CHAPTER 13

New Chinese Immigrants in Spain: The Migration Process, Demographic Characteristics and Adaptation Strategies

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Most Chinese in today's Spain are first-generation immigrants; almost all emigrated from China after the late 1970s, when China reopened its door to the West. In about three decades between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s, the number of Chinese migrants in Spain has grown more than 100-fold. This chapter traces the migration process of the Chinese to Spain, describes their sociodemographic characteristics, and analyzes their economic activities and the social challenges they face. In particular, it addresses the following questions: Why did hundreds of thousands of Chinese choose Spain, not a traditional country of Chinese immigration? How did they migrate? And what are their adaptation strategies to cope with life there?

The Migration Process

The Earlier Waves

Historical records demonstrate that a handful of Chinese servants, merchants and novices were found in Spain before the twentieth century. However, the earlier Chinese migrants there were mainly from the

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Philippines, a former Spanish colony and one of the most important migration destinations of the Chinese at the time. The Chinese did not begin migrating directly from China until the early twentieth century. The port city of Barcelona became the first place where Chinese seamen and traders chose to settle (Antolin 1998).

According to Chinese records, Chinese migration directly from China to Spain started in the early twentieth century. One record described a circus formed by the people from Shandong arriving from North China by way of Russia. It arrived in Spain in around 1910. Finding that Spain was a country in which it was relatively easy to make a living, the circus decided to set up a base there and went north now and then to perform in other European countries (Xu 1956: 45). Another oral record suggests that the first Chinese in Spain were Chen Xianting and Wang Tingxiang, both from Qingtian in Zhejiang, in around 1914.[1]

In the late 1920s and the early 1930s, emigration toward Europe surged in the southern part of Zhejiang, particularly in Qingtian and Wenzhou. Most migrants settled in Rotterdam, Hamburg and Marseilles. However, these Zhejiangese saw Europe as a single entity, often transferring from one country to another and then on to a third or fourth country, especially shortly after arriving (Li 1999). Dozens of the earliest Zhejiangese migrants went south to Spain to make a living. Most worked as peddlers selling cheap ties and trinkets. Few intended to settle down in Spain. Instead, they planned to return home with enough money to purchase land for the family. In the winter of 1930, Jin Guangkui, a Qingtianese, set up a Huaqiao Gongyu (华侨公寓, lodging house for overseas Chinese) in Madrid for the 300-odd Chinese living in the city who needed somewhere to live. These people rented bunk beds. Dozens of them lived together, so the Huaqiao Gongyu became a meeting place for Qingtian people. However, most left in 1936 after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Only a dozen or so stayed, most of whom had married Spanish women.

After the 1950s, emigration from mainland China to Spain came to a stop, apart from several hundred immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 1949 a dozen Chinese Christians left Shanghai for Spain to study theology. In the early 1950s, the Spanish government provided 150 scholarships to allow students from Taiwan to study theology in Spain. More than 100 students went. Some switched their status to that of immigrant after finishing their studies.[2] They later attracted new migrants from Taiwan. In 1955 there were 132 Chinese living in Spain, and the number increased to 336 in 1965. Most came from Taiwan.[3]

Table 13.1 Chinese immigrants in select European countries

Country	*1935*	*1955*	*1965*	*1975*	*1985*
UK	8000	3000	45,000	120,000	230,000
France	17,000	2000	6000	90,000	210,000
Netherlands	8000	2000	2353	30,000	60,000
Germany	1800	500	1200	8000	30,000
Belgium	500	99	565	2000	11,400
Portugal	1200	120	176	300	6800
Austria	N.A.	30	N.A.	1000	6000
Italy	274	330	700	1000	5000
Spain	273	132	336	2000	5000

Source: Li (2002: 830)

Up until the mid-1980s, Europe was not a destination for emigrants from mainland China. Compared with other Western European countries, Spain was among the smallest places of Chinese settlement. The European countries that accepted most Chinese were the UK, France and the Netherlands, mainly from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indochina and Indonesia (see Table 13.1).

New Chinese Migration

Only in the 1970s did migration to Spain from mainland China, particularly Qingtian and Wenzhou, in Zhejiang, begin to pick up again. In 1973, Spain and the People's Republic of China (PRC) established diplomatic relations. In 1975, Chen Diguang, a Qingtianese whose father lived in Spain, became the first migrant to go directly from the PRC to Spain. In the following years a couple of Zhejiangese with relatives in Spain obtained permission to emigrate there. After that, emigration to Spain surged.

Why the surge? Many studies have explored the general reasons (Antolin 1998; Li 1999; Nieto 2003; Thunø 1999). Here I focus on the special case of Spain and try to update my data to the 2010s, exploring how the interaction of push and pull factors shaped the migration.

Reopening the Chinese Emigration Door and Its Consequences in Zhejiang

According to migration theories based on what is often conveniently summarized as "traditional neoclassical economics," international migration is a response to differentials in incomes between countries of origin and

destination (Massey et al. 1994: 708–711). Dreams of getting rich, high expectations and imagination have pushed people to emigrate despite the ethnic and cultural differences they encounter. China's reforms have greatly raised the expectations of Chinese people regarding the pursuit of material wealth. Many studies have explored the motivation of Chinese migrants in the late twentieth century (Benton and Pieke 1998; Li 1999; Thunø 1999).

Migration was particularly important for Zhejiang people, even more so for Qingtianese, during the early period when the PRC reopened the door to emigration. The economic reforms that started in the late 1970s reignited Chinese emigration. At the beginning, permission to emigrate could be granted if the applicant could demonstrate sponsorship from relatives abroad. Zhejiang people, with their special links with Spain, became active participants in this process.

