



QUALITY AND JOB SATISFACTION IN SPANISH EMIGRANTS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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El mercado de trabajo actual se caracteriza por altos índices de desempleo, temporalidad, segmentación y condiciones precarias. La preocupación se vuelve a centrar una vez más en la vertiente numérica del empleo, dejando atrás los esfuerzos por la calidad del mismo. En este contexto la emigración, como era antaño, se vuelve una alternativa posible, y el estudio de la satisfacción laboral por parte de los psicólogos sociales un foco de interés necesario. En este trabajo se vislumbran pistas sobre los factores que pueden determinar la satisfacción laboral, tanto en su dimensión extrínseca como intrínseca, así como los efectos psicosociales que de ella se derivan para esta población. Con ello se pretende ofrecer algunas pautas de intervención con el afán de mejorar la calidad de vida y bienestar de este colectivo.

Palabras claves: Emigración española, Calidad del empleo, Mercado de trabajo, Satisfacción laboral.

The current labor market is characterized by high unemployment rates, temporality, segmentation and precarious conditions. The numerical facet of employment is the focus of all concerns once more, casting aside any efforts regarding quality. In this context, emigration becomes a possible alternative once again, as it was in the past, and job satisfaction studies by social psychologists become a necessary focus of interest. This paper outlines the factors that can determine the two dimensions of job satisfaction, both intrinsic and extrinsic ones, and the psychosocial effects for this population that derive from them. With them we intend to offer some intervention guidelines in order to improve quality of life and well-being in this group.

Key words: Spanish emigration, Work quality, Labor market, Job satisfaction.

Migrations are not a phenomenon of the contemporary world in which we live. In spite of the great transcendence that migration flows are currently being given, they have always existed and are inherent to human beings and civilizations. However, at the present time, the political and economic system that prevails on a global level has constituted the planet as a global migratory field, to the point that one speaks of the era of migrations (Castles & Miller, 1998). The new trends of human mobility have transformed the global migratory map and globalization has played a significant part in the displacement, settlement and metamorphosis of the profiles, causes and consequences of migratory movements with respect to a hundred years ago (Valero-Matas, Mediavilla, Valero-Otero & Coca, 2015), although everything seems to indicate that the behaviors are reoccurring (Valero-Matas, Coca & Miranda-Castañeda, 2010).

Spain's history as a country of emigration is not new either; it could even be said that it this an endogenous fact. Emigration acquired great importance in the

economic, cultural and social development of Spain in the past and it has great relevance once again in the present. Specific phenomena and moments of the 20th century have recently marked our history as an emigrant country. Examples of these may be the Franco dictatorship, which throughout its entire period condemned thousands of people to exile, or the modernization of agriculture that led to a marked emigration to neighboring countries in the 1960s, derived from surplus labor which arose due to the exodus from rural to urban areas. The economic crisis that has occurred in recent years since 2008 characterizes the country as an emigrant nation again, although it continues to be a recipient of migration flows. Although this economic recession can be framed within a global crisis there are internal factors, such as the halt to the "real estate boom", which have meant that it is suffered more severely than in other countries and with far-reaching consequences. The figures on the people who have moved in this latest period are not clear, since there is a discrepancy between the data produced by the Spanish institutions and those provided by other countries. These differences, which were identified in 2013 by González-Ferrer, continue today. As an example, we can cite the paradigmatic cases of the United Kingdom and Ireland. In the former case, according to the INE (2016) the number of Spaniards that

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emigrated in 2015 was 6,038 while the British agencies produced a figure of 50,028 (five times more). In the second case, the differences are multiplied by eight, 516 people according to the INE and 4,351 according to the Irish institutions. Currently the INE (2017) indicates that the total number of Spanish people who have emigrated abroad since 2008 is 556,918, of which 42% live in European countries. Among the main destinations are the United Kingdom, Germany and France. Migration flows have been increasing every year, although a downward trend can be seen starting in 2016. Below is a graph that shows the evolution since 2008 of emigration towards these three main destinations:

MIGRATIONS FROM A PSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH

In spite of the great relevance of the phenomenon of Spanish emigration currently, there are few psychosocial studies related to this group (Elgorriaga, Ibabe, & Arnosó, 2016; Requés & de Cos, 2003; Vallejo-Martín & Moreno-Jiménez, 2016).

