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RELIGION, IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION IN CASTILLA AND LEON

RELIGIÓN, INMIGRACIÓN E INTEGRACIÓN EN CASTILLA Y LEÓN

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the processes of change in the study of the integration of immigrants in Spain, specifically in Castilla y León, their religiosity and the meaning of religion in their integration. The majority of immigrants residing in Spain declare themselves to be believers and practitioners of their religion, hence knowing about coexistence and their religious practices. A quantitative/qualitative study is used as it helps us to understand the relationship between the importance of religion and social participation as a factor of integration. From the study it is extracted, the low tendency to the relations with other cultures and the little social and cultural participation, makes difficult the integration of some ethnic/religious groups. Religiosity increases as integration decreases, this is a consequence of people locking themselves into their ethnic/religious group. Muslims have more difficulties integrating, mainly due to cultural and religious differences.

Keywords: Castilla and Leon (Spain); Immigrant; Integration; Religiosity; Religious minorities.

Resumen: Este trabajo analiza el proceso de cambio en el estudio de la integración de los inmigrantes en España, concretamente en Castilla y León, su religiosidad y el significado de la religión en su integración. La mayoría de los inmigrantes que residen en España se declaran creyentes y practicantes de su religión de ahí conocer la convivencia y sus prácticas religiosas. Se recurre a un estudio cuantitativo/cualitativo pues nos ayuda a conocer la relación entre la importancia de la religión y la participación social como factor de integración. Se observa que, la baja tendencia a las relaciones con otras culturas y la escasa participación social y cultural, dificulta la integración de algunos grupos étnicos/religiosos. La religiosidad aumenta a medida que desciende la integración, esto es consecuencia a que las personas se encierran en su grupo étnico/religioso. Los musulmanes tienen más dificultades para integrarse, principalmente por las diferencias culturales y religiosas.

Palabras clave: Castilla y León (España); Inmigrantes, Integración; Minorías religiosas; Religiosidad.

1. Introduction

Religion is a complex social fact that it can only be understood through other simpler social facts. According to this, Durkheim defines religion as a solidarity system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things. In other words, beliefs and practices that come together in the same moral community, called the Church. Second, the functional interpretation of religion. This perspective highlights the role that religion plays in society. For Luhmann, member this perspective, religion is as a social function of the global social system, and thus preserves its contextual relationship with the latter. The religious system remains, despite the functional specification, as a social system where a multiplicity of functions must be satisfied at the same time. Throughout human evolution, religion has occupied a predominant place in society, although the different social transformations have relegated religion to a secondary place, but it continues to play an important role. This relevance placed religion as a dependent variable in Durkheimian thought. Facts and social changes influence facts and religious changes. Bajzek state that some sociologists consider that religious events can be essentially reduced to their social causes. Then, religion is only understandable in terms of the demands of social systems. In this sense, the analytical development exposed by Milanesi and Cervera they describe different integrating functions of religion and worship: 1) The eminently social function: symbolic projection of the social ethos and whose purpose is elicit feelings of dependency and trust from the group. As well as availability for cooperation and altruism in society. 2) The disciplinary function, educating in solidarity and social self-denial through the renunciation of something offered in sacrifice. 3) The recreational function: parties, folklore and artist expressions that accompany the rite. It has the power to reduce tensions and keep individuals in the social roles of the group. Functionalists contend that religion serves several functions in society. Religion, in fact, depends on society for its existence, value, and significance, and vice versa. Theorists like Durkheim or Sapir understood religion as a basic social institution that fulfilled positive functions, that is, it was a source of social solidarity, and it provided peace and inner comfort to the individual. In addition, it provides individuals with belonging to a community. Other theorists like Marx, Sumner and Keller or Thomas O’dea have pointed out the dysfunctional of religion. Religion is a form of alienation because it is a human invention that comforts man from the sufferings in this world, diminishes revolutionary capacity and legiti-

mizes oppression. Both perspectives in the study of religion and especially in the case of immigration have to be included.

New perspectives have emerged regarding religion. For example, that the religion has been revalued and conceptualized in terms of its relevance to the ideals of tolerance, equality, pluralism and human rights. In addition, different theories exist on how religiosity is impacted by international migration. For example, who focused on the role of religion in the processes of social integration and religious assimilation of migration flows in host societies. On the other, theories that emphasize the limits, symbolic borders, and barriers produced by religious diversity that contribute negatively to inclusion, through creating segregated communities. Finally, who state that migration has a theologizing effect, arguing that it increases the religious participation and spiritual beliefs. Arguments in favor of the theologizing effect argue that the unstable period following migration might make a migrant more reliant on the supernatural, spiritual world. Furthermore, the religious community offers many benefits to migrants, for example regarding employment, language classes and social services. The community could also serve as a refuge against racism and feelings of exclusion.