In 1985 the Law on the Control of Exit and Entry of Citizens was promulgated in China. It granted the right of exit to all Chinese citizens but required proof of an entry visa in the overseas destination. A Chinese citizen still needed to go through complicated formalities when applying for a passport. Relevant requirements included an invitation letter from the warrantor in the destination country, who also had to provide a financial guarantee for the duration of the visit; household registration documents; and approval from one's work unit, which in rural areas meant the township authorities. With these documents, the applicant could go to the Public Security Bureau to apply for a passport.

In qiaoxiang areas such as Qingtian and Wenzhou in Zhejiang, the revival of emigration relied on the availability of supportive links with relatives and friends abroad, not only to provide the documents needed but to receive the new arrivals. In the early years of emigration, *qiaoxiang* people pioneered the new wave of emigration.

Table 13.2 shows the annual number of Qingtian people who received permission from the Qingtian Public Security Bureau to emigrate between 1986 and 2000. The variation shows how quickly the number grew, from a few thousand in the 1980s to more than 20,000 a year at the end of the 1990s.

The records show that Spain was the number-one destination for Qingtian people. During those 15 years, Qingtian migrants went to more than 39 different countries, but at the height of the wave 44.5 % went to Spain, and on average up to 28.5 % chose Spain as their destination. Why was Spain chosen?

Table 13.2 Annual report of Qingtian people who received emigration permission from Qingtian Public Security Bureau (1986–2000)

Year	*Spain*	*Italy*	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Portugal*	*Other*	*Total*[a]	*Spain/ total (%)*
1986	960	325	283	167	111	540	2386	40.2
1987	1392	158	315	198	145	920	3128	44.5
1988	156	376	404	193	50	939	2118	7.4
1989	N.A.	385	418	325	81	1528	N.A.	N.A.
1990	284	1240	645	1076	304	908	4457	6.4
1991	659	1661	767	828	265	1036	5216	12.6
1992	774	509	395	828	153	1472	4131	18.7
1993	590	344	330	763	158	2794	4979	11.8
1994	392	319	201	147	60	1230	2349	16.7
1995	937	553	297	253	96	2070	4206	22.3
1996	2322	799	400	354	210	4372	8457	27.5
1997	3572	2511	358	366	283	4824	11,914	30.0
1998	8920	3473	516	392	782	8835	22,918	38.9
1999	7944	3784	878	333	860	9537	23,336	34.0
2000	8754	8917	888	531	938	9952	29,980	29.2
Total	37,656	25,354	7095	6754	4496	50,957	132,312	28.5

[a]The original table lists the statistics under 39 different countries. Here I have selected only the top five countries and grouped the remaining 34 under "Other"

Source: Editorial Board, Qingtian Huaqiaoshi [A History of Qingtianese Abroad]. Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2011, p. 94

Changes in Immigration Policy in Spain

The migration policy of the destination country helps to shape migration. Emigration to Spain and rapid economic development there went hand in hand.

In the three decades after World War II, Spain experienced outmigration. Spanish people went north to more developed European countries. However, after the mid-1980s and into the first half of 2008, before the global financial crisis in 2008, Spain entered a period of rapid economic development (see Fig. 13.1). The Barcelona Olympics of 1992 initiated a large number of public construction projects in the 1980s. New immigrants were attracted by this opportunity. Although the economy was disrupted almost immediately after the Olympics, it soon started to grow again. Spanish gross domestic product (GDP) grew quickly for most of the subsequent decade.

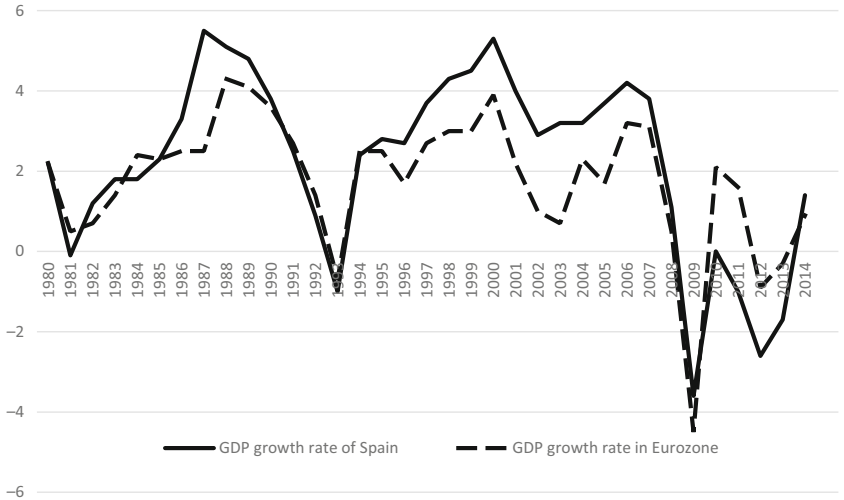

Fig. 13.1 Economic growth rate in Spain and in the EU (1980–2014) (Source: http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=WDI&f=Indicator_Code%3ANY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG)

Along with rapid economic development, particularly at the turn of the century, the Spanish government implemented a rather liberal immigration policy in order to attract Spanish returnees and cheap foreign labor to work on its construction projects. The policy was effective. According to statistics published in June 2015, in the period between 1998 and 2008, Spain received 4,933,231 new immigrants, 2,823,048 (57.2 %) of which came from other European Union (EU) states and the rest from outside the EU. Many of the non-EU foreigners (up to 34 %) were from Morocco. Chinese immigrants were the second biggest group (around 9 %) (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social 2015: 10).

