The Chinese in Spain

Gladys Nieto*

ABSTRACT

During the past 15 years, the Chinese migrant community in Spain has grown significantly. Originally a small and dispersed population, it now ranks fourth among the migrant groups from non-European Union (EU) countries. Its increasing presence in daily urban life is evident everywhere. Even though the Chinese community has a long history of settlement in Spain, the Spanish population still considers the Chinese as a closed and somewhat mysterious community. References to exaggerated stereotypes and prejudices regarding their activities and social organization can often be overheard in daily conversations. However, China, usually considered exotic and remote, has recently assumed greater importance in Spain's foreign policy. Thus, the Spanish Government has drawn up the Asia-Pacific Framework Plan for 2000-2002 as part of its international policy considerations, thereby extending its interests to include areas well beyond its traditional foreign policy focus on Latin America. The Government's objectives are to expand its economic relations with Asia, to enhance trade and tourism with the area, expand the development cooperation with China, the Philippines, and Viet Nam – countries defined as top priorities for the Spanish Government – and to reinforce linguistic and cultural ties with these countries (Bejarano, 2002). In support of the Asia-Pacific Framework Plan, the *Casa Asia* (House of Asia) was established in Barcelona in 2002, an institution created to organize academic and artistic activities in order to promote the knowledge of the region among Spaniards, and to foster political, economic, and cultural relations with Asia.

The Government intends to pursue two important objectives related to the increasing commitments it is seeking to establish with China, and which are also of relevance to the overseas Chinese as the principal social actors involved. First, the strengthening of commercial exchanges with the People's Republic of China (PRC) are likely to benefit import-export activities among the Chinese migrants, and be supported by their knowledge and practical experience of the respective social environments. Second, the dissemination of information on Spain is expected to establish and maintain stronger links in both directions. In the near future, these initiatives may also be instrumental

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in increasing the movement of people between China and Spain. Besides these primary objectives, the initiative pursues another important aim – the promotion of the social integration of the Chinese migrant community in the country.

This paper addresses these issues, including data sources and their availability on Chinese migrants in Spain, the relevant local legal framework and how it influences the development of the Chinese migrant group, its socio-demographic composition, and migratory patterns. Finally, it addresses the changes in their economic activities.

INTRODUCTION

During the past 15 years, the Chinese migrant community in Spain has grown significantly. Originally a small and dispersed population, it now ranks fourth among the migrant groups from non-European Union (EU) countries. Its increasing presence in daily urban life is evident everywhere. Even though the Chinese community has a long history of settlement in Spain, the Spanish population still considers the Chinese as a closed and somewhat mysterious community. References to exaggerated stereotypes and prejudices regarding their activities and social organization can often be overheard in daily conversations. However, China, usually considered exotic and remote, has recently assumed greater importance in Spain's foreign policy. Thus, the Spanish Government has drawn up the Asia-Pacific Framework Plan for 2000-2002 as part of its international policy considerations, thereby extending its interests to include areas well beyond its traditional foreign policy focus on Latin America. The Government's objectives are to expand its economic relations with Asia, to enhance trade and tourism with the area, expand the development cooperation with China, the Philippines, and Viet Nam – countries defined as top priorities for the Spanish Government – and to reinforce linguistic and cultural ties with these countries (Bejarano, 2002). In support of the Asia-Pacific Framework Plan, the *Casa Asia* (House of Asia) was established in Barcelona in 2002, an institution created to organize academic and artistic activities in order to promote the knowledge of the region among Spaniards, and to foster political, economic, and cultural relations with Asia.

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DATA SOURCES

The availability and distribution of data on the foreign population by Spanish public bodies has been greatly improved over the last few years. The most comprehensive publication is the *Statistical Yearbook on Foreigners* which collects data obtained from different ministries and departments in charge of issuing documents for foreigners, such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The data assembled generally covers the following categories: residents, workers, students, asylum seekers, and applicants for Spanish citizenship. The worker category naturally overlaps with that of residents. According to Spanish law, a foreigner who has obtained a work contract or has fulfilled the necessary requirements to engage in self-employed activities must apply for a work and residence permit separately. The most common case is when a non-national holds a residence but not a work permit and involves to two situations: foreigners with sufficient means to make their living in Spain, such as retired persons and pensioners, and those who entered the country under family reunification procedures, e.g. as dependent relatives. Under Spanish law, the close relatives of an immigrant applying for family reunification receive a residence permit valid for the same time period as the claimant, but not a work permit. If they also want to work, they have to apply to the Spanish authorities for an individual work permit.

The residence permit can be either temporary (between 90 days and five years) or permanent. The family reunion procedure has been widely used by foreign settlers in Spain. However, official statistical data do not distinguish between applicants for (i.e. residents) and receivers of (i.e. newly arrived dependent migrants) the right to family reunification and the distinction between the two is blurred. In fact, the major categories covered by the data supplied by the *Yearbook* are residents and workers, who are divided according to origin, sex, and age, and their territorial distribution in Spain. These statistics do not offer any more detailed information such as the migrant's place of birth (village, district, province) – although this would be useful to be able to distinguish between "old" and "new" regions of migrant origins. And, of course, data compiled in the *Yearbook* only concern regular migrants, leaving a large segment untouched.