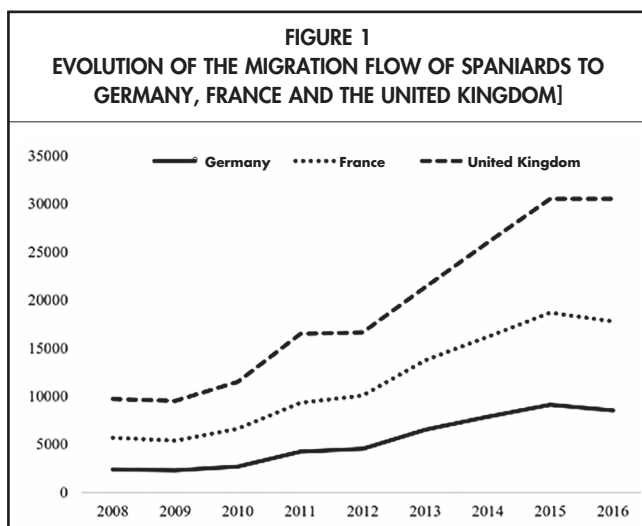
From a psychological perspective, the migratory experience is understood as a transitory stage in which the displaced person must adapt to a new context. This means that the migrant goes through an adjustment phase known as the acculturation process (Redfield, Linton & Herskovist, 1936). Within this process, two dimensions can be distinguished, sociocultural adjustment and psychological adjustment, which although correlated with each other, are not identical adjustments. The first is made up of factors such as perceived discrimination (Checa & Arjona, 2005, Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzálek, 2000, Swawi, 2009) the degree of contact with the indigenous population (Vallejo, 2009, Ward, & Kennedy, 1993) or socioeconomic difficulties (De Luca,

Bobowik, & Basabe, 2011). On the other hand, the psychological adjustment is determined by variables such as social support (Singh, McBride, & Kak, 2015; Vallejo-Martín, & Moreno-Jiménez, 2014) or migratory expectations (Berry, 1997; Mähönen, Leinonen, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2013, Moreno-Jiménez, Ríos-Rodríguez, Canto-Ortiz, San Martín-García, & Perles-Nova, 2010). There are several models that explain, from a psychosocial perspective, the factors that affect the adaptation process of the migratory project; among them we can mention the acculturation model (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989), the model of Parker and McEvoy (1993) or the life satisfaction model for immigrants (Vallejo-Martín & Moreno-Jiménez, 2014), upon which we shall not dwell since it would exceed the aims of this manuscript. In any case, in all of them it is determined that employment and its conditions play a central role in the migratory experience and in the adjustment of the acculturation process. As indicated by several authors (Becker, 1964; Harris & Todaro, 1970, Piore, 1979; Stark & Bloom, 1985), migration flows are based on economic motivations, the rationality of the labor market and the professional expectations of the people that migrate. Despite this, studies that link work and psychological adjustment in the migrant population are not abundant.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EMPLOYMENT FACTOR

According to Aycan and Berry (1996), immigrants are especially sensitive to risks at work. This is due to three reasons: 1) immigrants tend to occupy positions of low working conditions, rejected by locals, with high precariousness and low wages (Moreno-Jiménez et al., 2010; Pajares, 2009; Porthé, Amable, & Benach, 2007); 2) immigrants tend to perform functions below their qualifications, which could lead to a break with the psychological contract between the worker and the organization (Morgan & Finniear, 2009) and 3) due to the different language or cultural patterns there may be a lack of adaptation to the workplace, which increases the acculturative stress (Ramos-Villagrasa, García-Izquierdo, & García-Izquierdo, 2011).

Work should be a source of personal fulfillment, security, social contact and physical and mental health (Gamero, 2009; Salanova, Gracia, & Peiró, 1996). However, the complexity of the labor market and, in many cases, the high rates of precariousness are affecting the well-being and health of the working population with broad consequences in the global economy (European Agency for Health and Health at Work, 2009). These repercussions are even more serious for the immigrant





worker, who has poorer working conditions, has to adapt to new forms of organization (Ramos-Villagrasa & García-Izquierdo, 2007) and must make his own efforts in the acculturation process (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Kotic, 2004; Vallejo, 2009).