The Chinese, particularly the Zhejiangese, emigrated in different ways. In the beginning they did so by way of family reunion, for most West European countries allow this. For Chinese, "family" (*jia*) is a concept that embraces brothers and sisters, married or unmarried, and their children. Moreover, even sharing the same family name is sufficient evidence for descent from a common ancestor and membership of one great family. It is not unusual for a migrant to adopt a son or a daughter from another family who is already abroad, and then to arrange their emigration via the "family

reunion" procedure (Li 1998). Zhejiang people, particularly Qingtian and Wenzhou people, grasped the opportunity and became the first group to emigrate from mainland China to Spain. When this new generation of pioneers had settled down, a new migration chain started up.

However, the family link is still limited. Those who could not find a family link emigrated where possible by a number of ways. Some entered Spain on a tourist or business visa but remained after its expiry. Others were smuggled into Europe. As the number of undocumented Chinese migrants rose, amnesties for illegal immigrants launched in some European countries offered hope. France launched its first amnesty in 1981, when 132,000 immigrants legalized their status (Li 2002: 493).

While news of the French amnesty was spreading across the *qiaoxiang* areas of Zhejiang, Spain followed suit in 1985. Undocumented Chinese in Spain and neighboring countries rushed to take advantage of the opportunity. A total of 1192 Chinese applied and 845 were legalized, accounting for 2.2 % of the total number of legalized foreigners. In June 1991 a second amnesty followed in Spain. A total of 4291 Chinese legalized their status, representing 4 % of the total.

In 2000 the Spanish government announced a new Aliens Act (*Ley de Extranjería*). Any foreigner who had lived in Spain for more than three years and held a contract of more than a year could obtain a residential and working permit. This act, in effect a third amnesty, started in March and ended on July 31, 2000. Nearly 5000 Chinese legalized their status, representing 5.8 % of the total.[4] Undocumented Chinese had to buy a work contract from a settled Chinese with a business in Spain. A one-year work contract cost USD10,000 in around 2000 and EUR16,000 at the beginning of 2008.

From 1985 up until 2010, Spain carried out seven legalization programs. As a result, it quickly became a main destination for Chinese migrants, particularly those unable to emigrate via official channels but who had local contacts able to provide the necessary information and documents. In this way, more and more Chinese joined the official migrant community and started up new migration chains. Meanwhile, more irregular migrants awaited the next amnesty.

According to a report published in 2015, nearly 5 million foreign migrants had received permits to live in Spain, including 189,853 Chinese, or 193,690 Chinese if those with another EU citizenship are included (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social 2015: 1).

The Chinese have migrated to Spain in different ways. It is difficult, however, to define what is and what isn't a normal approach. For example, having a legal immigration permit may require forged documents. Someone who overstays their tourist visa, or is trafficked, may have the legal right to join their family in Spain but be unaware of it or be unwilling or unable to carry out the complicated and time-consuming process of application. In the eyes of potential Chinese migrants in the qiaoxiang areas, "being channeled to another country" is not a crime but a worthwhile undertaking by people who want to make a fortune abroad but lack the legal entitlement to try. The most attractive point of going abroad—regardless of its legality—is that no matter how tough the experience, the reward will prove worthwhile. As long as the migrant returns one day as a successful overseas Chinese, all the processes along the way, no matter how frustrating or demeaning, and no matter whether legal or illegal, are as if erased.

In 2010 a Chinese association in Spain reviewed the ways in which Chinese immigrants reached Spain. From the 1980s to the early 1990s, about 40 % entered on tourist visas and overstayed; about 40 % were smuggled in via a third or fourth country; and the other 20 % gained access by way of family reunion or study. In the 1990s about 40 % entered through family reunion and work contracts, based on people who had legalized their status in the first two legalization programs; about 40 % were smuggled in to await new amnesties; and the remaining 20 % entered on business or student visas. Starting in 2000, about 35 % entered Spain on work contracts, most of them Zhejiangese; 40 % relied on tourist or business visas and then stayed in the expectation of a new amnesty; about 8 % used student visas; and the remaining 12 % gained entry via another European country or via South America.[5]

Size and Composition

Chinese migrants who have legalized their status in Spain have continued to bring over family members. Since the mid-1990s, new Chinese immigrants have become a socially visible ethnic group in Spain.

In the mid-1950s there were only 132 Chinese immigrants in Spain; the number was limited to a few thousand until the mid-1980s but started to rise after the end of the 1980s; it then increased from 20,000 in the mid-1990s to 190,000 in 2015. Table 13.3 shows the changes in the number of Chinese formally registered with the authorities. In 2015, Don Juan Aguilar, chief of the Spanish Police Office, said there were about

Table 13.3 Chinese immigrants in Spain

1952	*1961*	*1971*	*1981*	*1991*	*2000*	*2011*	*2013*	*2015*
116	167	439	758	7024	28,693	160,636	182,072	230,000

Sources: The statistics for 1952–1991 are from Ministerio de Interior, Direccion General de la Policia (Ministry of the Interior, Directorate-General of the Police). Requoted from Antolin 1998: 217; the statistics for 2000, 2011 and 2013 are from the National Statistics Bureau of Spain, quoted from personal email contacts with Mr. Xu Songhua, the honorary chairman of the Association of Chinese in Spain; and the statistics for 2015 are quoted from an announcement made by Mr. Don Juan Aguilar, chief of the Spanish Police Office

230,000 Chinese immigrants in Spain, and it is informally claimed that their numbers are currently approaching 300,000, including undocumented migrants.

In the first decade of this century, the number of Chinese with resident permits increased from 28,693 to 145,425—that is, at a rate of around 20 % a year (Table 13.4).