Recently, however, the Municipality Census became an additional useful instrument to obtain more reliable figures regarding the foreign population generally, regular and irregular. The Census records permanent dwellers in all administrative locations, covering villages, neighbourhoods, and cities. To be registered in the Municipality Census, people are only required to produce identity papers (e.g. passport or ID) and evidence of their entitlement to live at the stated address (e.g. a lease, or water, light, or gas supply receipts). According to the Spanish Law on Foreigners 8/2000, the registration of foreigners in the Municipality Census is necessary to obtain a health card. This has induced some segments of the irregular foreign population to register in the Census in the expectation that the registration could be useful to certify previous residence in Spain in the event of future amnesties. Therefore, the Municipality Census allows the Spanish authorities a partial view of the numbers of irregular migrants at the local administrative level.

The available domestic research on the Chinese in Spain is rather uneven. Even though there are two doctoral dissertations in anthropology (Beltrán, 1996; Nieto, 2001a) and many published articles (Beltrán, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Nieto, 2001b) dealing with the social, economic, and political organization of Chinese migrants both in Spain and the PRC, some gaps still remain. First, there is an excessive concentration on certain aspects such as the historical development of the Chinese community in Spain, Chinese migrants' integration and education, the PRC nationalist influences on the associative movement, and gender issues (García Mateos, 1994; Beltrán and Sáiz, 2001; Nieto, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002a, 2002b), while less material is available regarding economic and social issues internal to the community itself (Beltrán, 2000; Colectivo IOÉ, 1999). Second, this community is undergoing rapid change, which poses a considerable challenge for specialized researchers. The social segmentation and economic diversification caused by the arrival of new Chinese migrants during the 1990s is leading to numerous communal changes, making the tracking and close study of such processes by researchers difficult. Because official statistics do not provide key facts of information such as data on family reunion procedures, irregular migration, or a migrant's place of origin, relevant missing data must be obtained through fieldwork, personal interviews, and surveys. These are some of the reasons why our knowledge regarding the Chinese in Spain is still fragmentary and in need of improvement.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Chinese migration to Spain is not a recent phenomenon. In fact, its origins go back to the early twentieth century – although some pioneers already arrived in Spain around 1860 and even before (Beltrán, 1997a) – when part of a group of Chinese workers recruited by the French Government during World War I subsequently moved on to other European countries, including Spain. Stories related by

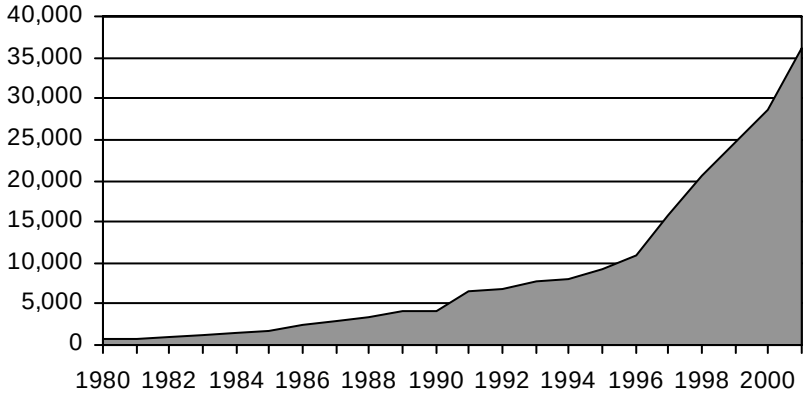
the Chinese community suggest that those were the earliest immigrants from Qingtian who arrived in Spain in the 1920s. This phenomenon may be related to the recruitment of 2,000 contract workers by the local Qingtian Government in 1917, some of whom were sent to Europe (Thunø, 1999). These early pioneers engaged mainly in street peddling, the manufacturing and sale of hand-made goods such as stone carvings, ties, and trinkets. Around that time some vaudeville artists also came to Spain. The pioneers from Qingtian may be said to have prepared the way for future emigration from that province to Europe (Thunø, 1999). In fact, today they form the largest single group among the Chinese migrants in Spain. During the Spanish Civil War, a group of Chinese was actually committed to the defense of the Republican government and joined the International Brigades.

Following the founding of the PRC, some Chinese Christian priests came to Spain through Hong Kong. They were joined by a group of Taiwanese students in the mid-1950s through a bilateral exchange programme signed by Spain and Taiwan. After the PRC and Spain established diplomatic and trade relations in 1973, immediately after the twenty-sixth General Assembly of the United Nations recognized the PRC as the official representative of the Chinese people, a few PRC citizens came to Spain directly from the mainland (Xu, 1999).