The difficulties and negative consequences due to employment conditions are not alien to Spanish emigration. The following are examples of how some authors reflect this reality referring to the Spanish emigration of the sixties:

“Labor discrimination was another negative element for the integration of Spanish emigrants. The wage differences with natives, the almost non-existent labor relations, the restrictions of access to the same benefits as the natives, the lack of preparation and the difficulty with the language did not provide an equivalent level of training to that of the natives and, therefore, the result was that labor mobility practically did not exist” (Valero-Matas, Mediavilla, Valero-Otero, & Coca, 2015).

“Spanish emigrants always have the minimum level of professional training, they occupy positions of inferior category within the European professional scale; most of them are employed in industry, however not as specialized workers, but as laborers or in jobs that require low qualification or rapid learning” (Meseguer, 1975, p. 412).

However, the profile of Spanish migrant workers in European countries changed considerably with the beginning of democracy and entry into the European Economic Community. They were characterized less as a mass and instead consisted of workers in multinationals, researchers or adventurers in search of new business or life opportunities. In addition, the profiles of increasingly qualified professionals in search of social and work recognition were noteworthy. At that time new typologies of migrants emerged both in Europe and in the Spanish context that go beyond labor migration. They correspond to new forms of mobility, where the economic elements appear in combination with other motivations such as free time or opportunities for new lifestyles with quality of life (Alaminos, Albert, & Santacreu, 2010). Specifically, in those years, Spanish emigration experienced an ascending social mobility when comparing the status before and after displacement and with respect to other intra-European migrations (Recchi, 2006).

But how is the current relationship between employment and Spanish emigration in European countries? Are the displaced people satisfied in their work? The economic crisis that began in 2008 is changing the Spanish migratory panorama once again and with it the relations with neighboring countries and the characteristics of the emigration as well. The socioeconomic context in our

country is defined by high rates of unemployment, job and social precariousness, lack of opportunities and highly qualified young people who view emigration as the only work option. The effects of this panorama are short, medium and, probably, long term, both at a collective and individual level. As indicated by Santos (2016), the brain drain phenomenon has become an icon of the crisis period, and its numerical volume is difficult to determine accurately, but its symbolic magnitude is indisputable. The authors Moldes and Gómez (2015) in their book *¿Por qué te vas? Jóvenes españoles en Alemania [Why are you leaving? Young Spaniards in Germany]* determine that Spain is in its third phase of migration, in which we are returned back to the first square on the game board. The work also includes a description of the exodus of young people composed of highly qualified people and highly skilled in the new technologies, whose main reason for emigrating has been the agonizing situation of the Spanish labor market and whose job satisfaction in the destination is determined by certain factors such as knowledge of the language. Thus, professional success stories are depicted along with other conditions of high precariousness and over-qualification that are significantly prejudicial in comparison with the German autochthonous population.

QUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION

As described above, the current labor market is characterized by individualization, segmentation, flexibilization, precarization, etc. Therefore, speaking about the quality of employment in times of socio-economic crisis is not a trivial issue, and less so when referring to the migrant population.

In recent times the polarization and tension between the quantity and quality of work has been accentuated once again. This predicament has a significant history and has been consolidated as a growing field of economic, social and psychological research (González & Guillén, 2009; Narocki, Zimmermann, Artazcoz, Gimeno, & Benavides, 2009; Sola, 2011). Thus, although it seemed as though quality in employment was placed at the center of the public policy game board, once again the crisis and high unemployment rates give supremacy to questions related to quantity. However, there is sufficient data to corroborate that quality in employment increases workers' capabilities, improves working conditions, increases productivity, promotes social well-being, and ultimately, improves the physical, mental and emotional health of the employed person (Cottinni & Lucifora, 2013; Dahl, Nesheim, & Olsen, 2009; Davoine, Erhel, & Guergota-Lariviere, 2009; Green et al., 2013).



Traditionally, quality in employment has centered on two dimensions which, while a priori they may seem opposite, are complementary to an integral approach. They deal with the objective dimension, more related to physical conditions, job security, organizational and management processes, and the subjective dimension, which encompasses issues such as job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, motivation, etc. In other words, the objective dimension refers to the work environment, and the subjective dimension, to the people employed. These two dimensions should not be enemies, but necessary allies. Thus, quality in employment must be understood as a multidimensional concept that must be approached from different perspectives (micro- and macro-economic, psychological and sociological) and for different actors (employees, organizations and jobs). We therefore accept the definition of labor quality provided by the authors Díaz-Chao, Ficapal-Cusí, and Torrent-Sellens (2015) as one of the most complete: "quality of employment is a general state of satisfaction that includes the objective aspects of material well-being, satisfactory relationships with the physical and social environment, and objectively perceived health; and subjective aspects of physical, psychological and social well-being". It is also important to point out the different dimensions that the European Commission (2008) analyzes to measure the quality of employment in its countries: 1) intrinsic job quality, its skills and competences; 2) learning and career development; 3) gender equality; 4) health and safety at work; 5) flexibility and employment security; 6) inclusion and access to labor markets; 7) work and family conciliation; 8) social dialogue and participation; 9) diversity and non-discrimination and 10) aggregate economic result and productivity. As we can see, it is a broad concept and its measurement is complex.

