejudice outweighs cultural recognition and social barriers outweigh effective opportunities. In this respect, this research brings European and American social scientists together and shows that the exclusion of Mexican im-

migrants and their offspring echoes the suffering that has led to the torching of Parisian suburbs. Some aspects of the itineraries of exclusion and assimilation of Algerians and Turks in France are equivalent to those of Mexican-Americans and African-Americans in the U.S. In the end, the thread running through the book is the failure, to varying degrees, of the integration model and it is fair to say that this fiasco goes beyond national borders.

### *The Globalization of the Exclusion Locks*

Two of the four padlocks that close off host societies to foreigners are universal: Exclusion from political rights and class-based exclusion which restricts them to certain occupations. The citizenship padlock is opened through naturalization while the job inferiority padlock is opened through education. The other two locks are used to distinguish immigrants' possibilities of integration in Europe and the U.S., namely social cohesion and cultural heterogeneity. According to this division, it is easier to engage in everyday life in the Old Continent while there is more scope for visibly different customs in North America. Cultural difference is more readily accepted in the U.S. whereas immigrants receive more benefits to enable them to fit into society in European welfare states.

Let us expand on these two sources of integrating energy, namely social benefits and cultural security. The former attempts to provide basic elements to enable a person to feel like everyone else while the second key opens the "padlock of cultural imposition".

This difference could be simplified by saying that cultural acceptance predominates in the U.S. whereas the impact of the welfare state prevails in Europe. There there would be more activity in civil society whereas here there would be more action from Public Administration. The question is whether benefits are more important than acceptance when it comes to achieving successful integration. In fact, the results show more similarities than differences. The forces of exclusion have been more persevering and powerful than those of integration in the two regions. The keys used to open the padlocks have rusted and have not served

their purpose, meaning that none of the four locks has been fully opened for foreigners and their offspring. During economic booms, distrustful, racist votes do not lower their guard in their efforts to marginalize others whereas during the crisis, understanding, egalitarian citizens hesitate and withdraw their defense of equity. With each political, economic and cultural crisis, Europeans take a step towards the weakening of the welfare state and towards a cultural impasse. In fact, European states have been stingy when it comes to providing immigrants with elements for cohesion while culturally integrative attitudes have been reflected more in words than actions. Republican equality, as Tribalat says, is more of a credo than a demand, as borne out by the achievements in educational, work and residential leveling of generations of immigrants.

What one can say is that immigrants in Europe have shown their deficiencies as regards health and education benefits. At the end of the day, immigrants have withdrawn culturally as a result of their exclusion from the public sphere and their lack of political rights. They do not want less of a nation-state but rather more of a welfare state. Thus, lack of integration is more a reflection of the lack of effective opportunities than of the aptitudes and attitudes of minorities. Voting intentions that supported socio-cultural restrictions have reduced the Welfare State in election after election. Incredible though it may seem, surveys show that all social classes in Spain (especially the middle and lower sectors) believe that immigrants enjoy more protection from the state than senior citizens, pensioners, the unemployed, and working women (Cea and Valles, 2009).

As regards cultural security, suffice it to say that the strong French identity has been subjected to proof its own definition for years now. What it means to be French and what values and symbols reproduce the French identity is a subject of recurrent public debate. What fails is the actual capacity to respect cultural diversity and to acknowledge the fact that identity is both multiple and changing. Irrefutable proof is provided by the separation in the inquisitorial dynamics between the public and private sphere. Surveys conducted in the official sphere engage in a sort of repub-

lican discipline that regards the use of ethnic categories as a mistake, as Tribalat complains, whereas in privately funded surveys conducted commonly use these categories.

Regarding the debate in France, which is a centralized state, but in also Spain, which is a multilevel, plurinational state, it is worth asking about the degree of trust in national identity or identities. Insofar as host countries have the most highly valued lifestyle and symbols when it comes to having immigrants interiorize and appropriate them. The crux of this debate is the loss of the hegemony of voluntary identities over those that are branded into you. In other words, how can one explain the fact that simple identities are strengthened in complex societies? As regards the integration of foreigners, social scientists' interest lies in analyzing the factors that lead the native majority to believe that the identities of vulnerable, relocated or uprooted minorities are a threat to their own identity.

Forgetting about colonization and slavery goes hand in hand with denying the existence of racial treatment in the present, not only towards foreign immigrants but also towards non-white nationals. Official memory tends to be a patchwork of private and collective memories. Patrick Weil provided us with a brilliant reflection on the French nation's reluctance to write its history in terms of narration; but in Spain too, the population continues to imbibe the same potion that erases memory. All one has to do is see how the grandchildren of Spaniards who emigrated abroad differentiate between EU passports, dual nationality and national identity. They applied for Spanish nationality under the Law of Historical Memory but only because doing this they can travel the world with EU passport and, at the same time, they can continue drinking *mate* tea as a sign of identity and remembering that their ancestors were emigrants who escaped from the lack of opportunities to lead decent lives.

### *The Exchange of Migratory Experiences*

This study encourages a joint reflection on integration between countries and regions with *traditional emigration* and *recent im-*

*migration*. This is a crucial task in order to keep abreast of the times. These are times when immigrants retort with lost references because those that were promised to them could not be achieved. This is a time when national contexts are not analytical prisons but rather revelations of human resemblance. The mission of social science is to open up and ventilate contexts so that it is not suffocated within them. Let us give an example.