However, because of the conditions prevailing at the time both in Spain and in China, Chinese migration to Spain remained scattered and uneven. The situation changed at the beginning of the 1980s in line with transformations occurring in both the countries of origin and of destination. The democratic transition in Spain accelerated the country's economic development and positioned it among the most developed countries in the world. At the same time, the economic opening and reforms in the PRC pursued since 1978 led the country to relax the controls on the mobility of its population, while also raising economic and social expectations in both urban and rural areas and making it easier for Chinese migrants to go abroad. In about two decades Spain had turned from a labour-exporting into a labour-importing country. Yet, it seems contradictory that a country with long-term high unemployment rates (12% to 15%) should be importing labour. The main reason may be the highly segmented nature of Spain's labour market. There are some labour-market segments that Spaniards are unwilling to accept and that are systematically filled by foreign migrants. Following Spain's economic boom in the 1980s, the demand for household services (including for middle-income households) and care providers for the elderly rose sharply. It is here, together with agriculture and construction, all characterized by low wages, insecurity, and poor working conditions, where non-EU migrants can be found (Colectivo IOÉ, 1994). At the beginning of the 1980s, the number of Chinese migrants in Spain was very low, not even reaching 1,000 people (see Figure 1). Chinese migration gradually increased after 1986 following the first amnesty launched by the Spanish Government. The arrival of migrants of other nationalities also accelerated.

FIGURE 1

PRC CHINESE RESIDENT POPULATION IN SPAIN (1980-2001)



Source: National Institute of Statistics, various years; Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, various years; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, various years.

The development of tourism during the 1980s also contributed to the expansion of the Chinese restaurant sector and to the resulting family reunification process and business participation among the Chinese community. The growth of the Chinese community in Spain was also driven by the reactivation of the migration networks established by previous Chinese settlers from Qingtian and the surroundings of Wenzhou municipality in Zhejiang Province. At that time, Spain represented a new and unexploited area open to Chinese migrants to try their luck in trade or commerce. The ethnic community was not large and the internal economic competition not too strong (Beltrán, 1997a). New opportunities became available in a country experiencing an economic takeoff.

The accelerated arrival of new Chinese migrants in the 1990s contributed to the growth of a large and diversified community, characterized not only by the expansion of its economic activities but also by their internal dynamism leading to the creation of different services for their own consumption.

The next section analyses how Spanish migration policies have influenced Chinese migration flows.

SPANISH MIGRATION POLICIES AND AMNESTIES

Up to 1985, Spanish immigration policies were very lax. The Organic Law on Foreigners (OL 7/1985) was the result of external pressure from other European

countries on Spain to adhere to EU legislation in order to restrict immigration from non-EU countries, even though Spain needed foreign workers. One effect of such pressure was reinforced visa control. As of 1991 nationals from the Maghreb countries, including Moroccans, the major migrant group in Spain, had to apply for a visa to enter Spain. Later, some Latin American countries were also subject to sharper controls, including Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia. This was a difficult decision for Spain in view of the cultural and historical links it maintained with Latin American countries (Colectivo IOÉ, 1994).

The 1985 Law on Foreigners was replaced by the Organic Law on Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain and their Social Integration (OL 4/2000 of 11 January, amended by OL 8/2000 of 22 December)[1] which is currently in force. It is also in line with the EU guiding principles to control migration flows, the integration of foreign residents, and the development of countries of origin. To achieve these aims, the Spanish law not only introduced more stringent visa regulations to control migration flows, but also reinforced the penalties for irregular migrants, smugglers, and their facilitators, including deportation (Ruiz de Huidobro, 2001). Recently, human rights organizations have criticized the Spanish Government for its treatment of migrants, especially regarding expulsion procedures (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

In June 2002, the number of regularized Chinese in Spain increased to 42,500. This figure excludes around 1,800 *huaren*, people of Chinese origin who became naturalized Spanish citizens during the last decade, and all irregular migrants. Some Chinese associations mention a figure exceeding 35,000 irregular Chinese migrants, which would imply a community of approximately 80,000 people (CEIICHES, 2002). The high numbers of irregular migrants are not limited to Chinese, but are also applicable to Moroccans, Ecuadorians, Colombians, and others. Whether Chinese migrants are to be regularized depends on the repeated amendments to the Spanish Aliens Law and the duration of their stay in Spain. As a foreign worker in Spain has to have both a residence and a work permit for the first year, the loss of employment during that period means that the work permit cannot be renewed and that the migrant becomes irregular if he remains in Spain. Although the most common illegal entry into Spain is by sea in small boats, most Chinese smugglers resort to entry through airports with student or tourist visas, and then overstay.

In terms of tourist numbers, Spain ranks third after the United States and France; more than 50 million tourist per year visit Spain (Colectivo IOÉ, 1994). As the tourist industry is an extremely important source of income for the country, it is difficult to tighten entry controls, and migrants entering as tourists are well aware of this. There are no official estimates of the numbers of Chinese irregular migrants, but it is possible to infer them by looking at the statistics on regularized migrants following the various amnesties in Spain.

As seen in Figure 1, the number of regularized Chinese rose six-fold during the last decade, from 6,500 to 36,000 in 2001. The different amnesty programmes launched in Spain every four or five years have enabled irregular Chinese migrants to obtain residence permits. However, the annual numbers of regularized Chinese through such amnesties vary. The first one in 1986 is referred to by the Chinese migrant population as the "little amnesty" (*xiao she*) and resulted in a 53 per cent increase in the Chinese population over the previous year. The second amnesty was launched in 1991 and produced a 58 per cent increase in the Chinese population relative to the previous year. At that time, the Chinese living in Portugal, France, and the Netherlands came to Spain to regularize their status (Xu, 1999). However, no precise indication about their numbers is available. Surprisingly, the most recent amnesties organized in 1996 and 2000 resulted in an increase of the regular Chinese population of only 18 and 16 per cent, respectively.