2. Religion in a plural context

In plural societies, religion acquires a double meaning on the one hand, it is an element of identity, because many foreigners seek to maintain their religious belief in the host country. Second, religion serves as an instrument of support for foreigners seeking work, prosperity, etc., acquiring the function of reception and social support.

In these plural contexts, interreligious dialogue is necessary for a coexistence, where it is possible to dialogue, share, learn, cooperate and respect each other among the believers of the different religions. Migratory movements have produced changes in the urban religious landscape. This move makes people in the same neighborhood interact with different religious beliefs. People, who pray and dress differently, live together (Golemboski, 2021). They no longer live on the other side of the world, they live next door, they work together, and their children go to school with our other children. Your children may marry others of a different religion and ethnicity. This religious diversity is present in some countries than in others. Interreligious dialogue seeks understanding in difference, and he must accept the questions that the personal faith of the other provokes in the experience of the other's personal experience.

Interreligious dialogue needs to know the rituals of other beliefs, but also, to know the other beliefs in order to value, analyze and discuss them from a common framework. All religions, when they enter into dialogue, need to undertake a reflective journey within themselves and their own beliefs, that is, an intra-dialogue. Intra-religious dialogue occurs into context, silence, and the mystical experience. The primacy of silence over “the Word” entails the preference for unity as a mystical human experience, since silence is one; the words are many. Therefore, to improve religious practice, it is not necessary to change religion, but to improve the practices and understandings within the religion that one follows.

When someone comes to another country, especially where the culture and beliefs are very different, he relies on related religious-cultural environments. Then it can happen that, he uniquely relationships with people of the same belief and culture. This ends up generating ghettos and reproducing the original models, without participating in the coexistence and cooperation between beliefs and cultures.

In the reception process, religious organizations become very important¹ in helping immigrants who arrive in Spain, and in this specific case in Castilla y León, both from the private and public dimension. They are only sheltering some believers, also responding to basic needs and in some cases in return. A welcome within the contexts of coexistence can be a key element for interreligious dialogue, and avoid clashes of civilizations/religions.

3. Methodology

Some social investigations for decades use different sources of data, research, theories or methods. In these cases, exploratory methods and techniques as well as in the descriptive quantitative methodology is used. That is, both deductive and hypothetical inductive inference apply. This type of mixed methodological approach to the results is significant, as well as the precision and transparency of the analysis².

¹ Cfr. Aguilar, M. I. Diálogo Intra-religioso en Raimon Panikkar: el silencio en el diálogo cristiano-hindú. *Cuadernos de teología* 11, (2019): e3245. <https://doi.org/10.22199/issn.0719-8175-2019-0001>

² We have followed to Tashakkori A, Creswell JW. Editorial: The New Era of Mixed Methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. 1, (1) (2007): 3-7. doi:10.1177/2345678906293042. Molina-Azorin, J.F., Tari, J.J., López-Gamero, M.D., Pereira-Moliner, J., & Pertusa-Ortega, E. The Implementation and Advantages of Mixed

In this case, we have chosen for a mixed methodological integrating exploratory bibliographic and quantitative information integrating exploratory bibliographic and quantitative information. In the study, we used questionnaires, bibliographic review and analysis of empirical and statistical secondary sources; these instruments allowed us to observe how relationships change over time, since they are linked to the context.

The research has consisted of two phases, a first one of bibliographic review on the state of the question and, a second, more operative, through an empirical analysis focused on religion/ society.

3.1. Data Collection

The research carried out 209 surveys with immigrants residing in the Autonomous Community of Castilla and León. A probability sampling for convenience was chosen.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Sample.

Characteristics interviewed.	Description	Dates
Sex/immigrant	<i>Women</i>	41,5%
	<i>Men</i>	58,5%
Average Ages	<i>Immigrant</i>	39 years old
Average educational level	<i>Women</i>	Primary Education
	<i>Men</i>	Secondary Education

Instrument

Questionnaire

To know the degree of social integration and the implication with their religious beliefs, a questionnaire was designed. Moreover, it structured into two blocks. One to know the degree of integration. Made up of a group of subjective and objective questions related to religion. A) Integration questions: where we wanted to know the degree of integration in the host society and its social relationships with ethnically and religiously different people; B Block relationship with religion, it was sought to know its links with religion, effects,

Methods in Competitive Strategy and Management Systems. *International journal of multiple research approaches*, 10 (1) (2018): 412-421. doi:10.29034/ijmra.v10n1a28, because they approach the analysis from mixed methods research.

degree of involvement, etc.; C) Control block, several sociodemographic variables were included. Educational level, they were requested to enter the highest educational level achieved by following the following options: 1 (primary education), 2 (Secondary education), 3 (Professional training/high school), 4 (Degree), 5 (Doctorate). In age, this was required of them. Sex was coded as 0 male 1 female; finally, D) Segmentation block: in order to be able to analyze whether there were differences between population segments, variables such as the type of province of belonging were included in this block, and, to have a greater dimension and data management, was added to the control block.