Countries in Southern Europe which, until yesterday, were solely regarded as emigration countries and countries that now operate in two directions, such as Spain and Mexico. It is true that one of these movements now dominates, immigration in Spain and emigration in Mexico. But these dominant movements take place at the same time as others in a different direction, which are less numerous although highly significant. First of all, let us put an ear to the ground to detect the slightest tremor and then let us look up as far as we can see. The history of migrations does not offer a series of journeys in a single direction. It blends departures and arrivals, realizing that migratory processes have a longer life expectancy than that of those that occasionally participate in them. In the case of Spain, this intense immigration conceals other migratory trends that are virtually unnoticed. Thus, at the same time as we receive large flows of immigrants, there are Spanish workers who go to France for the annual grape harvest, while doctors and nurses emigrate to the U.K. and Portugal. In other words, there is a heterogeneous migratory exchange as regards its capacities and projects. It is our duty to debunk headlines and show that there are migratory movements of a triple, pluralistic nature. Thus, a research project undertaken with a telescope like *Generations of Exclusion* enables us to see further and anticipate the different stages of the movements and policies with a complex migratory situation or those that are on way to becoming so.

In particular, it is of great interest for social scientists who only have eyes for emigration and the first cohorts of immigrants. The former abound in Mexico and the latter in Spain. The former underestimate the settlement of workers and their families in the states

in the south of Mexico and their impact on the perceptions and reduction of rights. Mexico is a country with an enormous awareness of emigration in the familial and local sphere, which feels aggravated by its northern neighbor and therefore fails to notice the effects of transit migration in its own territory. When these effects increase, they will have a rocky start. Accustomed as they are to the violation of their fellow countrymen in the U.S., they fail to react sufficiently to the harm inflicted on established foreigners and on migrants that cross their territory. The authorities and this deeply divided society adopted the converts' pattern whereby foreigners are given the same bitter medicine they are given in the U.S.

Spaniards underestimate the structural consequences of the growing immigrant population. They also adopt the convert's attitude, behaving like the nouveaux riches who see foreigners as nothing more than returnable labor for unskilled tasks, underestimating their educational capacities and political and cultural contribution to society. It is as though we were shortsighted and could only see things close up.

The two scientific communities are confused by the large numbers and struggling to cope with migratory flows rather than generational installation and integration. They remain in the short term, trapped within the skin of a chameleonic, structural phenomenon. They forget that from the analysis of the today's large flows, of either emigration or immigration, one can learn how to handle later, in twenty years or so, smaller flows, of either settlement or return migration. And that the migratory traces of fullness or emptiness, have long-term demographic and sociological consequences. The scope of different types of movement currently being experienced in Mexico and Spain have profound repercussions.

In other words, the scientific task of Mexicans and Spaniards is to interpret overseas emigration in order to analyze immigration into the country or vice versa, in other words, to decipher the large scale event to measure the small scale one. It is worth noting that, like the energy from a volcano, neither of the two experiences is definitively exhausted simply because they come from the same source. An important issue we will return to at

the end of this article is the flood of simplistic news that drowns out the opinion of the end users of our work, "Once you have learnt something properly, you can communicate it clearly". In other words, it is better to write it, albeit briefly, than to leave it to ideology hunters.

The Spanish experience provides three warnings that may serve our Mexican colleagues. The first is that is advisable to pay more attention to the incipient immigration concealed by the memory and remorse of large-scale emigration. The second warns against the idea of believing that the role of Mexico is only to provide a corridor for foreign immigrants to reach their main destination in another country. The third warns of the risk of vertical, global approaches that produce a state of scientific torpor but critical satisfaction, because without the distinction of time, place and composition, there is no consistent analysis of integration.

### *Immigration is Not a Pillar of Salt*

In a sociological sense, immigration is an action with a desire for the future, a movement that does not look back to avoid being turned into a pillar of salt. The result of this change of perspective is that the return is reduced and expectations are invested in the destination. Migrants do not walk blindly, without a destination or a plan and integration is the basic substance of this movement and its purpose. Contrasting with this perspective of an intentional project, and a person with ambition and will, in European host societies, the prevailing idea is of circumstantial immigration that is subjected to and reflects economic and political convenience. Public policies, particularly those specifically concerned with immigration, tend not to grasp this fact. For a movement that looks forward, assimilation constitutes a life project. Without it, all that is left is foreignness, in other words, social and civic exclusion. What is significant nowadays is that this narrow view of labor and temporary or circumstantial immigration still prevails in the public unconscious and particularly and paradoxically, in the countries that have experienced a recent migratory

transition. They should be the first to realize that fewer than expected returned and that more families than anticipated settled in their destination. It seems that the spirit of the convert inspires and grips immigration policies in a sort of historical oblivion and psychological complex that has yet to be overcome.

In fact, emigrants have always had a Plan B. If there was a lack of rapid accumulation of capital, then a person's stay was prolonged. Returning is not recommended when things are going well and difficult to accept when they go wrong. The point is that since the crisis of the 1970s, Plan A or the initial plan is increasingly a settlement project. The rate of this change of plans from the temporary stay to settlement has accelerated due to a succession of failures in the country of origin and various kinds of impact in the host country. Narrow avenues for the educational and social advancement of both themselves and their children in the country of origin and, as one can see in *Generations of Exclusion*, few hopes of rapid progress in one's destination. The final result shows that in the emigrants' place of origin, there is increasingly less future and more past.