Undoubtedly, the awareness among the Chinese migrant community in Europe of the likelihood of an amnesty being declared every so often in one of the European countries is a potent pull factor (see Ceccagno, this volume). Therefore, an irregular presence in a European country may serve as an intermediary strategic step toward the ultimate objective of obtaining legal status via an amnesty programme.

However, the regularized status achieved through such programmes does not necessarily ensure the maintenance of that status in the long term. In fact, from the 4,153 irregular Chinese migrants who benefited under the 1991 amnesty programme, only 3,281 renewed their permits in 1994 (OECD, 2000). The rest may be assumed to have again drifted into irregularity, or to have left. Although the amnesty programmes help to regularize the status of some Chinese migrants, once these move on to better jobs, their original low-level occupations are picked up by newly arrived irregular migrants (OECD, 2000) who, in turn, hope to be able to benefit from subsequent amnesty programmes. The amnesties launched in Spain initially appeared to be attracting irregular Chinese migrants from other European countries to benefit therefrom. Clearly, the Chinese migration and extended family networks facilitate the presence of Chinese migrants in a variety of countries across Europe. They offer possibilities for members of an extended family to engage in different economic activities and also ensure a high degree of mobility (Nieto, 2002a).

THE QUOTA SYSTEM AND FAMILY REUNIONS

Based on fieldwork observations, another major channel used by the Chinese to obtain a resident permit is the family reunification procedure. As shown in Figure 1, since 1996 there has been a steady rise in the number of Chinese migrants applying for family reunification. Although no detailed information is available through

official statistics, family reunification seems to have contributed significantly to the growth of the Chinese community during the last five years. Family reunification is governed by Article 17, Law OL 8/2000, under which only close relatives such as spouses, children (also adopted children) under age 18, disabled persons if the applicant is their legal representative, and dependent parents may benefit under this procedure. The claimant has to have lived legally in Spain for at least one year and must hold a residence permit valid for at least another year. Moreover, the claimant has to provide evidence of sufficient financial means and accommodation. However, given the extended family network and the mutual assistance this traditionally implies, that condition is usually not difficult to fulfil.

The Spanish Government faces a dilemma: on the one hand, the Spanish economy needs foreign labour and, on the other, there is growing pressure on the Government to control immigration. This led to the introduction of an annual quota system that has remained in force since 1993. Under this quota system, the Government establishes so-called *contingente* based on the various labour needs in the Spanish autonomous regions, but without regard to the nationalities of the potential labour migrants. The areas where foreign labour would normally find work are agriculture, household services, tourism, and restaurant and catering. Although this system was intended to inform labour-exporting countries of the possibilities available for labour migrants in Spain, it was inadequate to regularize the status of those migrants already living in Spain. The annual quotas varied between 20,000 and 30,000 over recent years, lower than in Italy. Other estimates refer to quotas as high as 100,000 to 120,000, but such high figures appear unrealistic and would have contributed to the creation of future labour emigration expectations. Although no selection was to be based on the nationality of labour migrants, in practice a certain selective recruitment could be observed nevertheless.

Regarding Chinese migrants, the agreement seems to be well established and translated into practice. In an interview published in an overseas Chinese magazine, the president of the Association of the Chinese in Spain – the oldest in Spain, composed mainly of PRC migrants – affirmed that the allocation of 300 positions out of the annual quota was insufficient. Without going into more detail, he confirmed that the Chinese Association had been negotiating with the Spanish immigration authorities to have the quota assigned to Chinese labour migrants raised to 3,000 positions annually (Zhang and Wu, 2000). Therefore, the labour migration flows from China may be expected to increase further.

IMMIGRATION IN SPAIN AND THE CHINESE POPULATION

By late 2001, the number of foreigners living in Spain had risen to 1,109,060, or 2.74 per cent of the native population. The figures of some of the main migrant groups in Spain are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

MAIN DOCUMENTED MIGRANT GROUPS IN SPAIN (1999-2001)

Country of origin	Population (2000)	Population (2001)	Variation (%)
Morocco	199,782	234,937	17.5
Ecuador	30,878	84,699	174.3
United Kingdom	73,983	80,183	8.3
Germany	60,575	62,506	3.1
Colombia	24,702	48,710	97.1
France	42,316	44,798	5.8
Portugal	41,997	42,634	1.5
PRC	28,693	36,143	25.9
Italy	30,862	35,647	15.5
Peru	27,888	33,758	21.0
Dominican Republic	26,481	29,314	10.6
Romania	10,983	24,856	126.3
Cuba	19,165	21,467	12.0
Argentina	16,610	20,412	22.8
Netherlands	16,711	17,488	4.6