The validation of the questionnaire went through two processes, the calculation of validity and that of reliability. For validity, the Delphi Technique was used³ and ten experts participated (5 Spanish and 5 foreigners) following the observations of Grisham. The process developed on validation matrices, submitted to a panel of experts. The general calculation of the questions posed in the questionnaire was of 94%, 85% of quality assessment and 8% did not have the quality standards. The study rejected them.

Instrument validation

The study did 209 valid questionnaires for a confidence level of 95% for the proportion most unfavorable $p = q = 50$ and sampling error of 4.9%. The statistical analysis used the SPSS 26. A univariate descriptive analysis was performed; the standard deviation, the coefficient of variation, the homogeneity, as well as the kurtosis and asymmetry were calculated. Variables were crossed and the chi-square test to find out if there was a relationship between them.

Reliability analysis

Cronbach's Alpha⁴ used to measure reliability, following the criteria of Cohen, Manion and Morrison. The results of the analysis were $\alpha = 0.797$ for the integration questions and $\alpha = 0.819$ for the group of religion questions. This indicates a good / acceptable internal reliability, being between 0.6 and 0.8.

³ We have used the delphi methodology following the guidelines of García-Ruiz, M. E., y Lena-Acebo, F. J. Aplicación del método Delphi en el diseño de una investigación cuantitativa sobre el fenómeno FABLAB. *Empiria: Revista de metodología de ciencias sociales*, 40 (2018): 129-166. <https://doi.org/empiria.40.2018.22014/>

⁴ Frías Navaro, D. Análisis de fiabilidad de las puntuaciones de un instrumento de medida Alfa de Cronbach: un coeficiente de fiabilidad. Apuntes de SPSS (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia 2019), 171.

Survey Administration

The data for this study come from 209 surveys administered in September to December 2019 to immigrants residing in Castilla y León. Churches, temples and immigration aid centers permission was sought. We left the questionnaires at the centers, and the immigrants had to fill them out and return them. We explain them, that the survey was anonymous and their participation voluntary. We informed to them that it was a university research, and not a study by the Government of Spain. 209 surveys out of 224 were completed.

Study Location

The place of the study was the Autonomous Community of Castilla y León. It is a territory within Spain formed by a new province with an area of 94,224 km². It is the largest autonomous territory in Spain. It has a population of 2,394,918 people, distributed according to age groups, from 0 to 14 years old, 11.66%, from 15 to 65 years old, 62.68% and over 65 years old, 25.65%.

Table 2. Population in Castilla y León (%).

		Spanish		Foreing
	Women	50,77%		51,10%
	Men	49,02%		48,90%
Total		94%		6%

The percentages of foreign population in Castilla y León is as follows, Africa (19.82%), non-EU (2.69%), America, (30.16%), Asia (5.14%), Oceania (0, 05%), Stateless (0.041%), and EU (Schengen area) (42.1%). So the foreign population is very unequal and with different religious beliefs. The study did not analyze the population of the EU (Schengen area) or the US and Canada, as they have special mobility regimes.

4. Results

4.1. Religious behavior of immigration

Religious identity constitutes a central element of analysis, since it is one of the most persistent characteristics preserved by the descendants of

immigrants⁵, even though they have lost the language and multiple cultural characteristics of the country of their ancestors⁶. Religion is part of the most intimate experiences of the person, but in some way, to the sphere of personal intimacy and feeling can be reduced. Religion permeates the life of the person, the family and social groups and, to a certain extent, determines their priorities⁷.

The mosque becomes a center for religious practice, welcoming, meeting and especially identifying for Muslims. When many Muslims arrive in a city they look for a mosque or, failing that, a cultural center run by Muslims, as their first. In Castilla y León, foreign Muslims residing have boosted mosques. The cultural center is the meeting point of Muslims and where the mosque is located. This is by the desire to preserve their identity, customs, traditions and religion. They want their children to keep up their values and customs together with the Spanish education. Therefore, mosques do not have an exclusively religious, cultural and social character⁸.