Given this change of perspective, policies are obsessed with controlling flows and insist on ignoring permanent settlement. Thus, illegal stays lengthens while foreigner status (of those that fail to achieve or do not accept naturalization) is experienced for longer. The result is an increase in undocumented immigration in the long term and generational exclusion in the medium and long term.

The fact is that in most receiving countries, immigrants do not strive as hard as previous generations to save money in order to return to their country of origin and instead, try to settle permanently in the country of destination. Gradually and increasingly quickly during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigration, as a de facto and legal population, has increased its share over total movement of labor. As a result, nowadays we have a mixed model of temporary workers and family settlement that resembles European and American arrangements. And this model, which was present in countries with a century of immigration (France

and the U.S.) has rapidly taken root in countries with recent migratory experience.

This convergence of realities of exclusion, migratory projects involving installation and mixed models is what has globalized public debates. The policies promoted by governments and the questions asked by the media that shapes public opinion are increasingly similar, and link novice and experienced countries within the European Union. But this does not only happen in the European Union. Proof of its scope is provided in the common annual agenda developed by countries which are members of the OECD Permanent Observation System and the OAS's interest in re-adapting the instrument to its space. Contrasting similarities and differences highlights the trends, context and transmission of experiences.

### *The Meandering, Uneven Pace of Assimilation*

When workers become residents, they look hopefully at their children who were born or raised in the host country. And they focus their desires on what counts most, on the capital that will provide the greatest assistance to their offspring's social advancement. The aptitudes and qualities that are most highly valued in that society. Simplifying this description, one could say that, what counts in the beginning is being able to accept any job and speak the language. Later on, and in order to be able to advance socially, one has to acquire education and accumulate contacts, in other words training and mixing with the natives. In other words, it is necessary to enrich educational capital through social networks. And this combination of settlement and generational expectations produces different rates and degrees of integration in the most basic dimensions, and of just adjustment in those aspects less important for social promotion. These particularities and uneven pace in the case of Mexican Americans, explored by Telles and Ortiz (2008) makes it possible to characterize this population as an ethnic group that is the object of racialized treatment and perception. In other words, it is a cultural minority subjected to specific, effective means of exclusion.

In general, equaling the native-born middle classes is taken as a sign of assimilation. As is the lack of distinction in occupations, access to university studies, learning the language, mixed marriage, incorporation into the armed forces, electoral participation and residential dispersion. Conversely, symbolic and festive cultural particularities (gastronomy, music, dancing and sports) are understood, quite rightly, not to distort the process of integration. Because assimilation is equality regarding basic issues, regarding what sustains and promotes social life, rather than signing a contract to adhere to the customs of certain nation states that have never been socially or culturally homogeneous.

*Generations of Exclusion* stresses these meanders and sometimes the illusions in which everything follows the script foreseen in the theories that focus more on integration. It explains how one can retreat generationally in certain basis dimensions such as education and how it is possible to lose linguistic capital due to one's social origin and racial pressure. Mexican immigrants sacrifice the richness of bilingualism for the sake of social progress that takes a while to occur. They lose Spanish but become proficient in English. This loss of complex identity is carried out with the hope of receiving some form of compensation in the occupation pyramid. Significant nuances emerge in the zigzags of assimilation when the perspective is one provided by a time cohort as opposed to family succession. The pace and the progress made in each of the explored dimension varies according to the period in which the immigrant lives and the primary environment surrounding him. It has already been said that good research does not minimize the heterogeneity of immigration, despite having the same national origin. This is a golden rule that is broken on a daily basis in the headlines and expanded news in the media. And this acknowledgement of the internal diversity of immigrants and their offspring is crucial to public integration policies. The difficulties and limitations placed on family regrouping and the racial definition of Mexicans as permanently inferior labor has its costs for assimilation in terms of ethnic attachment. Ethnic group, class and racial treatment are links in the processes of exclusion.

### *The Local Observatory and its Mark on Integration*

Integration is forged in a context. Racial treatment, based on the prejudice of people's inferiority due to the color of their skin or their nationality erects internal and social barriers against assimilation. Several researchers have pointed out that the burden of integration in multilevel governments falls on those with the least means and skills for achieving this, in other words, municipal government. In most European countries, there is a clash between politics in local contexts and in the national sphere. At the town hall level, preference is given to the largest, best organized ethnic group, even though the official ideology states that treatment should not differ according to a person's ethnic origin. The condition to achieve the official principle of equal treatment is that this sub-population should have recognized political rights. France, a country with an iron backbone, is no exception.

The level of national abstraction makes it impossible to reconstruct the specific mechanisms of each context. It is necessary to identify what narrows the path to integration in each particular place and at each specific time. Because a national integration model, if indeed it exists, consists of regional and local variations. In fact, there is conclusive evidence that circumstances dictate and that the municipal integration program responds first to community pressure and then to general declarations. Since they contradict each other, the proclamation tends to get lost. As Massey concluded two decades ago in *Return to Aztlan* and Tribalat remarked in *Cent Ans D'immigration*, one has to seek the mechanisms for assimilation in immigrants' behavior and in the functioning of the institutions where this process takes place.