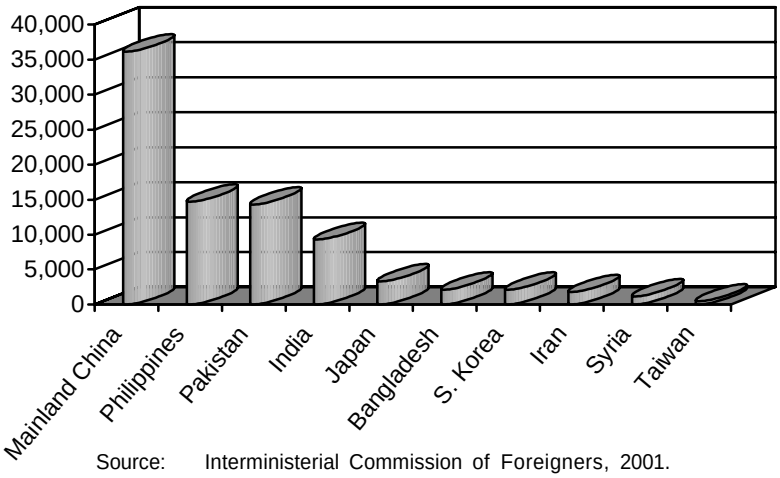
Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 2001.

Moroccans account for 21.1 per cent of the total migrant population and are the largest migrant group in Spain. Over the last two years, the number of Latin American migrants arriving in Spain increased sharply as a result of the economic crisis and the political violence in their countries of origin. This applies in particular to migrants from Ecuador, Colombia, and Argentina. Notwithstanding the continued growth of the Chinese population over the last ten years, they account for only 3.2 per cent of the total alien population, although they represent the fourth-largest group of non-EU migrants.

In late 2001, the number of Asian migrants stood at 91,552 (Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 2001), of which the Chinese represent the largest share with 39 per cent (Figure 2). People from the Philippines account for 16 per cent of the Asian migrants, with a particularly large proportion of women from this population working as domestics for wealthy Spanish families. Following the 2000 amnesty, the numbers of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Indian migrants also increased sharply, while the flow of migrants from Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea either remained stable or declined (Beltrán and Sáiz, 2002).

FIGURE 2

ASIAN MIGRATION TO SPAIN (2001)



Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 2001.

CHINESE MIGRATORY PATTERNS

According to available evidence, the main entry route for Chinese migrants into Spain is through irregular migration channels. Their irregular status does not prevent them from finding work in the underground economy. The industries with the highest concentration of irregular labourers are the same which also hire regular labour migrants (agriculture, small industries, tourism, hotel and catering, household and business services) (OECD, 2000). The Chinese in Spain, both regular and irregular, tend to be unskilled workers, and come from the rural areas surrounding the Ou River in Zhejiang Province – especially from Qingtian district and Wenzhou municipality. They find work mainly in the ethnic restaurants and small family businesses. Unlike in other EU countries, asylum seekers and students from China are not present in significant numbers, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Every year, a relatively small number of Chinese university students and government officials from the PRC, for example, from the official Xinhua news agency or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, come to Spain to pursue advanced studies, especially in Spanish philology (Nieto, 2002c). The reason for the low numbers is not always clear. However, it may be partially explained by the nature of the Spanish tertiary education system, which still tends to be centrifugal and encourages local students to go abroad for further studies, especially to the United States or other western European countries, as they offer better advanced research and training opportunities. However, Spain remains a desirable destination for Latin

American students who share the same language. Yet, with the exception of students of Hispanic philology or history of literature, Spain is not an attractive destination for Chinese students who prefer other western European countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France, or the Netherlands.

TABLE 2

PRC STUDENTS IN SPAIN

Year	Numbers
1997	78
1998	167
1999	209
2000	240
2001	249

Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 1997-2001.

As Table 3 shows, the number of Chinese asylum seekers in Spain is insignificant and their chance of success rather limited.

TABLE 3

PRC ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SPAIN (1997-2001)

Year	Numbers
1997	2
1998	10
1999	15
2000	6
2001	11

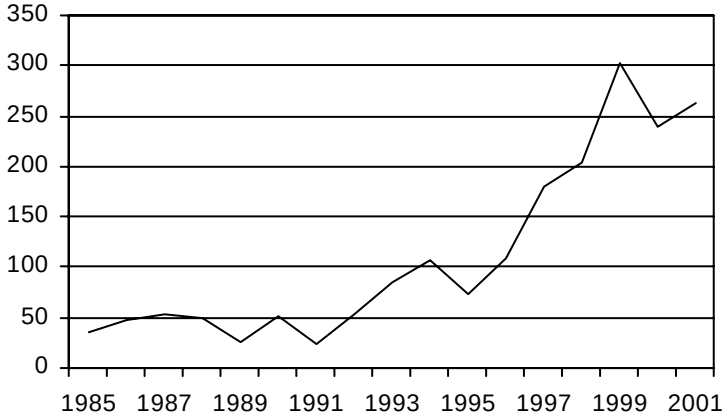
Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 1997-2001.

Thus, Spain's experience with Chinese migration patterns is limited mainly to labour migration, with only very insignificant instances of migration for political or academic reasons. On the other hand, the incidence of naturalized PRC citizens is relatively important and their numbers have increased considerably over the last five years (see Figure 3).

Before being able to obtain Spanish citizenship, a Chinese applicant must have lived in Spain regularly for at least ten years, a difficult condition to fulfil for many Chinese. The total number of naturalizations of Chinese migrants for the period 1985 to 2001 is, therefore, correspondingly low at 1,868.