When immigrants arrive in a country, their space for meeting and socializing is very limited, and in some cases, in the first moments, they do not find that favorable context as security. Only those who enter the country through immigration networks find that possibility. Lacking this socialization network, immigrants look for a favorable context, and this is usually the church, the mosque, the temple, etc. In these places, in addition to sharing their beliefs, they interact with other immigrants, but they also meet other citizens of their country. The prayer centers, depending on the communities, can be very heterogeneous, but also homogeneous. Of course, but with common elements, belief and immigration. This helps to establish relationships that serve to exchange experiences. This informality gives way to exchanging key information for many of them to find a job, social benefits, regularize their situation, lawyers, etc. This makes religious centers fulfill the function of socialization. Newcomers can start the process of redefining identity, and help to integrate into the host society.

⁵ Cfr. Ben-Nun Bloom, P, Arikan, G, & Lahav, G. The effect of perceived cultural and material threats on ethnic preferences in immigration attitudes, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(10) (2015): 1760-1778. DOI:10.1080/01419870.2015.1015581

⁶ Cf. García, P. La inmigración: un nuevo reto para la Iglesia Católica in González Martínez E. (ed.), *Anuario Americanista Europeo*, (Madrid: Redial/CEISAL, 2005), 35-47.

⁷ See Osorio García de Oteyza, M. The religious factor in the integration of immigrants in Spain. *Cauriensia*, 13 (2018): 605-617. //doi.org/10.17398/2340-4256.13.605

⁸ Cfr. Valero-Matas, J.A. Las minorías religiosas en Castilla y León, (Barcelona: Icaria-Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia, 2012), 107.

Another fact that occurs in certain groups of immigrants who practice a certain belief, initially attend a place of worship to be clothed and comply with the beliefs. After a while, when national community acquires a group dimension, they end up selecting a certain place of worship as a reference center. That is, for example, many Colombians attend their religious obligations at the Church of Our Lady of Carmen in Valladolid. Ecuadorians gather in the San Ignacio de Loyola Church. There they feel as a family because they exchange experiences, concerns, talk about their places of origin, etc. In this way, they maintain ties with their country and serve them to claim their particular local identity. In Castilla y León, there have had no fusion of the host religion with the native popular religiosity of the immigrant⁹ as in the United States, that this takes an important place. Immigrant religious communities' transfer their local icons to the host religious community. This is because this practice recognized and accepted by American society.

This is a consequence of the importance of the Catholic tradition in the United States, and therefore, the incorporation of these elements of particular and even local identities is accepted. In Castilla y León that does not happen, but it does not mean that Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Mexicans, etc., residents of Castilla y León have abandoned the local festival. They celebrate it, without having the transnational dimension of events such as those in Madrid or Barcelona, where the communities are more closely related and with larger groups. This can lead to a superficial integration process, that is, at first, they participate, but when an optimal level of coexistence reached, then it produces an investment phenomenon. By grouping in national-local communities, a disintegration takes place. The groups have acquired an important size that begins a process of endogamous relations, maintaining their local or national culture. This has not happened in Castilla y León, but yes, in Barcelona and some towns in Andalusia. As it happens with a large group of the Philippine community who have found in the Church of San Agustín a meeting point for said community¹⁰.

In the case of evangelical Christians, they practice another type of relationship. They are multiethnic churches where there is homogeneity they are the ones who establish the identity codes of congregational, Presbyterian or Episcopal organization.

⁹ Cf. Deguma, J.J., Case, M.S., & Tandag, J.N. Popular Religiosity: Experiencing Quiapo and Turumba, *American Research Journal of Humanities & Social Science*, 2 (6) (2019): 1-11.

¹⁰ See Vida Nueva magazine, summary 2832

4.2. Questions about the integration of immigration. Integration indicators

One of the important questions to know the degree of integration of immigration is to know their participation in different events or social, religious and cultural activities of different social and ethnic groups. As they say Kogan, Fong & Reitz there are studies make sound theoretical foundations on the link between religious affiliation and minorities' socioeconomic and cultural integration, indicate that they are not conclusive.

4.2.1. Participation in events or activities

One of the questions was about his participation in different religious cultural activities. The study revealed a high rate of participation in cultural, social and religious activities, mainly with their culture of origin. 72.3% said they participated in some activity compared to 27.7% of them who said no. Of the immigrants who participate in activities or events, 31.1% attend immigrant meetings, being the most common. 23.5% attend religious events. 6.3% attend cultural events of other cultures or ethnic minorities. Another 4.2% say that it is easy for them to make friends from different cultures and religions, and finally 34.9% do not participate in anything related to culture or religion. Most immigrants seek to reaffirm their identity, as well as to find ties of union with other people in a similar situation, local culture, etc¹¹.

