

NEW EMIGRATION FLOWS FROM SPAIN TO EUROPE: THE PATH OF ECONOMIC CRISIS AND AUSTERITY POLICIES

Enrique Ortega, * Andreu Domingo* and Albert Sabater**

Submitted to the European Population Conference 2014 to be considered in
International Migration and Migrant Population

Budapest, Hungary
June 25-28, 2014

Abstract

After a period of intensive economic growth and the immigration boom, Spain has been hit hard by the crisis. The impact has been particularly severe in the case of young nationals and immigrant workers, affecting migration trends and patterns. In line with this conjuncture, there has been a sharp decline in the inflows of foreigners followed by a progressive increase in return and re-migration. The deteriorating labor market situation, austerity measures and the lack of economic opportunities resulted in an increase in the outflows of Spanish nationals, both native-born and those foreign-born who acquired Spanish nationality, to other European countries, particularly the United Kingdom, France and Germany. At the same time, the so-called lifestyle migrants from northern and central Europe have also faced the recession, as shown by the decrease in inflows and the rise in departures from Spain. This study analyzes three concurrent migration patterns that characterize a new migratory phase, focusing on those flows with origin in Spain and destination in European countries: 1) Spanish emigration and neo-Hispanic migration; 2) Return of foreign nationals from northern and central European countries; and 3) Re-migration of foreign nationals. This paper adopts a path-creating path-dependence perspective to examine these new emigration flows through an analysis based on microdata from the Residential Variation Statistics of the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE).

Introduction

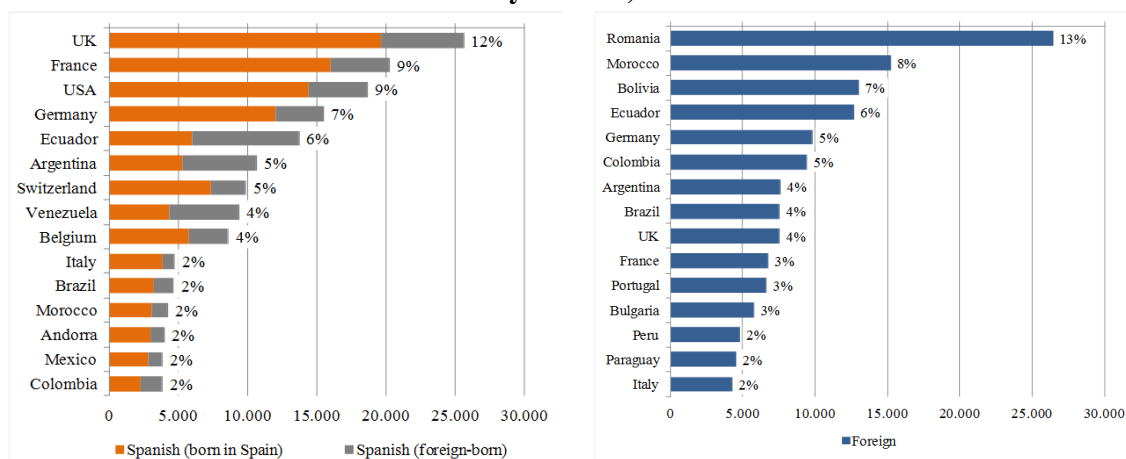
The growth of the Spanish economy between 1995 and 2007 led to an unprecedented migration flow. Spain was Europe's leading destination country between 2000 and 2007, registering over 4.8 million immigrants. The demand for workers in the secondary segment of the labor market, together with selective migration policies and historical and cultural links, led to migration flows dominated by Romanians, Moroccans and Latin Americans (Peixoto et al. 2013). However, the Great Recession has profoundly affected migration processes. Consequently, the academic literature has focused on the Spanish case because of the hardness of the recession and austerity measures, as reflected in the sharp drop in GDP and the increase in unemployment, which affect 27 percent of the labor force. The impact of the crisis and austerity policies has been particularly severe for young people and immigrant workers, affecting migration trends and patterns (Beets and Willekens 2009, Domingo and Sabater 2013, OECD 2013, Papadimitriou and Terrazas 2009). Thus, inflows of foreigners fell by 30 percent compared to pre-crisis levels, while return and re-migration has increased progressively from 232,000 departures in 2008 to over 320,000 in 2012. New trends and patterns were identifiable, among which Spanish emigration to Europe, the USA and some rising economies stood out.

* Centre for Demographic Studies, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.