From a psychological approach, quality in employment is closely related to job satisfaction (Green, 2010; Gonzalez, Peiró, & Bravo, 1996; May & Lau, 1988; Sirgy, 2001). Locke (1976) conceives this as a positive or pleasant emotional state of the worker's experiences at work. The characteristics of the job itself and how they are perceived and valued by the employed person will condition this affective response. For Spector (1997), job satisfaction is simply the feeling people have towards their work, based on the assessment of its satisfactory and unsatisfactory aspects. On the other hand, Fabra and Camisón (2009) consider that job satisfaction is a joint assessment of the monetary and non-monetary gains that one gains from one's job, according to one's personal preferences and expectations.

Although it is a diffuse concept, research is currently

based on the two-dimensional character provided by Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979), distinguishing between extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction. The first focuses on worker satisfaction with aspects related to the organization of the job, such as working hours, remuneration or physical conditions. On the other hand, intrinsic job satisfaction addresses aspects such as the recognition obtained through work, responsibility, promotion, and issues related to the content of the task.

The following section describes the results of a study with which we intend to sketch an analysis of job satisfaction for the group of Spanish emigrants in European countries. Since most of these people migrate for reasons related to employment, how they value it and what degree of satisfaction it gives them may be a matter of particular importance in their migratory project.

JOB SATISFACTION IN SPANISH EMIGRANTS

The study to which we refer is made up of Spanish people (a total of 816) who have emigrated relatively recently (average period, twenty-one months) to European countries (mainly the United Kingdom, Germany and France). We have a profile of young people (average age, thirty years), with a majority of women, whose main reasons for emigrating have been the search for employment and to practice a profession in accordance with their level of qualification. Almost two thirds have university studies. The employment rate is close to 90%, although slightly more than half are working in functions below their educational level.

The first conclusion we can draw from the study is that the two dimensions of job satisfaction are confirmed. According to the data, the Spanish population living in European countries has average levels of job satisfaction, although they are higher in the extrinsic dimension than in the intrinsic one. Likewise, the factors with which each dimension is associated are different in each case, although we have found some common ones.

The results show higher levels of (extrinsic and intrinsic) satisfaction for those people who have an indefinite contract, full time, with higher income and adjusted to their educational level. On the other hand, we obtain greater extrinsic job satisfaction in people with university studies compared to those with primary or secondary studies. On the other hand, also important for intrinsic job satisfaction are issues such as the type of tasks, in the sense that these are stimulating and not repetitive or boring, strict control by superiors is not perceived and they do not have a very long working day. In any case, the results show that working conditions determine both types of satisfaction (Table 1).



A relevant finding is that, unlike in other studies which indicate that immigrants are inserted at first in precarious low-wage jobs but tend to improve over time (Martínez, 1996, Patiño & Kirchner, 2009), in our study, extrinsic job satisfaction does not present significant differences in terms of residence time. However, people do show higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction over the years and this seems to be a determining issue. Additionally, there are two other issues of interest. The first is that knowledge of the language is a key factor in relation to job satisfaction in both of its dimensions. The second is that no differences were detected between men and women in extrinsic or intrinsic job satisfaction.

Regarding the relationship of job satisfaction with other psychosocial variables, the results show that both extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction are related to life satisfaction and the psychological adjustment of the migrants. The life satisfaction of the migrated population corresponds to the subject's assessment of their own migratory experience in relation to their life developing according to their own goals, beliefs, values and wishes (Marrero & Carballeira, 2010) and is closely related with the expectations placed

on the migratory process. The results found are in line with other recent studies on Spanish emigration and quality in employment (Elorriaga, Ibabe, & Arnosó, 2016; Vallejo-Martín & Moreno Jiménez, 2016), which highlight how job satisfaction and good working conditions correlate positively with life satisfaction and negatively with perceived stress. Likewise, another study of the same nature shows that negative working conditions are a predictive factor for suffering burnout syndrome in this group (Vallejo-Martín, 2017).