In March 2010 a nationwide survey by a Chinese association showed that the Chinese in Spain came from all provinces of China, but most from Zhejiang, and among the Zhejiangese, most were from Qingtian. Nearly 62 % came from Zhejiang, 65 % of those came from Qingtian and nearly 32 % from Wenzhou. Fujianese comprised nearly 21.5 % of the total. Thus more than 83 % of the Chinese in Spain came from Zhejiang and Fujian (see Table 13.5).

Most Chinese in Spain are in their productive years, so aged 15 to 64, while dependents are those under the age of 15 and over the age of 64. According to the Census published by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security in Spain in 2013, the dependency ratio of the Chinese in Spain is much lower than that of native Spanish. Among the Chinese, 74.58 % belong to the productive part compared with 67.50 % among indigenous people. The proportion of those over 64 is 17.40 % among the Spanish population as a whole but less than 1.5 % among Chinese immigrants (Figs. 13.2 and 13.3).

The dependency ratio is another important measure of the population structure. The total dependency ratio can be separated into two subsections: the child dependency ratio and the aged dependency ratio. The cost of caring for the aged is much greater than that of raising a child, particularly as life expectancy keeps rising. The greater the proportion of the aged, the heavier the pressure on the productive population. In Spain, the

Table 13.4 Chinese immigrants in Spain (2000–2015)

Year	*Chinese (N)*	*Annual growth (%)*
2000	28,693	
2001	38,561	34.39
2002	45,815	18.81
2003	56,086	22.42
2004	71,881	28.16
2005	89,137	24.01
2006	93,116	4.46
2007	104,011	11.70
2008	126,075	21.21
2009	145,425	15.35
2010	154,056	5.94
2011	160,636	4.27
2012	175,813	9.45
2013	184,072	4.70
2014	191,078	3.81
2015	198,017	3.63

Source: Provided by Mr. Xu, honorary chairman of the Association of Chinese in Spain (Asociacion de Chinos en Espana). The data are taken from the relevant government bulletin. There are some differences from the statistics published by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security (Ministerio de Empleo Y Seguridad Social)

aged dependency ratio is 26 among natives but only 2 among Chinese. The child dependency ratio is 22 among natives but 32 among Chinese. The total dependency ratio of the Spanish population is 14 points higher than the Chinese immigrant ratio (see Table 13.6). Spain has the highest median age of any nation in the world, so the Chinese contribution is notable.[6]

Besides migrants moving directly from China to Spain who mainly comprise unskilled laborers, such as Qinqtianese, three other Chinese groups should be noted. Although entering Spain to study is not a new phenomenon, and many went to work rather than to study during the 1980s and 1990s, since 2000, more and more Chinese students have been going there to study. In early 2015 there were more than 6000 Chinese students at Spanish universities, most of them in Madrid. Some may become immigrants after finishing their studies. Another group is Chinese children adopted by Spanish parents. In 2015, Spanish families adopted at least 12,000 Chinese children, almost all of them girls.[7] The third and most recent group is Chinese investors. Rising China has produced a group of new rich. When the Spanish government announced the

Table 13.5 Hometowns of Chinese immigrants in Spain, 2010

	Province/city	*Number*	*Percent*
1	Zhejiang	100,530	61.72
	Qingtian	65,400	
	Wenzhou	32,000	
	Other Counties	3130	
2	Fujian	35,000	21.49
	Zhejiang + Fujian	135,530	83.21
3	Shanghai	5200	3.19
4	Shandong	4500	2.76
5	Liaoning	3000	1.84
6	Taiwan	2800	1.72
7	Henan	2600	1.60
8	Guangdong	1980	1.22
9	Jilin	1800	1.11
10	Heilongjiang	1700	1.04
	Other provinces	3779	2.31
Total		162,889	100%

Source: Provided by Mr. Xu, honorary chairman of the Association of Chinese in Spain (Asociacion de Chinos en Espana)

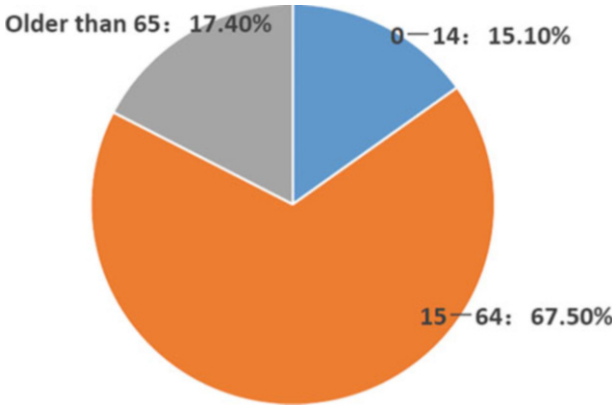

Fig. 13.2 Age structure of the Spanish population, 2012

policy of "buy property, get residency," the first group of Chinese new rich, a dozen families from Shanghai, were granted automatic residency in early 2014. More are expected.

