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Mediterranean Mosaic

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Writing assignment #1

1/29/2013

Moroccan Immigration to France

The number of Moroccans emigrating has been steadily growing, with 86.2% of them residing in Europe, 34.3% of whom living in France. France is the country with the largest legal Moroccan population, and historical reasons play an important role in explaining this phenomenon. French colonialism in Algeria in 1830, and the establishment of the French-Spanish protectorate over Morocco in 1912 both stimulated the economic activities in the Maghreb region and brought forth huge demand for unskilled labors. Such situations opened up a broad avenue for Moroccan migration into France before the First World War. During WWI and WWII periods, demand for soldiers and labor force continued to encourage more recruitment of Moroccans to France. The combination of the above factors forms the basis for the large number of Moroccan immigrants to France.

Just as in most other European countries, in France the early Moroccan immigrants were mostly consisted of men who tried to earn a living and support their family in Morocco from abroad. But recent surveys show considerably larger number of registered female Moroccan, mainly the result of family reunification, which speaks for the growing number of Moroccan immigrants in France. In regards to occupation, more than half of the immigrants are low-skilled workers (55.1%). This situation is the result of active recruitment of cheap labor

France held in the rural area of Morocco, where people are more likely to be lowly educated.

Lately, with the tightening up of immigration limits, the annual growth rate of Morocco immigrants in France has decreased. Such change signaled the shift of immigrant destination towards new immigrant countries in Europe, such as Spain and Italy.

Moroccan Immigration to Spain

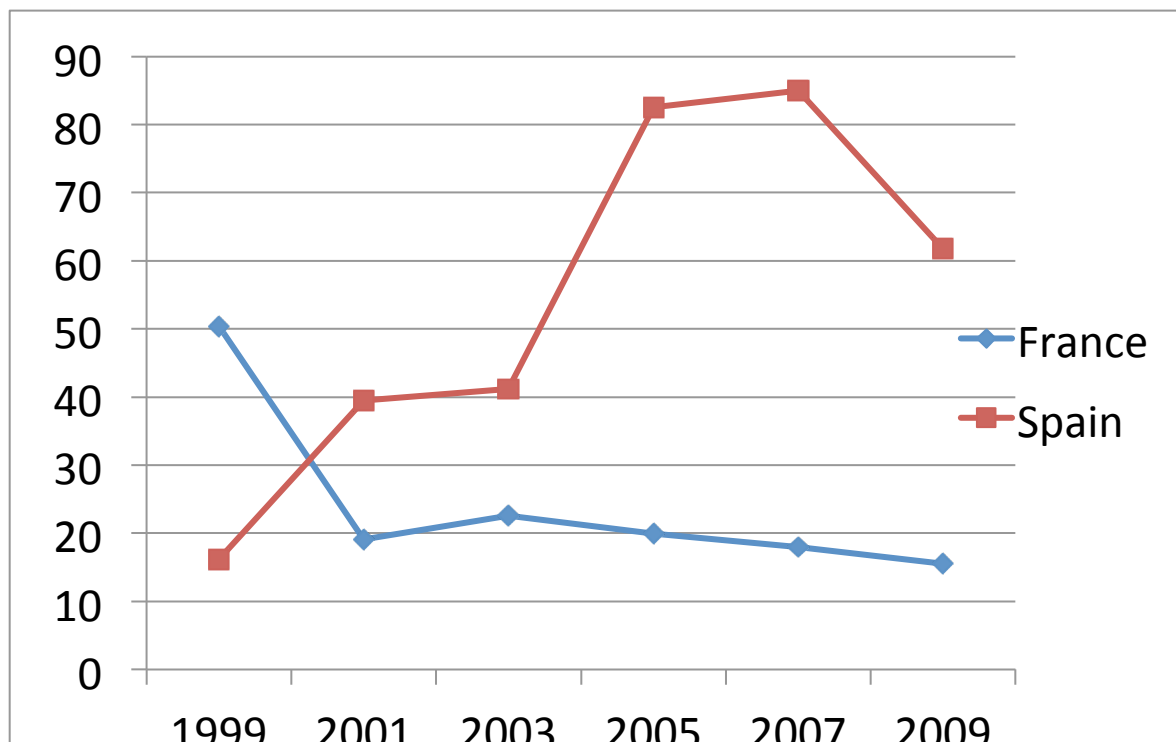
Spain is one of the major destinations of Morocco immigration, with a Moroccan population of 1311000 by 2007, constituting 16.6% of all the Moroccans living in Europe. When old Moroccan immigrant destinations like France tightened up their immigration restrictions around 1990s, Moroccan migrants heading to Spain increased considerably, making Spain a new migrant destination. This new trend could be seen from Spain's 1993-2007 average annual Moroccan population growth rates of 52.2%, which much surpasses that of France: 4.8%. In addition, the special geographical proximity of Spain and Morocco also makes Spain a good migrant destination for Moroccans. Adding to this fact is Spain's continual high demand of low-skilled, cheap labor, which attracts Moroccan migrants despite the increase in immigrant restrictions.

An increasing number of irregular and undocumented Moroccans is another feature of Moroccan immigration to Spain. This phenomenon mainly stems from the increase in restrictive policies and border control in main EU immigrant countries. The Spain's new visa requirements in 1991 enable Moroccans to enter Spain as tourists, while staying permanently in Spain as irregular immigrants. In addition, attempting to cross to Spain enclaves in Morocco, and travelling across the Gibraltar Strait to Spain illegally are other avenues for Moroccans to enter Spain as undocumented migrants. Because of those avenues, Morocco

has increasingly become the transit country of other Sub-Saharan countries whose emigrants eventually aim at crossing into Spain territory.

In Spain, 78.1% of the Moroccan population has low level of education, and 61.7% of the Moroccans work in low-skilled occupations, which are often for male workers. Female Moroccans in Spain only consist 33% of all Morocco immigrants. This underrepresentation of women stems from Spain's relatively later inflow of Moroccan migrants whose process of family reunion is not as fully launched as that of France. In addition, remittance from Spain to Morocco helps alleviate poverty in Morocco and boost the Moroccan economy, which shows the strong link between Moroccan migrants and their home community.

Number of Moroccan Immigrants to France and Spain (By Thousand)



Source: OECD.Stat Extracts, Axel Kreienbrink.

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