National observation relativizes but does not refute whereas the comparison of two, well-chosen local contexts reflects the contrasts, in other words, the differences and similarities. Under-employment and the educational treatment of the descendants of a particular ethnic group produces specific mechanisms in every neighborhood. The social and ethnic cracks in assimilation take place in the neighborhood and in well-delimited social spheres

where the ideological liquid solidifies. This rule is verified in Telles and Ortiz' study, when they compare the scope of integration of Mexican Americans in Los Angeles and San Antonio. When times are hard, local societies first modify their treatment of foreigners and then destroy the social links between the natives according to their position on the scale of power. If immigrants have the right to vote, municipal authorities hesitate before they act. Grasping the complexity of integration requires accurate municipal information, in other words, diversifying the levels of statistical information to enable national measurements to take shape. Because although the social profile of Mexican immigrants has not varied much (if this is the case, then it shows that Mexico as a country has done so even less), the context of settlement debunks this profile, turning it into a heterogeneous itinerary for integration. Moreover, local rebellions and racial conflicts contribute to the national and international representation of the migratory phenomenon. Statistical information must be collected and observatories established to follow the various integration trajectories at the regional and local level. It is also at the grass roots level that one should evaluate public policies and their influence on assimilation. Although context is not everything, it is crucial to explaining the instruments that lead to success or failure. And both the evaluation and the observation of integration processes are partially disoriented in multilevel governments. Integration takes place in everyday life and its reflection pales in larger spheres where, at best, they summarize and add what is common, discarding what is peculiar. The municipality is the library of integration, with neighborhoods constituting its display cases.

### *Lived experience and received inheritance*

In immigration, there are events that occur before entry and others that occur once a person is living in the host country. And in order to evaluate both, it is essential to differentiate them in empirical observation, meaning that the most appropriate perspective for analyzing the degree of assimilation is provided by length

of residence. This can in fact be expressed on the basis of two time frames. One is generational, the age at which one's immigrant status is confirmed and the other is the period he has lived in. In the first time frame, age of arrival and family support are crucial. In the second, transformations in the host society determine the trajectories and pace of integration. Behaviors evolve throughout generations and the political, social and cultural calendar.

In the case of offspring of immigrant origin, length of stay coincides with the age of those born in the host society. But in the case of immigrants who arrived when they were children, the crucial factor in the analysis of their integration is the age at which they came under observation, as shown by Tribilat's studies. The research that prompts this reflection consists of a score that combines a longitudinal design, which pursues the same individuals to observe their evolution after living in the United States for thirty-five years and an inter-generational design, in other words, interviews with the offspring that have been raised in the country. The study analyzes the behaviors of two family generations and four specific cohorts or generations since immigration.

The second step in this path towards isolating integration as a choice is the confusion between cohorts as fictitious generations and actual, historical families or generations. Transversal observations of assimilation, at a moment in time, include several generations with various experiences. This vertical analysis combines old immigrants who arrived at more difficult or favorable times with other newer, more recent migratory cohorts that arrived in more favorable legal and material circumstances. By combining them, the analysis of integration as an itinerary confuses the importance of being native-born with that of experience. It erases the mark left by social origins and family capital and the longitudinal impact of a life that has taken place in the host country. A triple approach is required to analyze assimilation: family inheritance, cohort composition and length of residence. In other words, the mark of the generation, the effect of structure and the dregs of experience. The accumulation of family capital among immigrants' descendants has advantages and disadvantages, such as

running out of steam as a result of adjusting to the hierarchical system operating in the host country. In this last case, it is possible to identify the generational effect of resigned socialization. Conversely, a transversal study reveals a mixture of projects and aptitudes of heterogeneous immigrants. This would be the composition or structure effect of this batch of migrants. Lastly, the life cycle and that of the change in the host country provides more or less opportunities for immigrants and therefore, an uneven rate of integration. This is the impact of the time they have spent as immigrants.

The scientific consensus based on the approach used in *Generations of Exclusion* shows how inappropriate instantaneous observations are for analyzing assimilation. These transversal cuts give rise, particularly at adverse times such as the present, to subjectivities that attribute exclusion to a lack of will and attitude on the part of immigrants and to the establishment of national hierarchies that ignore changes in the composition and the time they have experienced. Moreover, they overlook the fact that inclusion and exclusion are not processes that take place in one direction or involve a single actor. This happens when the authorities implement a measure that affects those that are there, those that overcame the situation and those that may succumb in the future. A common example in the Spanish, French and American case is to periodically attack illegal immigrants. They usually fail to notice the fact that by so doing they attack those that are alone and those that are accompanied, those who are suffering today and those that did so in the past. When government measures are able to link the different times in immigration, it is a sign that they have struck the core of integration and belong to its reversal.

### *When does Ethnic Origin Fade? When does Nationality Take Root?*

In Europe, ever since the time of Auschwitz, “population” is “raceless”. To be more specific, it does not officially belong to a particular race; yet ethnic origin certainly appears when registers and information is provided by private institutions. We saw it in the

case of France and we have witnessed it in other European countries. The inaccurate estimates of the number of gypsies in various European countries and their racial treatment constitute an eloquent example of this silence. Many debates on integration hide behind the categories of foreigner and immigrant, in other words, nationality as a stamp or birthplace as a brand. Classification by nationality, which predominates in official European statistics, imposes an ideology of state domination and difference of rights between nationals and foreigners. This gives rise to racial perspectives, never explicitly admitted, of superiority.