** School of Geography and Geosciences University of St. Andrews, Scotland, United Kingdom.

Although the absolute numbers remain small, movements of Spanish nationals to other countries have doubled since the onset of the crisis (from 28,000 in 2007 to 56,000 in 2012). Previous work has shown that very diverse flows, in terms of demographic composition and destination countries, converge in current Spanish migration (Figure 1). Along with youth and adult mobility is the concurrent re-migration of naturalized Spanish population, to which we described as “neo-Hispanic” (Domingo et al. 2013).

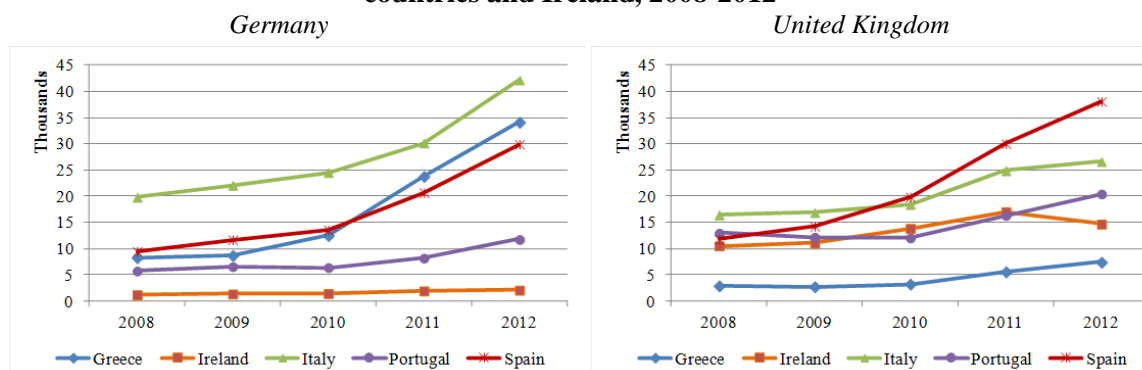
Figure 1. Top destination countries of emigration flows from Spain by nationality and country of birth, 2008-2012



Source: Residential Variation Statistics, NSI

In the European context, the rise in the mobility of workers from southern countries and Ireland is a subject of growing interest. Intra-EU mobility has been conceived both as a factor of labor market adjustment and as an instrument to deepen socio-political integration (Recchi and Favell 2009; Zimmerman 2009). Recent evidence suggest that these countries have experienced an increase in the number of nationals moving to other EU Member States, despite the strong drop in overall intra-EU mobility (European Commission 2012).

Figure 2. Entries in Germany and United Kingdom from South European countries and Ireland, 2008-2012



Source: NINo Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals entering the UK. Department for Work and Pensions 2013 - Bevölkerung und Erwerbstaetigkeit: Vorläufige Wanderungsergebnisse 2012 Statistisches Bundesamt

Data from main destinations such as Germany and the United Kingdom show that they are experiencing a boost in workers from hit-crisis countries (Figure 2). In Germany, immigration flows from Spain rose by 52% between 2010 and 2011, while in the UK the number of entries of Spanish population aged 16 years and above increased by 51%, according to data from national insurance number allocations.

The global conjuncture has also had an impact on so-called lifestyle migration (Benson and O'Rourke 2009). Recent research has revealed changes in migration patterns of British, German, Dutch or Norwegian nationals, among others, settled in Spain. There was a sharp decline in immigration flows to Spanish Mediterranean areas from countries from where lifestyle migrants typically come, coupled with an increase in the number of departures, particularly among individuals in economically active ages (Huete et al. 2013).

The aim of this paper is to contribute to a better understanding of this scenario, based on the analysis of three concurrent migration patterns that characterize a new migratory phase, focusing on those flows with origin in Spain and destination in European countries: 1) Spanish emigration and neo-Hispanic migration; 2) Return of foreign nationals from northern and central Europe; and 3) Re-migration of foreign nationals. Changes in migration patterns are examined through the path-dependency and path-creation perspective (Baláz and Williams 2007). Path dependency and, recently, path creation are concepts widely used in the social sciences. Broadly speaking, path dependency emphasizes the idea that "history matters", that is, the outcomes of contingent process depends on its past history by means of self-reinforcing mechanisms. In contrast, path creation poses a less deterministic approach, suggesting that initial conditions of processes are not given, contingencies are viewed as contexts for action, and self-reinforcing mechanisms can be strategically adapted by agents (Garud et al. 2010). This theoretical framework might be apposite in analyzing the rapid transformation of migratory processes in Spain since the beginning of the economic crisis. Although current emigration from Spain can be considered path-dependent, there are elements of path-creation in the new migratory phase in terms of socio-demographic composition and political and economic conditions. To reach these objectives, we review recent academic literature and examine the socio-demographic characteristics of migration flows.