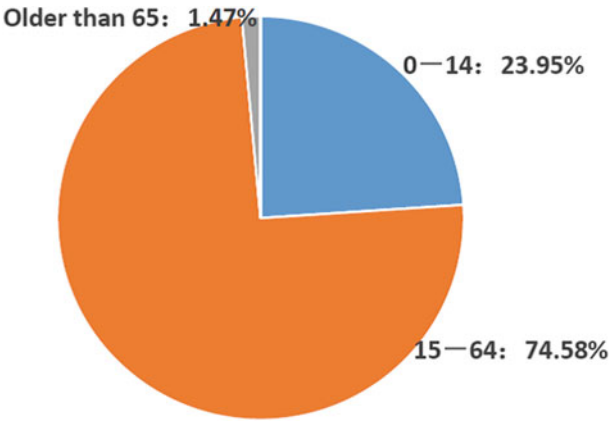

Fig. 13.3 Age structure of the Chinese immigrants in Spain, 2013

Table 13.6 Dependency ratio of Spanish population and Chinese immigrants in Spain, 2013

	Total dependency ratio	*Child dependency ratio*	*Age dependency ratio*
(A) Spanish population	48	22	26
(B) Chinese immigrants in Spain	34	32	2
(A) : (B)	+14	−10	+24

Source: Gobierno de Espana Ministerio de Empleoy Seguridad Social, Extranjeros Residentesen Espana: A 31 de Marzo de 2013

Statistics show that Chinese immigrants live in big cities. In Madrid, 71 % entered directly from China, but 29 % went by way of another place. Some 94 % of Chinese immigrants do not take Spanish nationality, although 57 % claim they would like to be naturalized. Some 63 % are married but only 1 % have a Spanish partner. Some 55 % were originally peasants, 20 % factory workers, 20 % students and the remaining 5 % civil servants, business people and others.[8]

Chinese immigrants in Spain have a strong enterprising drive. This links to their economic activities, which are discussed in the following section.

Economic Activities

Like those of Chinese immigrants in other European countries, the economic activities of the Chinese in Spain were traditionally focused on catering. However, since the late 1990s, they have diversified. The Chinese immigrant economy in Spain was flourishing until the global economic crisis in 2008.

The Catering Business

In 1953 the first Chinese restaurant was set up in Madrid by Lin Lianshui, a Zhejiangese. In 1965 there were five Chinese restaurants there. In 1975, Chen Diguang was the first Qingtianese migrant since the establishment of the PRC to set up a restaurant in the capital. His menu catered to both Chinese and Spanish tastes and was taken as a model by other Chinese restaurants. In 1978, King Juan Carlos of Spain visited Beijing and ate with chopsticks. Suddenly large numbers of Spanish people started frequenting Chinese restaurants. In 1979 there were 59 in Madrid, rising to more than 500 in the early1990s. The number peaked in early 1996, with more than 4000 Chinese restaurants all over the Spain, the golden age of Chinese catering in the country.[9]

The boom attracted more new immigrants from China, so competition increased. Few cooks had much professional training—most were peasants with no knowledge of catering. The only way forward was to cut prices. In the summer of 1996, local public health department officials found that some Chinese restaurants were using out-of-date food in their cooking. Chinese catering suffered a disastrous decline almost overnight. More than 300 Chinese restaurants went bankrupt within a year. Those restaurants that survived paid more attention to regularizing their business, while some Chinese sought other economic niches.

After 2000, Chinese restaurants in Spain followed a relatively stable line of development. The number of restaurants is around 3000 but they are moving in different directions, not only because of competition but also because of shifts in Chinese owners' marketing strategy.

At the high end of the trade, restaurants created a sophisticated environment in which to enjoy genuine Chinese cuisine. There are only a handful of such restaurants. The decor is Spanish and the restaurant is clean and quiet, with small candles rather than big red lanterns and soft Western classical

music instead of Chinese music. The service is adapted to the Spanish palate. Most customers are Spanish.

Other restaurants meet the needs of Chinese customers. Some smaller ones provide cheap Chinese-style snacks, while bigger ones also cater to tourists from China. The big Chinese restaurants often have a hall that can be used for banquets on the occasion of a wedding or Chinese associations' meeting. Customers talk loudly while toasting one another. Some restaurants provide karaoke equipment. Some Chinese like to enjoy themselves by whooping, talking and shouting.

Two other trends are worth mentioning. One is the emergence of the so-called "wok restaurant." The most important feature of this kind of restaurant is that it has an open kitchen. Chinese kitchens are often criticized on account of their unsanitary conditions, so wok restaurants show a clean and open kitchen to convince customers of their hygiene. Customers pick up half-prepared meat, seafood and vegetables from a set of open glass cupboards and hand them to the chef, who cooks in front of them. However, wok restaurants do not usually have much of a menu beyond three or four types of dish: very spicy, spicy, not very spicy or not at all spicy. Some professional Chinese chefs despair at this development, which they believe spells death for the reputation of Chinese cuisine. When wok restaurants first emerged in around 2000, they flourished, but the model quickly declined.

Some Chinese migrants have become owners of Spanish cafés. Although the profit margins for running a café are small, it needs little investment and can function as a family business. Cafés are deeply integrated into Spanish daily life. There is no need to worry about a shortage of customers. To increase the profits, some owners have developed a new range of services. For instance, coffee can be ordered by phone and delivered to the customer's shop or office.[10] The working hours of these Chinese cafés are long and they stay open until the last guest leaves. By the end of 2014 there were at least 8000 Chinese cafés in Spain.

Made in China

Since around 2000, selling Made in China goods has become the main Chinese economic activity in Spain. The Chinese working in this field include street peddlers, stall keepers, grocery-shop owners, supermarket owners and wholesale business people, as well as multinational companies.

Quite a few Chinese-run import-export companies, goods wholesalers and commercial malls of various sizes have been set up in Spanish cities.

In Madrid, Chinese shops first appeared in Lavapies in the mid-1990s. In 1996 about a dozen Chinese shops were selling clothes imported from China. Many Spanish buyers were attracted by the modern style and cheap price. Chinese business in the district peaked between 2000 and 2006, and Chinese wholesale shops there increased to more than 500. The Chinese with savings rushed to Lavapies to open businesses, and the price of real estate there shot up. A storefront valued at EUR230,000 in 1999 would fetch EUR1 million in 2006, according to a Chinese store owner.[11] The heavy traffic and the noise greatly disturbed people's daily lives. The conflict between Chinese (and some Arab) owners and local people reached breaking point.