Finally, it is important to note that the data also show that job satisfaction in its two dimensions is related to higher self-esteem, greater perception of social support in the new place of residence and lower perceived prejudice in the workplace by the autochthonous population (Table 2).

CONCLUSIONS

As has been exposed throughout this work, Spain is currently experiencing an exodus of people, mainly young people, who see emigration as a plausible alternative to a precarious labor market without opportunities and with few prospects for improvement. The flows to neighboring countries remind us of times gone by, in which many of our grandfathers and grandmothers had to move as a result of the political and economic situation of the time. Although our country has changed a lot in recent times, the "refuge" in Germany, France or the United Kingdom is back in fashion again. However, there are defining characteristics for this new wave of emigration. Firstly, the profile of the migrants, highly qualified and trained, which gives rise to the denomination "brain drain". Secondly, the use of and access to new technologies by those who emigrate, which facilitates information networks and contact with family and friends in the country of origin. Last, but not least, membership of the European Union, which eliminates the requirements for access and permanence to other countries under the protection of community citizenship.

According to the participants in our study, the main reason for emigration is to find a job and practice a

**TABLE 1
DIFFERENCES IN EXTRINSIC JS AND INTRINSIC JS ACCORDING TO SEX, LEVEL OF STUDIES, WORKING CONDITIONS AND RESIDENCE TIME (T-STUDENT AND ANOVA)**

	Extrinsic job satisfaction (1-7)	p	Intrinsic job satisfaction (1-7)	p
General	4.94		4.72	
Sex		.628		.302
Men	4.97		4.80	
Women	4.92		4.67	
Level of studies		.042		.123
Primary	5.02		4.72	
Secondary	4.95		4.77	
University	5.26		4.78	
Type of contract		.000		.000
Temporary	4.64		4.41	
Service/Project	4.46		4.28	
Indefinite	5.21		4.99	
Type of workday		.000		.000
Full time	5.09		4.92	
Part time	4.55		4.19	
Fit to the job		.000		.000
Appropriately qualified	5.34		5.36	
Over-qualified	4.42		3.86	
Income		.000		.000
< 1000	4.31		3.99	
1000 - 2500	5.06		4.75	
> 2500	5.56		5.59	
Time of residence		1.29		.009
< 6 months	4.74		4.43	
6 months - 1 year	4.96		4.74	
1 - 5 years	5.01		4.80	
> 5 years	5.14		5.22	

**TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN EXTRINSIC JS AND INTRINSIC JS AND PSYCHOSOCIAL VARIABLES (PEARSON'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENT)**

	Life satisfaction	Self esteem	Social support	Prejudice at work
Extrinsic J.S.	.523**	.293**	.331**	-.284**
Intrinsic J.S.	.565**	.339**	.338**	-.347**

Note: ** p < .001



profession in accordance with one's level of education, and it is this latter issue that seems to have the most impact on job satisfaction. The objective characteristics and working conditions such as the type of working day, the type of contract or the income level are also important in determining satisfaction in its two dimensions. In other words, we could establish a relationship between the quality of work conditions and job satisfaction. However, people indicate as main factors in feeling satisfied as working in their own profession, feeling recognized and valued, carrying out tasks that allow them to perform their skills or having the freedom to exercise certain functions. It seems that Spanish emigrants not only seek a salary that allows them to survive or stay in the host country, but also a social and labor recognition that they lack in Spain. The fulfillment of these expectations, to a large extent, will determine the course of the migratory project, with a link being able to be established between job satisfaction and other psychosocial variables. Thus, job satisfaction is related to making a positive global assessment of life, having a better concept of oneself, perceiving less discrimination on the part of the host society in the labor field and enjoying more available networks in the new country of destination.

In conclusion, we can elucidate that the quality and characteristics of employment and the degree of satisfaction with it are a cornerstone in the migratory project of Spanish emigrants, with implications for their acculturative adjustment and their life satisfaction and also with deep psychosocial implications. Spain still has many challenges ahead, in which the dilemma between the quantity and quality of employment must be overcome and the most prepared generation in the history of our country must receive the job recognition that it deserves.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There is not conflict of interest

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