

Title

Immigrant children. An inquiry about teenage children of Ecuadorian and Moroccan immigrants in a quarter of Seville (Spain)

Name and affiliation of the author

Castellani Simone

Anthropology department - University of Seville (Spain)

Extended Abstract

The so-called "second generation" of immigrants is quite a new phenomenon in European countries such as Spain, which have only been receptors of international immigration from 20 years ago on. In these last years, the number of children to parents that had experienced migration have increased in Spain. This group, that most authors tend to present in a fragmented way (one, one and half and second generation of immigrants), show a lot of varieties. It is also quite hard to characterize in general terms, since they seem to be a heterogeneous group unlikely to define itself as a group. If we try to classify them as "migrants", we will not describe a reality of people that have never -or only partially- experienced migration. A lot of these actors were born in a country of migration of their parents, or had arrived there before they were 3 or 6 years old, so they did not truly live the decision of migrating. In order to avoid falling in the risk of generalization, and being conscious of the experience of researches in the older country of migration, we have decided to opt for a qualitative approach, addressing this topic in depth within a small area.

We have wanted to carry out the investigation in Andalusia (southern Spain) and, after a consultation of official statistic data pertaining to both Civil and Labour registration offices, we got to the conclusion that it would be wise to start the inquire in Seville. Specifically, we have chosen the administrative district of Seville, which contains the widest nationality range of residents: the "Macarena" district. The choice of a delimited zone has enabled the in-depth study of the social networks of our units of observations: young immigrant (age ranging from 12 to 17 years, which correspond to compulsory secondary school; untutored children excluded), their families, the members of the education system and the network of both Spanish and foreign NGOs. We have also decided to make a comparison based upon the ethnic variable, thus addressing the two most represented nationalities in this district: Ecuadorian and Moroccan.

The study has been developed with a qualitative methodology, using techniques of **participative observation**,

in-depth interviews and focus groups. We have made a 6 months-long participative observation in the quarter, with direct implication in the activities of associations and cultural mediators who work with young people. We have also made an activity of observation in compulsory secondary schools in the district, assisting to both didactic and non-didactic activities. We have approximately made 60 in-depth interviews to the young children of immigrants (40), to the educational operators in the schools (teachers, mediators, psychologists...), to the operators belonging to quarter associations. In the interviews made to the children, we had introduced *ex ante* the gender variables, thus interviewing half male and half female within the two ethnic groups.

The qualitative approach has permitted to observe and register the insertion of the youngsters in the social networks of the quarter and in the social transnational network of their families. In other terms, we have focused on the everyday life of this particular actors of the quarter. Through the direct observation and narration of their life, it has been possible to comprehend the construction of their identities and representations in different daily situations. These experiences have been crossed with social variables, such as gender, the age of arrival to the country, the decision of migration of the parents, the instruction and work conditions (before and after migration) of the family, the religion practiced, the language spoken at home. This way, it has been possible to elaborate over a *continuum* some categories that assemble the principal way of life that this people take in reference for their ambivalent condition. The extremity of *continuum* is the total agreement with the original culture of the parents and, on the other side, the total refusal of this culture.

The problem of "second generation", has been studied in depth in the countries of "old" international immigration. But, provided it is possible to establish some comparison, we have to admit that the contest has changed in the last 30 years. In the countries that have the longest history of migration, this phenomenon has been developed within a fordist labour system, that required a particular type of worker: spatially and temporally static. Immigrant children have been brought up in this "stability" context: for example, in France, Great Britain or Germany. The effects of extension of globalization in the last 30 years, have also raised interest in international migrations. The material changes, for example, occurred in the labour market in the "Western countries" after the fallen of the indefinite progress myth in the 70s, has produced a delocalization of the hard production in third countries and a change to the slim toyotist production. So, it has changed the profile of the ideal worker: a flexible worker in place and time that has to get adapted to the requirement of the "just

in time" production. In this change, the migrants to the "western" country have been penalized by this situation. This kind of labour market, along with legal measures promoted by different states in order to contain migration fluxes, make a regularization of their position quite difficult, and often increase the number of workers in irregular and unprotected labour markets. In this context, how the immigrants' children, that have normally more rights (acquired with born or nationalization...) can effectively exercise these rights, when the parents didn't have, often, any political, civil and social rights? This is one of the questions that our inquiry opens.

The analysis of empirical data has been developed within the multiculturalist paradigm. This perspective values the manifestation of cultural difference in a public sphere as a resource. If we agree with this approach, we will have to realize that the first step to achieve a multicultural society is the elimination of differences in the access of a civil, social and political rights for all the people that reside in a same place, thus overcoming distinctions based upon nationality, gender and social-work conditions. In particular, the principal issue is the necessity to separate citizenship from nationality, for the elaboration of a new notion of citizenship. The immigrant children are members that experiment everyday, in their condition of ambivalence, the difficulties of the multicultural society and we have to elaborate strategies, in the different frames of everyday life to attempt to harmonize the different cultures and to find the contact points.

In this work, we considered the category "immigrant" as a construction that was born from a constructed distinction between We/Others. From this perspective, we can deduce that definitions like "second generation" of immigrant, risk to generate a form of "tagging". In our idea, we have to treat these people as new subjects that experiment the difficulties of constructing their identities, living in the same place and in the same time with a different culture.

Finally, we have used the network analysis. We agree to a transnational interpretation of migration. In this perspective, the decision of migration is not intended only as an individual choice but, often, like an origin group choice. This group builds linking networks in a country of arrival, as well as a regular interchange with the group of origin. In this perspective, it has been interesting to observe the roles that the immigrant's children play in a network of family culture and in networks outside the family. From the observation about how the children of immigrants play and are conditioned within/by these different networks, we have tried to elaborate some categories of choices of identification of this subject.