This classification occurs in a country with a multilevel government such as Spain and a strongly centralized one such as France. In the former, blood right prevails in popular culture and historical memory, in other words, they preserve the awareness of a country of emigration with a racial ideological substrate. Conversely, what prevails in the latter is the illusion of republican equality based on *jus solis*, on equity based on the fact of having been born in the same country. And this label of foreignness is not a good guide to analyzing immigration and even less so for evaluating the degree of integration into its various aspects. And it is not useful because it obscures linguistic and cultural differences, not to mention the social differences between foreigners within the same nation-state. They confuse identity and nationality when in fact, identities and passports are tools that operate within different frameworks. The condition of foreignness does not, by definition or intentionally, acknowledge heterogeneity. It is a category that hampers the analysis of integration.

In the introduction to *Fair France*, Tribalat reflects on how acceptable (rather than appropriate) it is to use nationality as an approach to immigration during the period of recent, intense flows. They come from a country and one assumes that those what will come are equally different. In other words, heterogeneity remains the same throughout this period. But once the waves die down and the years have gone by, and another inflow of this same nationality appears, it is not useful to continue stating that the composition of this flow has not varied in fifteen years. It is even more

mistaken to think that as settlement increases, births proliferate and immigrants inevitably become inhabitants, or to think that their nationality imposes the same strategy of assimilation. Foreignness appears as a nearly geological condition and one that is therefore incapable of describing the dynamics and variety of the experiences of integration. But in addition to foreigners and immigrants, and this is important for analyzing integration, there is a category of nationals derived from immigration. The offspring or population of foreign descent. The population of immigrant origin, born in the host country yet with a father or mother of another nationality. Those that were born inside yet are foreigners on the outside, “racialized” as Telles and Ortiz would say, form the crux of this analysis of generational assimilation.

Indeed, nationality can change overnight; all one has to do is to become naturalized in the host country. Ethnic origin is more persistent and includes more configurations and degrees of intensity. Ethnic identity fades with family succession but over time, in other words, it can rise from the ashes of political and cultural circumstances like a phoenix. Either as a recreation of a life style or as a reaction for improving conditions of existence, it expresses a need in numerous circumstances. In fact, nationality has a utilitarian as well as a sentimental dimension. The foreign immigrant adopts it although this does not mean that he feels it, it is simply useful to him. This dual aspect means that adoption or naturalization depends as much on what is offered by the host state as on the punishment exacted by the sending state. Conversely, the ethnic brand is more symbolic, a means of living and of being acknowledged.

The link between ethnic origin and nationality is by no means simple, especially when it is enveloped by the generation and lived experiences. Assimilation requires a certain ethnic molding which implies a partial transfer of symbolic value from ethnic identity to national identification. The difficulty of this reconciliation lies in the fact that the loss of original identity is not offset by what naturalization provides in the host country. Hence the different generational recreations of ethnic attachment according to the degree of

exclusion. Dual nationality would be the result of the coexistence between these two sources of inherited and voluntary identity.

### *Meaningful Data and Propagandistic Stocktaking*

Official data on immigration are usually full of disintegrating, discriminating concepts. An example that speaks for itself in the European case is the legal separation between immigrants from the EU and from outside the EU. Foreigners with EU status have already advanced a great deal along the path to integration. Obviously not everything is solved by the change of status, as borne out by the social discrimination suffered by Rumanians in Spain, yet they have made significant progress. On the legal scale that provides access to citizens' integration, the lowest rung is occupied by undocumented workers, followed by those with authorization to reside in the country within the non-EU regime with permits of varying duration, ranging from initial to permanent. This is where the rise to legal equality of the immigrant who was not born in the right place stops. Admission to the EU-regime is the wedding present for marrying a European, and it places the foreigner in a more advantageous position until he transfers his formal identity through naturalization. This is the top rung of the ladder, which can be reached by foot or more quickly, by elevator. But that is not our task here but rather to show that behind the statistical classifications, there is discrimination by nationality meaning that the internal heterogeneity of immigrants is lost.

We have seen that policies and, therefore, statistics are designed to control flows and emphasize nationality as a mold for cultural hierarchy. Conversely, they place virtually no importance on length of stay, age of arrival and the trajectory followed in the host country. In other words, in official statistics, the transversal reference predominates over longitudinal dynamics. In short, since integration as a process is not a priority, it is therefore not carefully measured. The burden of integration falls on an abstract idea which is the nation-state, rather than a concrete aspect which is the length of the stay and the generational experience. Admin-

istration therefore measures the paperwork carried out and the cases dealt with rather than the trajectories of persons of foreign origin. Integration also requires the coordination of horizontal and vertical information between ministerial departments of the same level and other more decentralized ones. It is difficult for central, regional and local administrations to exchange information and even more so for the information gathered to be comparable and capable of being accumulated.

This lack of reliable valid data, in other words, data accurately measured and significant for integration, is the result of the lack of conviction that this should be the main task of immigration policies in the host countries. Integration is almost exclusively the responsibility of the immigrant and the civil society in which he settles. The state withdraws and leaves its sphere of intervention to voluntary organizations in the third sector. Hence the importance of studying the organization of sentiments that are favorable or unfavorable to immigration and the commercialization of the latter.

