

Europeans in Spain: Are their international and internal migration patterns affected by economic downturn?

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Paper's aim

The paper firstly analyses Europeans' stock and flow changes in Spain in the last decade. Then, it focuses on their internal mobility spatial patterns (between the 50 Spanish provinces and within each of them) both during economic boom years –until 2007, when all kinds of flows reach their maximum– and the current recession. Research intends to answer questions such as: once they settle in Spain, are they more mobile than Spanish nationals or other foreign immigrants? When they move to other provinces, which spatial patterns do they follow? Are there differences between the main European nationalities? And finally, have their international and internal migration flows been affected by the present severe economic crisis? If so, which formerly receiving provinces have become sending ones and vice versa? Specific research is carried out on the main European nationalities present as well as on several groups of nationalities which are socially and demographically similar –former EU-15 countries and Other Europeans, that is to say, nationals from the 12 New Member States and from non-EU European countries.

Data sources

Two statistical data sources, collected and published by the Spanish National Statistical Institute (INE), are used: the *Padrón continuo* or local continuous register collecting stock data on the Spanish and foreign nationality population; and the *Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales* or residential change statistics, covering municipality of residence variations, and therefore supplying migratory flows (immigration and emigration).

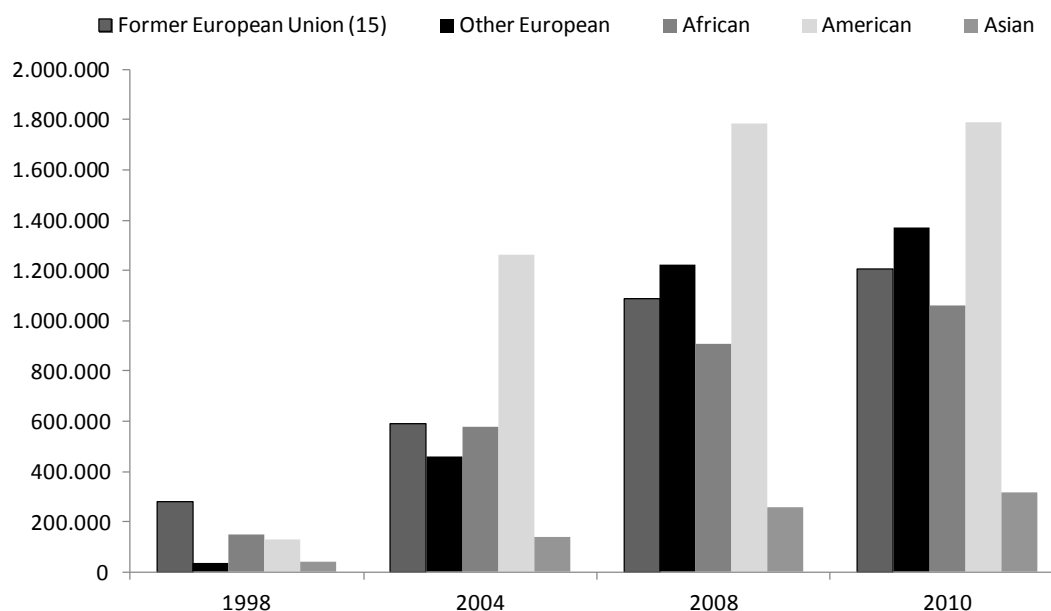
The INE's *Padrón continuo* results from coordinating and crosschecking municipal administrative registers called *padrones*. It is updated each year on January the 1st, giving, since 1998, the official population figure for each of the Spanish municipalities and therefore that of the whole country. It crosses the population's age and sex by their place of residence and nationality. According to Spanish law (*Ley de Bases de Régimen Local*), everyone residing in the country, independently from their legal situation, has the right and the duty to be registered in their local *padrón*. Foreigners, including recent and irregular immigrants, usually do it, as this gives them access to free public health and education. Therefore, its figures are considered to be a good estimate of the actual number of foreigners living in Spain.

The *Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales* collects flows between Spanish municipalities or between one of these and other countries, by nationality. It is annually elaborated by the INE by exploiting local *padrones* data on new registrations and deletions due to changes in the municipality of residence. Even though data on dwelling moves between Spanish municipalities are reasonably reliable, new registrations of people arriving from abroad and, especially, deletions of those residents moving to another country are rather poorly compiled.

Preliminary results

In the last 15 years, Spain has received more than 5 million foreign immigrants, becoming one of the European countries with the largest foreign population. With more than 2.6 million non-Spaniard Europeans now (2010) living in Spain –around 1.2 million being citizens of the former EU-15 countries and almost 1.4 million from other European countries–, they have come to represent the country’s main foreign continental origin (figure 1).

Figure 1. Foreign stocks by continental group of nationality. Spain, 1998, 2004, 2008 and 2010.