In 2006 the local government regularized business in the district. Trucks were only allowed into the area to load or unload goods at certain times. The Chinese shop owners sent representatives to talk with the local government, but to no avail. Business suffered as a result

Some Chinese then moved their businesses to Fuenlabrada, a satellite town of Madrid. In 1991, Extrastar became the first Chinese company to set up an office and workshop there. After 2000, more Chinese moved to the area, where real estate was much cheaper and transportation relatively convenient. After 2006, Chinese wholesale stores transferred from Lavapies to Fuenlabrada. Very quickly, hundreds of Chinese wholesale stores sprang up there. By 2008 the Chinese commercial center in the district was the biggest not only in Spain but in the whole of Southern Europe. In 2012, Chinese firms in the area did business worth EUR870 million a year. Of the 800 businesses there, 377 were Chinese-run, employing about 3000 people.[12]

In addition to Lavapies and Fuenlabrada, there are a couple of other large-scale Chinese commercial centers in Spain. In Barcelona, a Chinese commercial center arose in Trafalgar; in Valencia, there is one in Ruzafa; and there is another in Elche, a commercial center in the El Carrus district. They are wholesale centers selling products Made in China products at low prices.

The redistribution chain is formed by thousands of Chinese-run street shops. These are called Bai Yuan Dian in Chinese and *tiendas de todo a cien* in Spanish. The area of each shop is around 100 sq. m and the price of each item was supposed to be less than 100 pesetas (before the appearance of the Euro).[13] The operating costs of such shops are low because their owners

obtain the merchandise from Chinese wholesale centers on credit. Often the owner of a Bai Yuan Dian orders merchandise from a relative's wholesale company. Each wholesale company is supported by a network formed by the owner's relatives, fellow villagers and close friends. Often deals are done in cash to avoid tax. Since the late 1990s, Bai Yuan Dian have spread across the whole of Spain. A review by a Chinese association shows that there were more than 10,000 in 2014. After 2010, when the economic crisis in Spain deepened, Bai Yuan Dian started expanding again. Since the beginning of 2010, some occupy up to 3000 sq. m of space. The decor has improved. In February 2011, the largest ever Bai Yuan Dian was opened in Cobo Calleja in Madrid, occupying 600 sq. m. However, within a month, another even larger one opened in Galicia, occupying an area of 11,000 sq. m.

This business model is a double-edged sword from the perspective of the local authorities. Spaniards benefit more or less from the range of products but the grey economy, both of sellers and buyers, breaches Spanish trading rules. Chinese business people have encountered serious challenges in recent years, as I show in the following section.

These Chinese commercial centers, together with the thousands of Bai Yuan Dian, symbolize the Chinese economic presence in Spain. In each center, dozens or hundreds of wholesale shops and stores stand side by side. An estimate made in 2010 by a local Chinese association leader pointed out that the turnover value of all these shops had reached at least RMB5 billion per year.

Newly Emerged Economic Sectors

In addition to the large Chinese commercial centers and retail shops, new Chinese immigrants have joined other economic sectors.

In Usera, a Chinatown in Madrid, south of Lavapies, almost all the businesses deal in wholesale clothing. Alongside a couple of Bai Yuan Dian are all kinds of services needed by new Chinese immigrants. Most are provided by the Chinese for the Chinese. In Usera, and in other Chinese commercial centers, shop signs in both Chinese and Spanish advertise Chinese mobile phones, computers with Chinese software, Chinese printing services, wedding photography, Chinese bookstores, beauty salons designed to suit Chinese hair and skin, and decor items for Chinese restaurants and Chinese households. Chinese travel agencies selling airplane tickets have existed for decades, but now they also provide tourist services all over the world. More Chinese immigrants, particularly members of the younger generation, now enjoy worldwide travel. Chinese clinics sell herbs,

and provide acupuncture and massage services. Chinese law firms, accounting firms and broker agencies provide services in Chinese. Translation and consultant agencies advertise that they are willing to provide any official documents needed. Even Chinese gambling parlors can be found here and there.

Vegetable farms have been set up by new Chinese immigrants in Spain. The immigrants rent farms from Spanish people and plant Chinese cabbage, cucumber, water spinach, bitter gourd and other vegetables that Chinese people like. They meet the needs of Chinese restaurants and Chinese migrant families.

Language education, both teaching Chinese to local-born Chinese and Spanish to adults, has become a business. I visited one private Chinese school in Madrid in 2014. The founders are a Chinese couple. The wife, a primary-school teacher before migrating to Spain, is president and her husband is legal representative. The school has recruited a few hundred students in different age groups. Two three-storey residential buildings were rebuilt to meet the needs of the school. In Barcelona I visited another Chinese school, said to be the largest in Spain. It has just bought an old warehouse to be renovated as a school building with 14 classrooms and a big meeting hall. It seems that both schools are making big profits.

Some Chinese enterprises have established their own brands in Spain. The following are among the successful brands set up by new Chinese immigrants: Extrastar, Artesolar, Kde, Newness, Muralla, Modelisa, Patriot Sport and Livefish. An Extrastar battery costs more than a Sony battery because of its high quality; the Muralla clothing brand store has been named as the Chinese Zara in Spain.