Finally, it remains the disagreement between government parties over integration indicators and the limits and costs of assimilation. Government stocktaking distorts migratory data to such an extent that they become unintelligible and difficult to interpret, by concealing denominators, mixing sources and perverting concepts. A current example in the 2008 crisis is the concept of return and ways of measuring it. This has three different definitions. The most genuine, accurate one is of a person who returns to his country of origin with the aim of remaining there after having spent a long time in another country. This return may be voluntary or assisted. Then there is the perverted meaning of return which is, in fact, the expulsion of irregular immigrants. Expulsion with a varying degree of coercion and costs. And thirdly, there is the return to their country of the kind currently being proposed to Rumanians in Spain, which, in practice, is tantamount to *circular migration* within the EU. Another example is the calculation of illegal immigration which, depending on who does the calculations, doubles or is reduced without the slightest

qualm or indications about the method used or the source used to make the calculation. The ideology surrounding regularization or amnesties and the discrimination expressed in the files by nationality is a way of identifying governments' action and their respect for people's rights. An even more worrying sign is the widespread attacks on mixed marriages and the fertility of immigrant women. There is a widespread accusation that immigrants marry and procreate for the sole purpose of acquiring residence or nationality. Within the space of three decades, marriage and the fertility of mixed marriages have shifted from welcome indicators of integration to criminal acts. Readers should recall that there are benefits in all marriages.

In short, social scientists must continue to produce information on migrants' integration. By pushing in two critical directions: towards the authorities so that they compile this information in non-party institutes and in administrative records, regardless of their level and aptitude. And by creating, through research conducted with public and private funds, a body of data and indicators that will contribute to the follow-up of this demand in migratory policies, since integration actions may also be carried out within the organization of emigration and return.

### *The Deadlines for Integration*

We have seen that with its ways of verifying the processes and theoretical perspectives, this research combines agreements on both continents but we should now examine its rather worrying findings. Because although it is an accepted fact that integration requires time, after reading *Generations of Exclusion*, the question is, why does it take so long? What lies behind its shortcomings and failures? Telles and Ortiz's research measures the deadlines and the results are rather frustrating. Although over a century has elapsed, traces of subordination remain. There have been four or more generations since immigration and persons of immigrant origin continue to accumulate in large proportions at the bottom of the social scale. How long will this exclusion continue?

Assimilation has certainly advanced more in some areas than others. This progress has contributed to mitigate the radical questioning of the theory and dominated the overall perspective regarding events and their explanation. A journey forward in the sense that, with time, it will become like this, just as we thought. Obviously, scratching at the surface in a way that does not get to the root of the theory, fails to provide any consolation for the actual situation. The overall evaluation leaves a great deal to be desired, hence the nicknames and variations researchers have been forced to add to the global approach. It is sensible to regard integration as a process but it is not comforting to think of it as something that will never happen. It is an issue that must not be allowed to rest in the darkness of time. And this is precisely what has been done. It has been left for the following generation, and in the hands of those who have neither the competence nor the skill to achieve it.

### *Why Has the Task of Integration Been Put off?*

The governance of immigration and its integration have been subjected to employers' demands and voters' attitudes. Economic cycles and electoral shifts do not always coincide and above all, do not fit immigrants' projects or behavior. Moreover, they tend to contradict each other, since their preferences are significantly and increasingly different. Certain businessmen offer them low salaries and several voters prefer to have them excluded from the welfare state, whereas most immigrants wish for upward social mobility and inclusion in democracy. The forces of exclusion are more powerful, as borne out by this research. Governments adopt a policy that is midway between the demands of some and the will of others. They use the key of the law and naturalization to control flows, access to welfare and the right to vote. They select and submerge or legalize and expel immigrants according to the double standard of the economy and social costs. But legislation and its implementation are fragile tools in comparison with harsh economic forces, immigrants' resistance and

the forcefulness of the electoral shift. Let us quickly review five answers to the demands of businessmen, voters and immigrants. These answers underpin the delay and relative or profound failure of integration.

Employees are concerned about flows while voters feel uncomfortable about social inclusion. Governments mediate between these two requests by regulating the flows based on temporality and the rapid adjustment of conjunctures. But speed is incompatible with security. Temporary ones remain while the inertia of flows fails to reflect the brusqueness of a migratory cut or pause. The clash between immigrants' behavior and the demands for control has two consequences, namely permanence and irregularity. The former requires actions to promote integration while the latter prevents them.

The first clue is the contempt of the *changes that have occurred in the migratory project*. These changes are derived as much from the immigration policies that affect the regulation of flows and from the behavior of immigrants that confront these controls. One of the results of these policies has been the cultural and social selection of immigration. Another has been the increase in the degree to which they have settled and the stagnation of social promotion. In other words, their degree of settlement and the expectations of promotion associated with this life project have been underestimated. From the moment a person emigrates, both the family and the idea of settlement are present in the host country. Family emigration and installation are growing realities, yet immigration policies are going in the opposite direction. This divorce can probably be explained by the fact that policies are based on public opinion preferences and underestimate the consistency of the migratory project. The Welfare State is shrinking, while the population demanding its coverage is expanding. The electorate's preference for temporary, subordinate immigration is reflected, among other things, by the belief that they are over-protected and abuse social benefits. Thus, integration is hampered by the fact that social policies are based on the tastes and prejudices of voters and rulers. At the end of the day, consensus between representa-

tives and voters is based on stigma. In other words, legislation and voting is carried out on the basis of stereotypes or rather surveys detect what official discourse constructs.