Analyzing by mainland (see table 3), it is observed that Africans and Asians are the ones who most attend meetings with people from their country or mainland (39.8% and 39.4%). In addition, people from this mainland attend other activities not related to cultural and religious themes. Those who most attend religious events are immigrants from outside-EU and Latin Americans with 31.6% and 32.6% respectively.

Relations with other social, ethnic and religious groups are essential to know the degree of integration and social participation. Three questions

¹¹ Cf. Ambrosini, M. Participación religiosa e integración de los inmigrantes. Una reflexión entre América y Europa, entre historia y actualidad. *Migraciones*, [S.l.] 23 (2008): 11-44. Alaminos Chica, A & Santacreu Fernández, O. La integración cultural y social en las migraciones intraeuropeas. *Migraciones*, 30 (2012) 13-42. Frödin, O., Fredholm, A. & Sandberg, J. Integration, cultural preservation and transnationalism through state supported immigrant organizations: a study of Sweden's national ethnic associations. *CMS*, 9 (2021): 35. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00245-1>

were asked, considered important to promote social integration, You share gatherings or other social relationships with members of another religion or culture, You spend leisure time with people outside your religious community (do you have a coffee, watch football games, go to the park with the children, and so on.); You get involved in neighborhood problems.

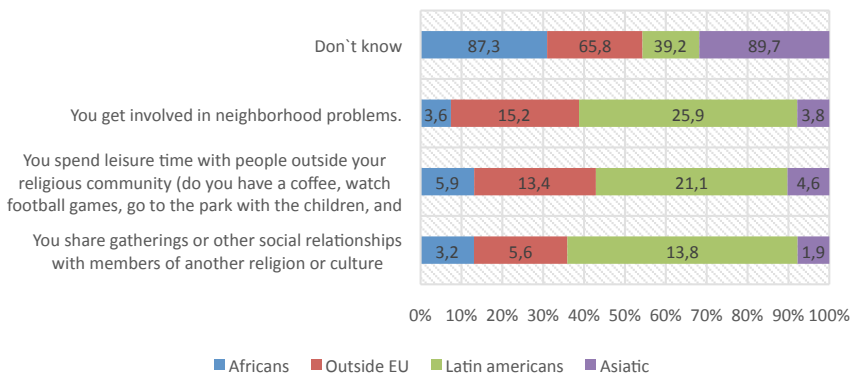
The data show that the majority of immigrants who arrived in Castilla y León are not involved in having a relationship with people of other cultures or beliefs (see Figure 1).

Table 3. Participation in events or activities/ as an indicator of integration.

Participation in events/activities.	Africa	no UE	Latin America	Asia
Attendance at social / cultural events of other ethnic groups	10,5%	10,9%	9,1%	5,2%
Ease of making friends from other cultures	6,2%	9,6%	19,2%	2,3%
Attendance at religious events	28,3%	31,6%	32,6%	4,1%
Meetings of immigrants from my country/mainland	39,8%	38,1%	36,9%	39,4%
None of the above/Others	15,2%	9,8%	2,2%	49%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: GICIPORE survey, 2020

Figure 1. Relationship sharing by continent.



The most active group are Latin Americans, who maintain more or less the same average (25.9%, 21.1% and 13.8%). Although, the language can be a condition that favors integration with the Spanish. However, there are other factors, which the culture will establish, as other cultural groups, such as Asians and Africans are not involved. Since their participation in the questions

consulted, their percentages are very low, as shown in figure 1. Participation in the community is essential for the integration of immigration, if it remains outside; it ends up generating small subgroups within a neighborhood. Giving way to the generation of sub-ghettos within a ghetto, and that will provide conflicts between the different groups, seeking a defense of their territory¹².

As Fitzpatrick said, there is evidence that the immigrant community is the beachhead into the new society. It provides for the immigrant a base of security, peace, and psycho-social satisfaction while he learns to adjust to the new and strange world into which he has come. Had he no such basis of security, the too sudden exposure to a strange culture could be an upsetting shock.

Table 4. Correlations between level of integration and Continent of origin, and Level of integration and Religiousness.