New Chinese immigrants in Spain are highly entrepreneurial. In 2013, 22,400 Chinese adults lived in Madrid. Some 46.72 % (10,471) had registered as self-employed or entrepreneurs.[14] A report published in September 2015 pointed out that the number of Chinese entrepreneurs has kept on rising, despite the economic crisis. In 2008 the number of Chinese registered as self-employed was 22,631. This increased to 47,174 in September 2015. Among these self-employed Chinese immigrants, some 70 % are in commerce while most own clothing shops, Bai Yuan Dian and grocery shops.[15]

Social Challenges and Adaptation Strategies

Before the end of the Cold War, most Chinese in Spain preferred to lead their social lives out of sight of Spanish society. Their contacts with Spanish people were mostly limited to the interiors of Chinese restaurants. They

remained a silent group, not only because the community was rather small but because it tried to solve its problems by itself. However, new Chinese immigration and Chinese economic strength have made new Chinese immigrants more visible. The Chinese came with empty hands but accumulated much wealth and property in a short period of time. Spanish manufacturers say that cheap Chinese imports have damaged their businesses; much blame is attached to Chinese immigrant business people because the goods they import are often untaxed and sold illegally. Sensational press reports talk of a "Chinese Mafia."

Chinese business people in Spain face tough challenges. Two incidents serve as examples. One is the "Burning Chinese shoes" episode in Elche in September 2004. Spain used to be a world leader in the manufacture of shoes, Elche, in southeastern Spain, is the capital of Spain's footwear industry. Since 2000, Spanish manufacturers of shoes have been hard hit by imported Chinese shoes, so they have become angry. In September 2004, some footwear manufacturers staged a demonstration with banners reading "Chinese Out." The protest turned into a riot, and two Chinese-owned warehouses and a lorry were set on fire. This incident was blamed by Chinese immigrants on racism.

Another was the so-called "Operation Emperor" launched by Spanish police in October 2012, when police staged raids on alleged Chinese mobsters. Gao Ping, who owned the biggest wholesale business in Fuenlabrada and two art galleries in Madrid and Beijing, and was regarded as one of the most successful new Chinese immigrants from Qingtian, was arrested and charged. More than 80 people were arrested across Spain, 53 of them reportedly Chinese. Spanish police seized EUR6 million in cash in hundreds of raids. A top anti-corruption prosecutor announced that the Chinese mobster network was laundering between EUR200 million and EUR300 million a year, dodging taxes, bribing officials and forging documents. Chinese business people in Fuenlabrada were shocked and scared. A spokesperson for the PRC government said that China was "deeply concerned." On November 3, 2012, Chinese business people in Fuenlabrada staged a strike in protest against the police crackdown on alleged money laundering. They said that Operation Emperor had stigmatized all Chinese immigrants in Spain.

These two events can be seen as representative of the serious challenges facing Chinese immigrants, alongside numerous raids on Chinese businesses, shops and companies by police officers, tax collectors and other officials. It seems that the Chinese immigrants still face formidable obstacles that derive from cultural differences.

There is no doubt that much Chinese economic activity in Spain is in cash transactions, which is unlawful. Dodging taxes, bribing officials and forging documents is also not unusual among Chinese, although the talk of a Chinese mafia is exaggerated. What causes these phenomena?

Most Chinese in Spain come from rural areas such as Qingtian and are economic migrants. They emigrate simply to escape poverty and become rich. They dream of making enough money to return home. But how much is enough? To satisfy their endless ambition, they pile up ever more wealth to banish the memory of poverty. They define success primarily in monetary terms. Deviant activities may become normal, particularly when success is posed in terms of a market narrative. These values persist among first-generation economic migrants of all nationalities.

Their strategy, like that of many other migrant groups, is to challenge existing rules and avoid punishment. They rely on cash transactions, dodge taxes, and forge documents. If illegal migration practices can be legalized, why not economic activities in fields regarded as illegal or even criminal? Some of these activities are undertaken together with Spanish entrepreneurs. A report published by the Spanish National Financial Ministry points out that the country's underground economy accounted for 17.8 % of GDP in 2008 and 24.6 % in 2012. The World Bank reports that it accounts for 20 % of world GDP and more than 40 % in developing countries.

The underground economic activities of Chinese in Spain are closely connected with the clan, co-villager and friendship network, which is hard to track. The amounts accumulated are very large. One Chinese entrepreneur claimed that the Chinese have studied Spanish law and know where the loopholes are, so they are able to make extra profits and escape conviction in a cat-and-mouse game with the Spanish authorities.

Some difficult challenges have to be resolved through greater interaction and mutual development. After the Elche incident, Chinese business people took three countermeasures to meet the challenge, including hiring a lawyer to sue for human rights violation, organizing a Chinese footwear trade association for self-protection, and suggesting that Chinese shoe firms employ more Spanish workers. However, the situation had not improved by 2008, when the demand for shoes in Spain decreased but increased in China, particularly for high-quality shoes made in Spain. In 2008 the total turnover of Spanish-made shoes in China reached EUR9.6 million, then EUR31.5 million in 2012. In other words, while Chinese shoe firms sell EUR10 shoes in Spain, the amount has reached EUR47.8 in China. Does the future of Spanish footwear manufacture lie in China? A new trend is for

cooperation between Spanish and Chinese footwear manufacturers to explore the new market in China. Spanish red wine and olive oil have found a market in China as a result of the activities of Chinese business people in Spain. In 2009, Spanish ham valued at about EUR20,000 was imported to China, and this reached more than EUR90 million in 2012. In 2011, China imported 74 million liters of Spanish red wine, and 100 million liters in 2013. "Nowadays Chinese immigrants help us profit from China's huge market. Spanish business people should leap at this money-making opportunity," said a Spanish businessman in November 2013 when interviewed by a Chinese journalist in Madrid.[16]

Conclusion

Spain, a non-traditional destination for Chinese migrants, has become one of their major targets. In the past, far fewer Chinese went to Spain than to the UK, France or the Netherlands. Spain only after the 1980s became an attractive destination. The economic boom and the amnesties have formed obvious pull factors.