We have already examined the change in the nature of immigration. This real change, based on evidence of the lengthening in immigrants' stay, has led to a *distorted perception*. Public opinion prefers immigrants to leave during difficult times. They were, and not only in the authorities' eyes, but civil society's too, circumstantial, visiting or guest immigrants. This perception was justified by their ideal project of leaving the country, crossing the border or simply arriving at their destination. The fact that they were temporary workers made it unnecessary to devote human and material resources to their integration. The evolution of residence permits and the resistance over time of irregular or undocumented workers has proved quite the opposite. They are not guided by a shifting project but rather by the firm will to remain in the host society. They wish to grow within this society and have the same opportunities as everyone else. There are three irrefutable facts regarding this. One is the increase in authorizations for permanent residence, the second is resistance in irregular situations and the third is the acquisition of nationality. These three facts constitute proof of their decision to remain and their will to become citizens.

This distorted perception is compounded by the false idea or excuse according to which, in order to be possible it needs, as Tribalat points out, a *pause in migration*. Flaws in the degree of control exerted would explain the delays and shortcomings in the integration of those that are already here. The assumption that there can be no integration without a pause in the flow is false, as borne out by the number of immigrant populations that continue to be excluded although the flow dried up a long time ago. This obsession with the arithmetical regulation of movements is impossible to achieve and insufficient. It is unrealistic to believe that the amount and composition of flows can be exactly adjusted to the mental and working circumstances of the host country. And neither is this success in assimilation ensured when flows are

interrupted or reduced as shown by the comparative evolution of Mexican Americans in San Antonio and Los Angeles.

Integration does not begin when foreigners have spent several years residing in the country and achieved stable legal status. The idea that assimilation should only be practiced with permanent rather than temporary residents and legal rather than undocumented workers has muddied the waters. Action must be taken from the first wave of immigrants and without hesitation until the flow dries up and even afterwards since it might revive. There is no point in delaying integration with the vain hope that they will be temporary or that they will return when the going gets tough. Integration requires working with a perspective of settlements and citizenship among permanent immigrants and with a perspective of rights and protection among temporary workers. Integration already exists in the origin of flows, in the first wave and in the sequence followed until legal stability is achieved.

Two more mistakes from the sphere of politics have influenced this delay in assimilation. One is *actions from multilevel governments* with a lack of coordination between their skills and rhythms. The other is the difficulty in coordination caused by administrative decentralization. The predominance of a policy of controlling flows means that central governments have come to be regarded as the only repositories of responsibilities for immigration. The decentralization of education and health policies, and even the transfer of powers to select and train workers to the regional governments, has overlooked the fact that although integration takes place in one neighborhood, school and locality, its target population moves.

The bulk of the budget and training must focus on municipalities, since Town Halls are the public places where the main aspects of integration take place: education, work, language, the neighborhood and cultural practices. Nevertheless, budgetary and technical skills are located at the regional and national levels. In a multilevel state, although the central government carries out functions of coordination and related to equity, it is not the best place to promote integration. Local administration lacks the

human means and technical capacities to meet the costs of immigrants' integration. The shadow of exclusion has lengthened generationally, since it has been left almost entirely to the civil society. The underlying idea is that the differences will be reabsorbed with the passage of time due to the influence of the majority of society. In any case, some specific, public intervention will be carried out. The underlying assumption of abandoning these public responsibilities is that the host society is capable of integrating and metabolizing the particularities of minorities. Thus, the economic costs of integration will drop and electoral returns will be negotiated.

The mixture of natives and foreigners is expressed in this strategy that naturalizes integration. All one has to do is to let time go by so that immigrants will gradually lose their specificities. But this mixture is not on native society's wish list. It is not an inevitable, irrepressible desire of the cultural communities that form a nation-state. The fact is that although over four generations have already gone by, a large proportion of immigrants and their offspring are still on the first rung of the social ladder, which is too long. This book shows that the white population discriminates against Mexican-Americans and their offspring for a long time. This way to proceed, rather than assimilating, racializes, thereby preventing the social promotion and political inclusion of the country's largest minority.

Integration is a form of social life, a culture of interactions that impregnates every facet of a well-organized society. From the most materialistic to the symbolic dimensions, through public policies. Immigrants' integration also has a social place, from which it fits into the host society. In other words, immigrants are integrated into a possible place according to accredited characteristics and they do not do so in a block nor are they assimilated into a formally unique and homogeneous "non-place". If one accepts that assimilation is a process that has its limits, whose margins change insofar as society as a whole alters, one wonders whether the initial definition is still valid one, two and up to four generations later. The theory of an industrial society focused on integrating

immigrants into the working class is difficult to uphold nowadays. And the European view of assimilation as the reabsorption of cultural specificity is even more out of date. Post-industrial societies are highly ethnically and socially fragmented. Thus a modest definition of integration could be one of “dynamic belonging”, which does not cause a break with one’s community of origin. The will to form part of a social group and to be culturally recognized in it appears to describe the reality of post-industrial societies more accurately.

Integration has been the “snap course” of migratory policies, as regards both emigration and immigration. It is a subject that was passed without any economic or institutional effort in the public sphere. The immigrant provided his expectations while what the examiner marked with a passing grade was nothing more than hopes. This is a crass error that has been made in public policy programs and practice. Immigrants’ process of assimilation has followed its own (not necessarily natural) course, although its contents have never been the subject of a profound debate in the chambers of democratic representation. What is true is that this omission has been rewarded in the elections. In short, the economic engine of social fragmentation has eradicated the democratic principle from civic cohesion.

*With Your Feet on the Ground and Without  
Losing Your Perspective*

An analysis of the zigzags of integration is attractive in itself and if it is published in Spanish at the same time as *Crack del año ocho* it is doubly so, because of its timeliness. The critical aspect of this scientific research is enhanced by the fact that it is useful in preventing two temptations to which research could succumb at this time of tribulations.

