

A decline in diversity? Migration in Burgos (Spain) before and after the crisis

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This communication examines migration dynamics in the city of Burgos (northern Spain) in the period before and after the economic crisis which started in 2008. Burgos is a mid-sized city which experienced remarkable population growth in the 20th century. Demographic changes in the 20th century, nevertheless, were rooted in the ancient history of Burgos. Burgos was the capital of Castille (*Caput Castellae*) in medieval times and became the capital of Spain when the Catholic Kings united the different reigns in the 15th century. The medieval character of Burgos is still noticeable in the city center, as one of the main landmarks giving identity to the city is the Cathedral, recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

In the 20th century, Burgos gained notoriety when the Rebel Army choose the city as its capital given the inability to occupy Madrid at the beginning of the war. The recovered status of capital brought many people to settle in Burgos, mostly military men and clergy, consolidating a building style, based on collective residences, which was to prevail in the city for the rest of the century.

The 1960's brought the so-called "desarrollismo" (developmentalism) to Burgos. Diez (2003) has pointed out that residential segregation began to increase at that time, as the new factory workers, formerly countryside peasants, settled in newly built mass housing states in the periphery while the bourgeoisie remained in the inner city. Burgos consolidated an urban configuration that Kesteloot has called "dramatic city" (Kesteloot, 2005). The independent town of Gamonal, located immediately west of the city center, was incorporated to Burgos in 1955 and from 1964 onwards became the main hub of settlement for factory workers. That was the age of fordist accumulation, made possible by thousands of internal migrants settling in the building blocks of Gamonal.

Internal migration was to be substituted by foreign migration from 1990 onwards. Slowly but constantly, Spanish factory workers were replaced by the newly arrived migration. Moroccans were the first foreign community in the city, but already in the mid-1990's, Eastern Europeans began to arrive. These were mainly Romanians and Bulgarians. The latter became one of the main foreign communities in Burgos (Ibañez, 2004). A third wave of migrations, in the late 1990's, was constituted by Latin Americans. Latin American migration, unlike African or Eastern European migration, is mostly feminine and works mainly in domestic service, care services, and industrial cleaning.

Among Latin Americans, the main two communities have traditionally been Ecuadorians and Colombians. Ecuador was the main sending country from Latin America to Spain in the 21st century. Latin American communities were among the first to create associations of mutual help and cultural groups. An Argentine association also appeared. Most foreign migrants settled in Gamonal, as the center was unaffordable for most of them.

The rise in the number of migrants was exponential during the period 1999-2008. Prosperity meant that the city was growing and, in fact, Burgos became one of the fastest expanding mid-sized city in Spain (Ganau & Vilagrassa, 2003). The early years of the 21st century were a time of urban projects. Two of them would have long lasting consequences for the future of the city. The new train station, which was located in a developing area of the periphery of the city, and the boulevard projected to encircle the city and forever change the landscape of the working class Gamonal.

However, the devastating impact of the worldwide economic crisis starting in 2008 brought to a halt both urban development and the growth of diversity brought upon by migration. Several migrant associations disappeared, as the funding which had been available for them in the period before the crisis dwindled. The only mediation between migrants and locals that remained was that of local NGO's such as Burgos Acoge and Fundacion Cauce. The case of Fundacion Cauce ("cauce" means stream in Spanish, is paradigmatic. Fundacion Cauce had moved to bigger premises and was organizing short courses for migrants to acquire skills. However, the crisis reduced their main source of funding through "calls for projects" by the local savings banks. Meanwhile migrants started returning to their home countries, especially those from Latin America, as the region was recovering from their own crises. Today, it is mainly Africans and Eastern Europeans that are still arriving in Burgos, but the diversity of the city is noticeably declining and faces an uncertain future.

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