Data and Methods

Our understanding of the trends and patterns of international migration are hindered both by the lack of statistical information and by inconsistencies in the measurement of the available data. Differences in the concepts and definitions of migration as well as the coverage of statistical systems affect the measurement of migration movements and migrant population stock (Poulain et al. 2006). Given this dearth, we use data from the Residential Variation Statistics (RVS) produced by the Spanish Statistical Office. The RVS provides data on migration flows based on the changes of residence recorded in municipal registers. Microdata give information on sex, age, nationality, country of birth, place of origin, and destination country of migrants. It is important to note the exceptional reliability of the RVS in the reporting and coverage of migration flows because, firstly, there are incentives for the registration of the foreign population in the municipal register – such as access to basic social rights – and, secondly, because no migrant group is excluded from registering. In contrast, the RVS under-reports departures from Spain to other countries, which makes the study of emigration difficult. However, the introduction of administrative tools in the municipal register has made a substantial improvement in capturing departures, particularly of the foreign population.

Expected findings

1. The different modalities and strategies of each flow draw a new geography of international migration in Spain and other European countries.
2. Spanish emigration and neo-Hispanic migration, return and re-migration of foreign nationals are heterogeneous in their demographic composition. Migration of young and adult people coexists with return and re-migration of elderly and adult migrants accompanied by their partners and offspring.
3. Re-migration of foreign nationals, Spanish emigration and neo-Hispanic migration can be seen as emerging forms of circular migration in the EU framework.

References

- Bálaz, V., & Williams, A.M. (2007). Path-dependency and Path-creation Perspectives on Migration Trajectories: The Economic Experiences of Vietnamese Migrants in Slovakia, *International Migration*, 45 (2), 37-64.
- Beets, G., & Willekens, F. (2009). The Global Economic Crisis and International Migration: An Uncertain Outlook. *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 19-37.
- Benson, M., and O'Really, K (eds.) (2009). *Lifestyle Migration. Expectations, Aspirations and Experiences*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Domingo, A., & Sabater, A. (2013). Crisis económica y emigración: la perspectiva demográfica. In E. Aja, J. Arango, & J. Oliver (Ed.), *Inmigración y crisis: entre la continuidad y el cambio. Anuario de Inmigración en España* (pp.70-89). Barcelona: Fundación CIDOB.
- Domingo, A., Sabater, A., & Ortega, E. (2013). ¿Vuelta a la España de la emigración? El impacto de la crisis económica en el fenómeno reemergente de la emigración española? *X Congreso de la Asociación de Demografía Histórica (ADEH)*. Asociación Española de Demografía Histórica. Albacete, 18-21 June 2013.
- European Commission (2012). *EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review*. Brussels: DG Employment.
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7830&langId=en>.
- Garud, R., Kumaraswamy, A. & Karnøe, P. (2010), Path Dependence or Path Creation?. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47 (4), 760–774
- Huete, R., Mantecón, A. & Estévez; J. (2013). Challenges in Lifestyle Migration Research: Reflections and Findings about the Spanish Crisis. *Mobilities*, 8 (3), 341-348.
- Martin, P. (2009). Recession and Migration: A New Era for Labor Migration? *International Migration Review*, 43(3), 671-691.
- Peixoto, J. et al. (2013). Immigrants, markets and policies in Southern Europe. In , M. Okólski (Ed.), *European Immigrations: Trends, Structures and Policy Implications*. Amsterdam University Press (pp. 107-148).
- OECD (2013). *International Migration Outlook 2013*. Paris: OECD Publishing. DOI: 10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-en
- Papademetriou, D. G., & Terrazas, A. (2009). *Immigrants and the Current Economic Crisis: Research Evidence, Policy Challenges, and Implications*. Migration Policy Institute.
- Poulain, M., Perrin, N., & Singleton, A. (Eds.) (2006). *THESIM: Towards Harmonized European Statistics on International Migration*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain.
- Zimmerman, K. (2009). *Labor Mobility and the Integration of European Labor Markets*. IZA Discussion Paper, 3999.