The first risk is to succumb to the blindness of tacticians while the second reaction is to take refuge in the clouds. It is easy to lose your perspective when you are deeply involved in the problems the crisis entails for migrants and the obstacles it puts in the way

of developing integration policies. A research project linked to a specific point in time runs the risk of leading to a short-sighted political assessment. It may become a more or less decent attempt to provide solutions without stopping to think about the repercussions of what is done today. Immigration policies, specifically integration policies, do not augur new models. Governments react to crises with defensive, short-term measures. Electoral xenophobia increases insofar as immigrants react as a structure. Their determination to settle is reflected in the evolution of internal movements, circular displacements and the condition of returns but also in the demands to legalize undocumented workers.

At the other extreme, there is a temptation to stand above events, which erodes the capacity to listen and to deal with reality. In this frame of mind, a person scorns novelty and imagines that immigrants' reaction to the current crisis will be a repetition of the past. It is vital to avoid both temptations and to investigate new aspects without losing sight of where we come from and what the long-term repercussion might be. Social scientists walk down a corridor whose walls are made up of one line of politicians and another of journalists. It is vital to be aware of this because they are professionals who are firmly established in the present but often uprooted from the past and disinterested in the future. However, one cannot deny the fact that both groups of professionals produce social reality, in other words they pass laws and form perceptions. If we are up in the clouds, we will remain deaf and indifferent to shortsightedness and exaggerations.

A very recent example of this construction of reality in both Spain and Mexico is the return of immigrants, which has been attributed to the crisis. Although poorly defined and measured, this return has given rise to party squabbles and legal norms. Predictably, this highly publicized return has more of a political than an economic basis and it has probably not taken place on a vast scale, although it does not lack social significance. In any case, free or voluntary returns are more numerous and have a different composition from those included in official programs. And this reflects two vital calculations or strategies: the one adopted by the

family in the host country and the one that relies on the family in the place of origin. Untangling the threads of migrants' return requires accurate tools for observation.

Tactical players focus on impregnating the present without thinking about future repercussions. And so politics and speculations regarding the return in times of crisis have the ideological bias discussed earlier in this reflection whereby immigration is reduced to a circumstantial phenomenon. However, it should not be forgotten that adaptation is not complete between the economy, flows, elections and the process of social integration. Current actions dominate the policies of flows and compromise those involving integration. This narrow perspective makes it impossible to measure what must be evaluated, namely the extent to which integration fails to a different extent according to who and what is involved and where. Revealing appearances (the brake on integration) is a task of social science, which requires finding out what happened in the past since memory is the key to the present. The social scientist is critical because he identifies what does not fit, what creaks in the structure and derails integration. It judges on the basis of method and depth, rather than ideology and haste. Criticism is therefore not obliged to offer alternatives nor does it have a political hue. Instead, it is consubstantial with although not exclusive to sociological activity.

The collapse of employment has struck immigrants with precarious jobs particularly hard. Precarious means weak as regards their civic status and unstable in the way they earn their livelihood. In other words, they have diminished rights and occupations. They are threatened by unemployment and therefore forced into irregularity and subject to expulsion.

Most of the measures being adopted by the governments of receiving countries focus on flows, rather than integration. A few European examples are given below. External and internal controls are reinforced while the legal protection of the detainees and those that have been expelled is reduced. Prison sentences for illegal entry or residence are increased while repatriations to nowhere are on the rise. Requirements for family reunification are

stiffened while return is encouraged. Immigration policies focus on controlling the immigration flow rather than on revalidating educational qualifications which would encourage many to boost their productivity. No efforts are being made to legalize those that are already here, which would enable them to change their sector of activity. Making immigrants illegal is tantamount to failing to give credit to a viable project. It delays, impoverishes and socially mutilates efforts to overcome this crisis.

In these circumstances, *Generations of Exclusion*'s rearview mirror highlights its timeliness. Because not all immigrant populations are exposed to the inclemency of the weather to the same extent. They do not benefit from a boom in the economy to the same extent nor are they equally affected by crises. The crisis is ethnically asymmetrical, arrhythmic in the way it punishes either gender and socially unclear. This research project sets about explaining the nuances of exclusion, showing that integration is written on wavy lines and that time is not an infallible remedy. The fact is that the assimilation of immigrants and their offspring does not always advance in a straight line. Sometimes it revolves around the identity circle, at others it gets lost in the legal labyrinth and it sometimes goes down a blind educational and work alley, bumping into a wall it cannot jump over. It should be clear by now that this is not a conjunctural research project, which is precisely why it includes them. It shows how the vulnerability of Mexican immigrants has been passed down over time and through successive generations. And this precariousness has continued both during periods of abundance and periods of economic adversity. It is true that this poisonous trend has occurred at different paces and with different nuances according to the dimension explored, particularly in the sphere of education and employment, but not only in these aspects.

This perspective brings the two continents together because the failure of integration is similar in both Los Angeles and Paris. And it links social scientists from complementary disciplines. It debunks the myth of cold figures (revealing the omissions in statistics and the distortion of propaganda) and dulls the aura of the mistaken impression of reality (assimilation, integration). It

makes the dimensions and limits of assimilation more accurate. In short, it introduces caution into space and concern into time. It is a study of enormous scientific scope that is methodologically accurate and substantially critical that fits this time of intuitions and losses perfectly.

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