Correlations

		Level of integration	Continent of origin
Level of integration	Pearson Correlation	1	-,222**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001
	N	209	209
Continent of origin	Pearson Correlation	-,222**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	
	N	209	209

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlations

		Level of integration	Religiousness
Level of integration	Pearson Correlation	1	,558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	209	209
religiousness	Pearson Correlation	,558**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	209	209

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Finally, the integration of people is complex, and it is difficult to achieve an optimal degree of assimilation. Culture and religion can be bridges or barriers

¹² Cf. Saiz, A., & Wachter, S. M. Immigration and the Neighborhood. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 3(2) (2011): 169-188. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/pol.3.2.169>

in the integration process¹³, especially when it comes to people with diametrically opposed cultural and religious values¹⁴. Every time is mounting evidence that religious affiliation and individual religiosity play an important role in immigrant integration in terms of individuals' attainment, educational, socio-economic outcomes, employment opportunities and earnings, political orientations¹⁵. Our analysis reveals two important issues; on the one hand, people from the African and Asian continents have the lowest integration rates (24.3% and 16.7% respectively). These people are not very participative in cultural activities (in the city, in the neighborhood, etc.), low participation in religious events unrelated to their belief, little interaction with people of different cultures, and so on. A second fact, depending on religious belief, religiosity can be a bridge or barrier in integration. That is, African, Muslim and religious people have the lowest integration rates (17.9%), while Latin American, Christian and religious people have the highest integration rates (59.4%). (See Table 4).

Although our research cannot affirm this, because there were more men than women in the research sample, gender could influence integration, both as a bridge or a barrier. As Kouros & Papadakis indicate, women tend to be more religious than men are. They can help or hinder assimilation, depending on their status in the religious and cultural community.

b) Religious behavior

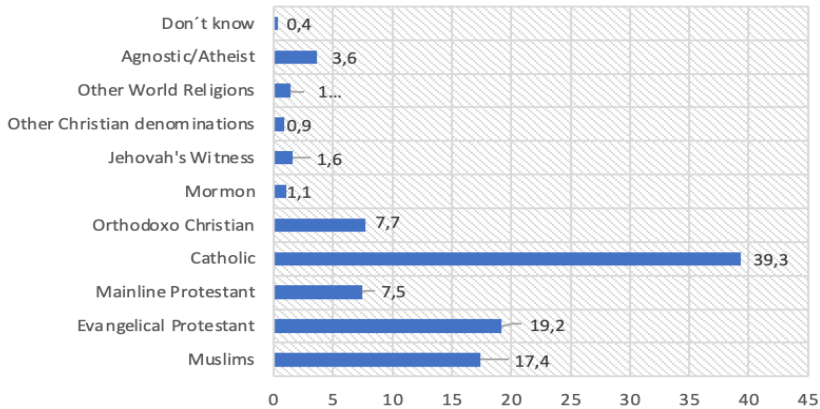
We observed two questions from the data obtained in the study; on the one hand, the immigrants who arrive in Castilla y León are believers of different faiths. As Table 3 shows, the majority are Catholic and come mainly from Latin America. Evangelicals with 19.2% follow this and the third largest belief is Muslim with 17.4%. The data indicate that in Castilla y León there is religious diversity, although not all beliefs have a temple where they can pray. There are no synagogues, so Jews have to move to other nearby places. The same thing happens with the Hindus, they have no place of worship.

¹³ Cf. Van Tubergen, F & Sindradóttir, J.F. The Religiosity of Immigrants in Europe: A Cross-National Study. *JSSR*, 50(2) (2011): 272–288. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2011.01567.x

¹⁴ See Penninx, R. Problems of and solutions for the study of immigrant integration. *CMS*, 7 (2019): 13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0122-x>

¹⁵ Cfr. Harder, N, Figueroa, L, Gillum, R, M, Hangartner, D, Laitin, D, & Hainmueller, J. Multidimensional measure of immigrant integration. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115 (45) (2018): 1483-11488; DOI:10.1073/pnas.1808793115

Figure 2. Beliefs of immigrants from Castilla y León (percentage/ Research Sample)



According to the analysis, many of the immigrants identify with religion, and it is mainly for reasons of tradition or necessity. Among those consulted, 27.7% did not participate in anything. The 73.3% who declared participating in some activity, 34.9% did not participate in anything. Moreover, their main attendance was to meetings with compatriots or from the same continent. Among those immigrants who indicated to go to church, they did not do so regularly or according to the demand of their beliefs. Only 36.1% attended church on the day of worship.

Some of the immigrants consulted would like to attend most frequent religious events, reading the Gospels, attending the temple, participating in religious and spiritual life, but two reasons prevented it. One: work, schedules, trips, etc., and others, the distance to places of worship. Not all beliefs have nearby religious centers. Members of some religions had to travel between 40 and 100 kilometers to go to their religious center. Therefore, this is inconvenient.

Among the self-professed practitioners, they are heavily involved with their beliefs. They feel religion as an important part of their life; they perceive it as a spiritual identification that gives meaning to their life. From the data obtained from the research, there is involvement of immigrants with religious-spiritual life, as stated by 43.1%, but also a significant group (34.4%) gives little importance to religion in their life. Perhaps this is due to the high secularization of world society¹⁶.