The theory of labor-market segmentation suggests that foreign workers often accept relatively dirty, dangerous, difficult and demeaning jobs in the secondary sector. The purpose of the continual redefinition of immigration policy in Spain is to attract the manual laborers that the country badly needs. They are expected to work in agriculture, construction, household services, street cleaning and so on, like the Romanians and Moroccans in Spain. Among the new Chinese immigrants, however, as many as 23.89 % are *autónomo* (i.e., "their own boss"). Among Chinese adults in Madrid, 10,471 are bosses, representing 46.72 % of the local Chinese adult population.[17]

The new Chinese immigrants in Spain want not simply to escape poverty but to achieve upward social mobility. Their strategy is to set up their own businesses, no matter how difficult it is to do so. Chinese immigrants do not fill the labor vacuum as expected, and even dare to challenge existing laws by importing cheap made in China goods and trading in a semilegal way. This is a challenge to the conventional Spanish market. The campaigns against the so-called "Chinese mafia" are not conflicts between immigrants and natives but signs of rising competition in business circles. The new challenges facing Chinese immigrants in Spain cannot be met simply by improving cultural

integration; they must be studied from the point of view of economic competition. It is easy to call transnational activities illegal, but more effort is needed to explore whether or not they are acceptable.

Notes

1. I should like to thank Ma Zhuomin, a Chinese amateur historian in Barcelona, for providing me with his unpublished manuscript, "A Brief History of Chinese in Spain" (in Chinese), and letting me quote from it.
2. It is said that quite a number of these students went to the USA after spending some time in Spain, but direct written records need to be identified.
3. The statistics are from the *Overseas Chinese Economic Yearbook*, published by the Overseas Chinese Economic Yearbook Compiling Committee, Taiwan.
4. The relevant statistics were compiled by the author from Antolin (1998); *Ouzhou shibao* (Chinese newspaper published in Paris), August 4, 2000; *Puhua bao* (Chinese newspaper published in Lisbon), January 2, 2007.
5. Thanks to Mr. Xu, honorary chairman of the Association of Chinese in Spain, for providing me with the report.
6. Arup Banerji and economist Mukesh Chawla of the World Bank predicted in July 2007 that half of Spain's population will be older than 55 by 2050, giving Spain the highest median age of any nation in the world (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageing_of_Europe#Spain).
7. *Yu Xibanya zishen jizhe tan Huayi yangnv beisha an* [《与西班甩资深庭审记者谈华裔养女被杀案》Talk with a Spanish journalist about the murder of an adopted Chinese girl] *Ouhua Bao* November 6, 2015 (http://chinatown.ouhua.info/news/2015/11/06/2083183.html). Recheck on 14 August 2016.
8. Report provided by Mr. Xu Songhua, honorary chairman of the Association of Chinese in Spain.
9. Fieldwork notes in November 2014; consulted with Mr. Ma Zhuomin, a Chinese amateur historian in Barcelona.
10. When I did my fieldwork in Spain in November 2014, I was frequently welcomed by the owners of Chinese shops. They often ordered coffee or soft drinks for me from a nearby Chinese Café by phone.
11. Zhongguo Xinwen (China News) (June 11, 2006) *Shinian chuangchu yipian tian* [《十年闯出一片天》 Set up successful business in ten years], (http://www.chinanews.com/news/2006/2006-06-11/8/742345.shtml), accessed on July 30, 2016.
12. "Spain Raids Chinese Mob, Arrests 80", *South China Morning Post*, October 17, 2012. http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1062995/spain-raids-chinese-mob-arrests-80, accessed on May 4, 2016.
13. When Spain entered the Eurozone in 1999, the exchange rate was 168 Pesetas to EUR1.

14. News published by GQB website (国务院侨务办公室网站新闻) (August 29, 2013)*Xibanya Madrid Huaren laoban guowan, zhan Huaren banshu* [西班甩马德里华人老板过万,占华人总数过半More than 10,000 Chinese in Madrid are bosses, formed nearly half of the Chinese community] (http://www.gqb.gov.cn/news/2013/0829/30916.shtml), accessed on July 30, 2016.
15. Zhongguo Xinwen (China News) (September 22, 2015) *Xibanya guoban Huaren zuo laoban, jingji weiji hou zizhu chuangye zeng 109%* [《西班甩过半华人做老板 经济危机后自主创业增109%, More than half of the Chinese immigrants in Spain are bosses. The number of Chinese who have set up their own businesses has doubled since the economic crisis] (http://www.chinanews.com/hr/2015/09-22/7537193.shtml), accessed on July 30, 2016.
16. Ou Hua Wang (www.ouhua.info) (November 16, 2013) *Lv Xi Huaren: Cong yimin dao tozizhe* [《旅西华人:从移民到投资者》 Chinese in Spain: From immigrants to investors] (http://chinatown.ouhua.info/news/2013/11/16/1957714.html). Recheck on 14 August 2016.
17. News published by GQB website (国务院侨务办公室网站新闻)(August 29, 2013)*Xibanya Madeli Huaren laoban guownag, zhan Huaren zongshu guo ban* [《西班甩马德里华人老板过万,占华人总数过半》. More than 10,000 Chinese in Madrid are bosses, forming nearly half of the Chinese community] (http://www.gqb.gov.cn/news/2013/0829/30916.shtml). Recheck on August 14, 2016.

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