FIGURE 3

PRC MIGRANTS NATURALIZED IN SPAIN (1985-2001)



Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 1997-2001.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The demographic profile of Chinese migrants in Spain shows a slight male preponderance of 55.5 per cent (see Table 4).

The Chinese community in Spain is characterized by a young population (Table 5), with the most numerous cohort aged between 25 and 44 (more than 15,000). The adult population (between 19 and 64 years) accounts for 81 per cent and adolescents and children (between 0 and 18 years) for 17 per cent. Only 2 per cent are 65 years old or older. This demographic profile implies that despite the arrival of new Chinese migrants in Spain, the group is becoming settled, with a permanent basis in the country of destination; families now tend to have their children in Spain. The Moroccan migrant group, one of the most consolidated in Spain, shows a similar age profile: adults (75%), children (23%), and elderly (2%).

TABLE 4

CHINESE POPULATION IN SPAIN, BY GENDER (2001)

Gender	Population
Male	20,084
Female	15,820
No record	239

Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 2001.

TABLE 5

CHINESE POPULATION IN SPAIN, BY AGE (2001)

Age	Population
Adults	22,763
Children and adolescents	5,350
Elderly	580
Total	36,143

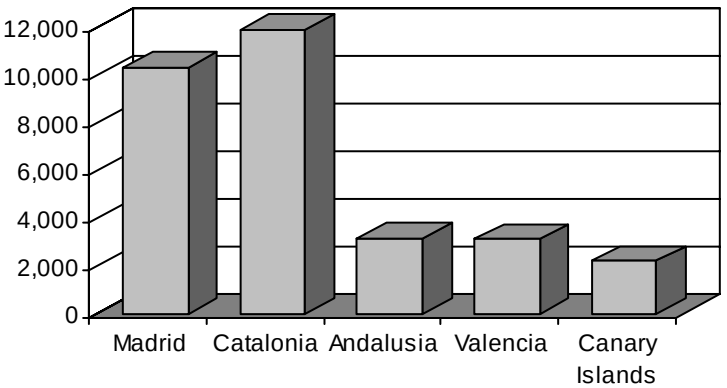
Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 2001.

The geographical distribution of the Chinese migrant population in China is uneven. Madrid used to host the largest concentration of Chinese migrants (approximately 10,354), but it has since been overtaken by Catalonia with 11,912. Chinese migrants are mostly active in the tourist areas around the Mediterranean coast where the Chinese restaurant and catering sector absorbs the largest numbers of Chinese migrant workers. The third-largest concentration is in Andalusia (see Figure 4), followed by Valencia and the Canary Islands.

There are no reliable figures as to the provincial and communal origins of Chinese migrants in Spain as the official census does not reflect these. All that can be said is that much as Chinese in other European countries (e.g. France, Italy, Portugal), most of them arrived from Qingtian district and the adjacent rural areas in Zhejiang province, with some Chinese estimates putting the proportion from Qingtian as high as 70 per cent (Chen, 1999).

FIGURE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHINESE POPULATION
IN THE DIFFERENT SPANISH AUTONOMOUS REGIONS



Source: Interministerial Commission of Foreigners, 2001.

Apart from migrants from Zhejian, other significant areas of origin are Fujian, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shandong, Guangdong, Tianjin, and the Chinese north-eastern provinces. Migrants from Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang appear to be a new group arriving in Spain, especially since the 2000 amnesty programme. These new migrants from Manchuria have also arrived in other European countries, with some of them having been smuggled there (see Guerassimoff and Ceccagno, this issue). Very few migrants are from other provinces such as Jiangsu, Sichuan, Henan, and Anhui, while a number of Chinese also arrive from South-East Asia. Compared to migrants from mainland China, those arriving from Taiwan are very few.

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Regarding their economic organization, Chinese migrants tend to stay within their own group. The family business structure fits the features of an ethnic economy, with owners and workers all belonging to the same ethnic group. This type of economy also presents a high degree of self-employment (Martínez Veiga, 1997).

Although the Chinese restaurant and catering sector has always been the most important employer of Chinese migrant labour, many changes have intervened over the last few years as Chinese restaurants have opened in almost every small city and town in Spain. According to current estimates there are some 2,000 Chinese restaurants in Spain,[2] with around 77.3 per cent of all work permits assigned to the catering sector (Colectivo IOÉ, 1999). The restaurant sector also includes other communal activities, such as growing vegetables for use in Chinese dishes, small industrial companies for doufu (soybean cheese), supermarkets for Chinese imported goods, and decorators or construction workers for the Chinese restaurants.

Restaurants are family enterprises where household members, relatives, and other fellow-countrymen work together. Even though medium-sized Chinese restaurants normally recruit between eight to ten people, only very few are permanent employees with a contract. A survey of 200 Chinese migrants shows that the majority of Chinese restaurants only hire three or less permanent workers (Colectivo IOÉ, 1999). The Colectivo IOÉ, a consultancy group specializing in migration issues, describes the traditional steps involved in the creation and proliferation of Chinese restaurants:

1. Neighbours, relatives, and fellow countrymen pool their capital to open a Chinese restaurant. These business associates also constitute the restaurant's workforce and divide the benefits according to their respective participation.