¹⁶ Cf. Casanova, J. The Secular and Secularisms. *Social Research*, 76,4 (2009):1049–1066. Stolz J. Secularization theories in the twenty-first century: Ideas, evidence, and problems.

Table 5. Attendance at religious events.

	%
Never	5,7
Rarely	20,5
Several times a year	19,1
Once a year	12,9
The days of worship	36,1
Several times a week	5,4
Don't know	0,3
Total	100

Source: GICIPORE survey, 2020

Table 6. Importance of religion in immigrants.

Very important.	3,9
Somewhat important	39,2
Neutral	14,4
Somewhat unimportant	21,5
Very unimportant	12,9
Don't know	8,1
Total	100

Source: GICIPORE survey, 2020

In the case of the Muslim community that arrived in Castilla y León, they maintain the same dynamics as the rest of the Muslims in Spain. They don't develop a homogeneous collective, as we believe. Their characteristics are subject to different contexts, migration process, gender, nationality, etc., and to the conversion, both of Spaniards who embrace Islam and foreign converts before arrival in Spain. Although the first impression is to perceive a greater conversion of men, reality shows, at least in Castilla y León, a feminization of the conversion to Islam. This because of two facts, either by mixed marriages, or by individual feelings towards this religion without having gone through a marriage. Even so, the conversion in Castilla y León is very low; it does not reach 1%.

In Castilla y León in the 70s of the last century, Muslims came to study at the University of Valladolid. Some married Spanish women and settled

Presidential address. *Social Compass*, 67(2) (2020): 282-308. doi:10.1177/0037768620917320.
 Müller T. Secularisation theory and its discontents: Recapturing decolonial and gendered narratives. Debate on Jörg Stolz's article on Secularization theories in the 21st century: ideas, evidence, and problems. *Social Compass*, 67(2) (2020):315-322. doi:10.1177/0037768620917328

here. In the 80s, there were also groups of Muslims, especially Moroccans, who came looking for employment, and in some cases, they brought their families and in others, they created new families here. Despite this, not all women were converted; most of them maintained their Christian beliefs, their atheism or agnosticism. In fact, a Lebanese doctor with more than 40 years in Castilla y León commented that neither his children nor his wife practice Islam, and when it is the time of Ramadan, he goes to his country to celebrate it with his family Muslim. Another Muslim from Salamanca, who arrived 26 years ago, reflected in the same terms. When I got married, my wife did not practice any religion, she now she agrees to participate in some Muslim events, although she has not converted. However, my daughter, if she practices the Muslim faith. Finally, a Muslim from Burgos, from the Middle East, said that none of his children has embraced the Muslim faith. They have followed her mother's main belief, the Catholic, although none of them practices it. They declare themselves Catholic, but not practicing.

Most of the members of the Latin American community residing in Castilla y León are Catholics. The second largest group are evangelicals. In smaller proportions, there are Mormons, Adventists, Protestants, and some atheists / agnostics. This is due in a way to the growth that took place in the eighties of the last century in Latin America. For immigration, Christian creeds in all their dimensions are an instrument of social articulation and identity. Although, as we have indicated in the text, immigration has not been a determining factor in the religious change, but it has been in the increase of confessions other than the Catholic (dominant belief in Spanish society). However, it has increased considerably, with the arrival of immigration, mosques or oratories, as well as evangelical churches. In the latter case, it makes its structure and management favor its expansion. Reality that does not happen with other denominations.

Discussion and conclusions

Some scholars suggest that the context of immigration, and therefore its integration, is important, because it will facilitate or hinder their integration into the host society. They also consider that immigration has varied substantially between old and new immigrants. According to Xie, & Greenman new immigrants from Latin America and Asia are considered racial / ethnic minorities in America, and their minority status can hinder their full integration into the white middle class. They ask themselves whether the racial / ethnic barriers to the assimilation of new immigrants are now much higher or qualitatively different from previous barriers.

While for Abramitzk, Boustan &, Eriksson the new generations come into contradiction with cultural identity, being an obstacle to assimilate into American society. However, the longer they stay in the country, the more they incorporate the new cultural values. This reality does not occur with the Muslim community in Europe, who are little assimilated, and have more difficulty integrating¹⁷.

