

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME?

SPANISH IMMIGRANTS IN GERMANY

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of
Master of Arts
in Social Anthropology
at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

CHRISTINA BORZNER

2004

ABSTRACT

This paper is based on my research among Spanish Immigrants in Germany. In-depth interviews, participant observation and a questionnaire were being used to explore, which meanings “home” can take on in the context of migrants’ experiences in the migration process. Different aspects are considered, like background of the migration, development of long-term settlement, language and social networks to get an insight in the migrants’ physical and emotional involvement in both, Germany and Spain.

I argue that the experiences and concepts of home in this context do not have to be limited to either the country of origin or the country of destination, but can entail both. The preservation of Spain as the true homeland does not have to preclude an emergent sense of home in Germany at the same time. Furthermore, I propose that the physical as well as cognitive movement between both countries might be an integral part of the migrants’ conception of home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the people who contributed to the success of this project in so many different and important ways.

I am grateful to my supervisor Graeme Mcrae for making this thesis and the research in Germany possible by offering to supervise it via email and for his continuous support and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Anne Dupuis for sharing her literature and to Eleanor Rimoldi, Kathryn Roundtree and my classmates Penny and Gregg for contributing ideas and valuable feedback in the very early stages of the project.

I am very thankful to all my family for their interest and belief in me. I owe special gratitude to my grandmother Lina for her love, trust and huge financial support and my mother Angelika for the most thorough proof reading and, above all, for being such an important part of what means home to me, physically as well as emotionally. With you in the world I can never become homeless.

I also want to thank my friends Heidi and Nicole for many relaxing evenings and lots of fun helping me to take my mind off work from time to time and regain energy and Kristy who, though she could not be here with me, never stopped to encourage me in countless emails.

Last but not least I owe a huge debt to all the Spaniards who consented to be interviewed or talk to me at the Centro Español and the participants of the questionnaire, sharing bits of their personal experiences of migration and home with me. Among the participants a special thank you goes to Maria Jesus who introduced me to the Centro Español and also was a big help where language issues arose.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Setting and Methods of the Research.....	3
1.2 Limitations.....	4
2. Home and Migration.....	8
2.1 Towards a Multidimensional Understanding of Home.....	8
2.2 Migration Processes and Transnational Realities.....	10
3. Migration to Germany in the 20 th Century.....	15
3.1 Building up Germany with Foreign Workers.....	15
3.2 Stopping Immigration Flows – New Alien Policies in the 70ies.....	19
3.3 Changing Immigration Landscapes.....	22
3.4 Recent Developments.....	25
3.5 Legal Situation of Spanish Immigrants.....	26
4. Centro Español - Spanish Community Support in Weinheim.....	30
4.1 First Impressions and Contact.....	31
4.2 Activities and Organisation.....	35
4.3 People and Atmosphere.....	37
4.4 A Multicultural Festival in Weinheim.....	42
5. A Sense of Exile, a Sense of Home – Spanish Immigrants in Germany.....	46
5.1 Motivation and Expectations.....	60
5.2 From Interim to Long-term Settlement.....	64
5.3 Language.....	67
5.4 Away From Home.....	70
5.5 Social Networks and Participation.....	73
5.6 Contentment and Intended Return.....	76
5.7 Between Homes – At Home in Between?.....	78
6. Conclusion.....	82
Bibliography	85