2. In the second stage, the Chinese restaurant splits and some business associates open their own restaurants, thanks to the credits received from relatives as well as private savings. These new restaurant owners in turn help relatives who are still in China to migrate and join them. These are then employed in the restaurant and the cycle repeats itself.
3. If sufficient profits are generated by the restaurant and capital can be accumulated, another restaurant will be opened. It will again be managed by someone from within the family, but the person who originally built the business chain remains the head of the undertaking. Only once the business is again divided among family members, or if the titular head of the family dies, will the new manager become independent. In the meantime, the workforce will be composed of relatives and friends from the same place of origin.

The most dynamic period for the opening of Chinese restaurants was in the late 1980s and continued up to the mid-1990s, with a saturation point becoming apparent as of 1995 and 1996.

In large cities, such as Madrid or Barcelona, the mushrooming of restaurants was such that the internal competition made it difficult for them to survive and newly arrived migrants decided to open their restaurants in smaller towns. As Beltrán (2000) points out, following the horizontal expansion, the Chinese business model started to expand vertically, diversifying from the traditional restaurant sector into a variety of other activities. Over the last five years, many grocery stores and imported goods shops have sprung up (*tiendas de todo a cien: baiyuan dian* in Chinese) selling a large variety of everyday items and gifts at very affordable prices. The procedure to open an imported-goods shop is similar to that of a Chinese restaurant (investing own savings and credit from relatives, and employing family members and friends) and they are usually an expansion of import-export companies controlled by "old settlers", among them many restaurant owners. They are very well accepted among the Spanish urban population, especially by lower and middle-class housewives. This may probably be explained by the disappearance of many local grocery stores that have been crowded out by large shopping malls. Also, restrictions on opening hours do not apply to small food stores, and the Chinese stores with their flexible opening hours, including weekends, have been able to fill that gap and cater to the needs of the local clients. As with Chinese restaurants, these shops are family-run.

Leather and clothes retail shops and textile manufacturing are other activities which are currently engaged in by Chinese migrants. These new occupations are probably connected to similar occupations by Chinese migrants in other European countries (Beltrán, 2000) with linkages also to China. They all benefit from a flexible and irregular workforce to minimize costs. Such information, as is available on the various activities developed by the Chinese migrants, is derived from

the Social Security register. As the contributions to be paid by the working population depend on the particular occupation, it is possible to see the different occupations engaged in by the Chinese migrant community. According to the annual social security entries up to January 2002, 20,260 Chinese migrants were active in various sectors, of which about 13,940 could not be clearly classified; 5,723 were recorded as self-employed; 120 as active in agriculture; and 477 as domestic helpers. Even if the number of household employees is still low, there is a growing tendency among middle-income families to hire Chinese babysitters, although the practice of sending small children home to the home village or town, where grandparents take care of their education and Chinese language skills, is still current.

Finally, although most first-generation Chinese migrants had no higher education, by today there are a number of professionals among the Chinese community, such as lawyers, university teachers, musicians, engineers, doctors, translators, and artists.

CONCLUSION

Although it is very difficult to gauge the future trends in Chinese migration to Spain, some projections are possible.

It is likely that the Chinese migrant population will continue to grow over the short and middle term. And this for two reasons: there will be a continuing need for additional Chinese labour for family businesses as they expand. Second, the experience and expectations of amnesties as well as other legal developments, such as the expansion of quota systems or family reunification schemes, will continue to encourage Chinese migrants to come to Spain to obtain legal status. The newly developed bilateral relations between the Spanish Government and the PRC through the Asia-Pacific Framework Plan 2000-2002 will be another contributing factor. Thus, the strengthening of economic, political, and cultural relations between the two countries will surely contribute to the intensification of flows of information, capital, and people in both directions.

Spain still has some way to go to properly appreciate the contributions of Chinese migrants already in the country to local economic development, and to devise and implement effective measures to integrate them in the local society. Their successful integration also presupposes a better understanding of the Chinese migrants' needs, of the mechanisms which underpin their insertion in the new ethnic labour sector, and of the manner of wealth creation, consumption, and distribution which operates inside the Chinese migrant community. Finally, greater attention will have to be paid to employment possibilities and social mobility that the host country may offer to its Chinese migrant population.

NOTES

1. Its implementation is based on the Execution Rules established by the Royal Order 864/2001 of 20 July 2001.
2. From an informal conversation with the director of the local newspaper China (*Zhongguo bao*) on 11 October 2002.