There are various theses that the integration policies of European governments, based on multiculturalism have been a failure¹⁸ and instead of achieving integration, rather a reverse process has taken place, generating a rejection, and producing segregation and self-exclusion. On the other hand, Portera considers that multiculturalism has not solved the problems of integration, but it will be possible with interculturalism, which is an approach that favors diversity. Otherwise, Virgili believes that any multicultural and intercultural policy should be abandoned and other elements of social cohesion should be sought. And stop falling into the “exotic” because it does not favor either one or the other and says “those intellectuals and activists so eager to embrace any type of demand, as long as it comes from a” minority “, would do better to remember that the most little of the earth is the individual, whose vibrant polychromy no group can reproduce”.

In the integration / coexistence process, social and political participation occupies an important place. This game implies accepting the social and cultural values of the host society. To participate socially and politically, it is necessary to have trust in the institutions¹⁹, an issue that several studies highlight, the mistrust of some immigrant groups in Europe, hindering their integration and participation. Fact that does not occur in the US, possibly due to the way of understanding immigration, especially its assimilationist model. The lack of participation in civil society may be in the low educational training of immigration, as suggested by some research. The low involvement of immigrants and some immigrant groups means that political participation does not flow, as is the case as Pérez Castaño points out that Islam has not managed to overcome political anonymity, and therefore acquire a broader participatory

¹⁷ Bisin, A, Patacchini, E, Verdier, Th, Zenou, Y. Are Muslim Immigrants Different in Terms of Cultural Integration? *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 6 (2-3) (2008): 445–456, <https://doi.org/10.1162/JEEA.2008.6.2-3.445>

¹⁸ Cf. Cante T. The ‘Failure’ of Multiculturalism. In: *Interculturalism*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137027474_4

¹⁹ Cf. Angenendt, S., Barrett, P. M., Laurence, J., Peach, C., Julianne, S., & Winter, T. *Muslim Integration: Challenging Conventional Wisdom in Europe and The United States*. (Washington, D.C: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2007), 1-17.

dimension. However, there is also the opinion of academics that this lack of participation in civil society is supported by political decisions²⁰.

When immigrants arrive in another country, they do so with symbolic references of their culture of origin, with religion as one of the most important and backbones of their cultural ties. According to this, religious beliefs acquire an important place in the social integration of migrants. As some research indicates, on the one hand, religion can be interpreted as a bridge, facilitating social integration by creating a strong sense of belonging among its parishioners (regardless of their place of birth) and by encouraging church members born in the Foreign. To become more active within your new community. However, differences in religious beliefs can also serve as barriers to this process²¹. As has been happening throughout migratory movements and due to the religious doctrine of the majority of beliefs, religious membership has the instrumental purpose of providing “refuge, respectability and resources” to first and second-generation immigrants who seek identity. In addition, sense of belonging, leadership, upward mobility and an entry into political life²². Religion is a determinant in a wide range of factors, now, the broader social conditions, including sociopolitical, can separate even more to religious groups. It is essential to consider the effects of religion in a transnational context²³.

The study points to large differences between the populations of the continents and religious groups. The cultural factor is decisive in social relations, and therefore in social and political participation. Asians and Africans choose to interact more with people of their ethnic group / continent, while Americans and not the US beat, they are more open to relationships with other cultures. They share activities with other immigrants different from their culture and religion. Although they are not very believers, religion occupies an important place in their daily life. Combining these, two points, and taking into account previous research, we can concluded that the low

²⁰ Kolnberger, T., Koff, H. Addressing seeming paradoxes by embracing them: small state theory and the integration of migrants. *CMS*, 9 (2021):14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00222-8>

²¹ Cf. Conner, N. Religion And The Social Integration Of Migrants In Dublin, Ireland, *Geographical Review*, 109(1) (2019): 27-46, DOI:10.1111/gere.12295

²² Cf. Foner, N., & Alba, R. Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion? *The International Migration Review*, 42(2) (2008): 360-392. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27645255>

²³ Schnittker, J. *Religion, social integration, and depression in Europe: Evidence from the European Social Survey*. *Social Science & Medicine*, (2019) 112376–doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112376

tendency to relationships with other cultures, and the scant social and cultural participation, hampers an integration of some ethnic / religious groups. Consequently, religiosity will increase in reaction to integration as people lock themselves around the homogeneous ethnic / religious group. The study upholds that Muslims have more difficulties integrating, mainly due to cultural differences and religion. The more religious there are the less integration. This also implies self-isolation and relating only to members of their cultural and religious communities. The Asian community, for cultural reasons rather than religious reasons, has low integration rates. Lastly, Latin Americans and outside the US have the highest levels of integration. The religious question (being Christian) and a close culture (Western) are a bridge to integration. In other words, religion (especially highly religious people) and a very different culture set barriers to integration.

Religion may well be an agent of integration or segregation in the host society. This will depend on the distance or proximity of cultural and religious values.

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