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LES CHINOIS EN ESPAGNE

Au cours des quinze dernières années, la communauté chinoise immigrée en Espagne a augmenté dans une proportion significative. Alors qu'elle ne représentait au départ qu'une petite population dispersée, elle occupe à présent le quatrième rang parmi les communautés immigrées en provenance de pays étrangers à l'Union européenne. Sa présence croissante dans la vie urbaine quotidienne est partout visible. Même si l'immigration chinoise en Espagne est un phénomène ancien, la population espagnole continue de considérer les Chinois comme une communauté fermée et quelque peu mystérieuse. Les conversations courantes sont fréquemment imprégnées de références à des stéréotypes et des préjudices exagérés concernant leurs activités et leur organisation sociale. Cependant, la Chine, habituellement considérée comme un pays lointain et exotique, occupe depuis peu une place de plus en plus grande dans la politique étrangère de l'Espagne. C'est ainsi que le Gouvernement espagnol a adopté son plan-cadre relatif à la région Asie-Pacifique pour 2000-2002 dans le cadre de ses considérations de politique internationale, élargissant ainsi son intérêt à des régions allant bien au-delà de son pôle traditionnel de politique étrangère centré s ur l'Amérique latine. Les objectifs du Gouvernement sont d'élargir ses relations économiques avec l'Asie, de renforcer les échanges commerciaux et le tourisme avec cette région, d'intensifier la coopération au développement avec la Chine, les Philippines et le Viet Nam – des pays définis comme revêtant une priorité absolue pour le Gouvernement espagnol – et de renforcer les liens linguistiques et culturels avec ces pays (Bejarano, 2002). A l'appui du plan-cadre pour l'Asie-Pacifique, la *Casa Asia* (la maison Asie) a été créée à Barcelone en 2002, une institution conçue pour organiser des activités académiques et artistiques destinées à familiariser la population espagnole avec cette région et à favoriser les relations politiques, économiques et culturelles avec l'Asie.

Le Gouvernement a l'intention de poursuivre deux objectifs importants liés aux engagements croissants qu'il s'efforce d'établir avec la Chine, et qui revêtent également une importance pour les Chinois de l'outremer en tant que principaux acteurs sociaux concernés. Premièrement, le renforcement des échanges commerciaux avec la République populaire de Chine devrait favoriser les activités d'import-export déployées par les immigrés chinois et profiter de leur connaissance et de leur expérience pratique des deux environnements. Deuxièmement, la diffusion d'informations concernant l'Espagne devrait permettre d'établir et de maintenir des liens plus fermes dans les deux sens. Dans un avenir proche, ces initiatives seront également déterminantes au niveau de l'accélération des mouvements de population entre la Chine et l'Espagne. En plus de ces objectifs primaires, il s'agit d'atteindre un autre but important : la promotion de l'intégration sociale de la communauté chinoise immigrée dans le pays.

Cet article traite de ces différents aspects, et notamment des sources des données et de la disponibilité de données sur les migrants chinois en Espagne, sur le cadre juridique local pertinent et sur la manière dont il influence le développement de la communauté chinoise immigrée, sa composition socio-démographique et ses particularités migratoires. Enfin, il traite également des changements intervenus sur le plan des activités économiques.

LOS CHINOS EN ESPAÑA

Durante los últimos 15 años, la comunidad migrante china en España ha aumentado considerablemente. Originalmente se trataba de una población pequeña y dispersa y ahora ocupa el cuarto puesto entre los grupos de migrantes procedentes de países fuera de la Unión Europea. Esta creciente presencia en la vida cotidiana urbana es evidente en todas partes. Si bien la comunidad China tiene una larga historia de asentamiento en España, la población española sigue considerando a los chinos como una comunidad cerrada y algo misteriosa. Las referencias a estereotipos y perjuicios exagerados con relación a sus actividades y organización social pueden oírse en las conversaciones cotidianas. Ello no obstante, China, considerada normalmente como un país exótico y remoto, ha asumido recientemente una mayor importancia en la política extranjera española. Por tanto, el Gobierno de España ha establecido un plan marco sobre Asia Pacífico para 2000-2002, como parte de sus consideraciones de política internacional, extendiendo así sus intereses para que incluyan esferas fuera de su centro tradicional de política extranjera es decir América Latina. Los objetivos del Gobierno son ampliar sus relaciones económicas con Asia, fomentar el comercio y turismo en esa región, ampliar la cooperación para el desarrollo con China, Filipinas y Viet Nam – países definidos como prioritarios por el Gobierno español, y reforzar los lazos lingüísticos y culturales con estos países (Bejarano, 2002). En apoyo del plan marco de Asia Pacífico, se ha establecido en Barcelona en 2002 la casa Asia, una institución creada para organizar las actividades académicas y artísticas a fin de promover el conocimiento de esa región entre los españoles y fomentar relaciones políticas, económicas y culturales con Asia.

El Gobierno tiene la intención de alcanzar dos importantes objetivos a fin de acrecentar los compromisos que desea establecer con China, que también es pertinente para los chinos en ultramar como principales interlocutores sociales concernidos. Primero, la consolidación de los intercambios comerciales con la República Popular de China beneficiará las actividades de importación y exportación entre los migrantes chinos y estará apoyada por sus conocimientos y experiencia práctica de sus entornos sociales respectivos. Segundo, la difusión de información en España habrá de establecer y reforzar los lazos en ambas

direcciones. En un futuro próximo, estas iniciativas bien podrían servir para acrecentar el movimiento de personas entre China y España. A parte de estos objetivos fundamentales, esta iniciativa tiene otra importante meta – la promoción de la integración social de la comunidad de migrantes chinos en el país.

Este artículo encara todas estas cuestiones, incluidas las fuentes de datos y su disponibilidad sobre migrantes chinos en España, la pertinencia del marco jurídico local y cómo éste influye en el desarrollo del grupo migrante chino, su composición sociodemográfica y patrones migratorios. Finalmente, también aborda los cambios en sus actividades económicas.