Source: INE Padrón continuo data

Padrón continuo stock data give us their social and demographic characteristics, which are very diverse depending on their geographical origin. For instance, former EU-15 citizens have a much older age-structure than immigrants from the 12-New Member States or non-EU European countries (table 1). Moreover, former EU-15 citizens have mainly moved to Spain for residential reasons (retired people) or they are white-collar highly-skilled workers¹, while labour reasons predominate among the ‘other Europeans’, who mainly work in low-skill jobs.

Spain’s continuous foreign stock increase during the first decade of the 21st century is due to growing international inflows. The maximum is achieved in 2007, when 958 thousand immigrants enter the country. Shortly after, the economic crisis outbursts, so, in the following years, inflows significantly decrease. Therefore, in 2010 figures “only” reach 431 thousand entries.

During all this decade, Europeans are very significant within these flows (figure 2). If Latin-American are the main inflow until 2003, Europeans take the leading role alter that year, especially those which are not from the former EU-15 countries, and Romanians in particular. In the 2007 record year, up to 459 thousand Europeans entered in Spain, but three years later this figure had been reduced to 171 thousand –the same level than seven or eight years before.

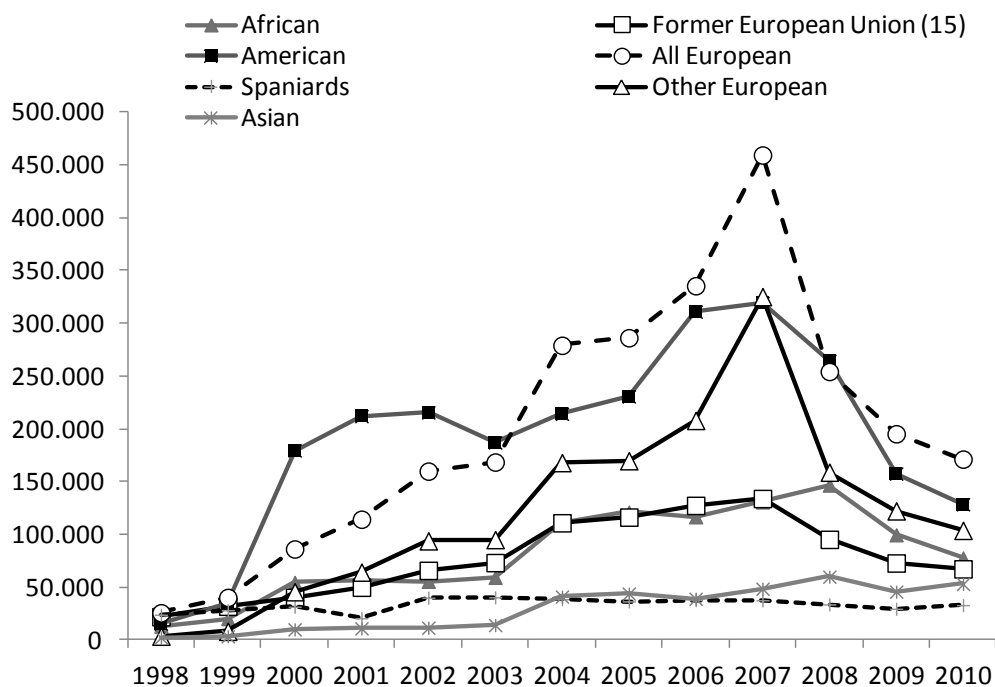
¹ Portuguese and Italians (many of them actually being Argentineans with double citizenship) are the exception, as their demographic and social characteristics are more similar to the Other Europeans’ ones.

Table 1. European citizens' in Spain: figures and main demographic characteristics, 2010.

	Men	Women	Total	% Women	% 65 and more
EUROPE	1.345.913	1.233.058	2.578.971	47,8	10,0
European Union (27)	1.242.968	1.107.204	2.350.172	47,1	10,2
Germany	98.210	97.614	195.824	49,8	28,6
France	62.281	61.589	123.870	49,7	12,7
Italy	107.440	76.837	184.277	41,7	6,9
Portugal	89.607	52.913	142.520	37,1	4,3
United Kingdom	196.389	191.288	387.677	49,3	25,9
Other	88.281	85.910	174.191	49,3	23,2
Former European Union (15)	642.208	566.151	1.208.359	46,9	19,2
Bulgaria	91.211	78.341	169.552	46,2	1,2
Poland	45.157	41.167	86.324	47,7	0,9
Romania	437.637	393.598	831.235	47,4	0,7
Other	26.755	27.947	54.702	51,1	1,1
New EU	600.760	541.053	1.141.813	47,4	0,8
European no EU	102.945	125.854	228.799	55,0	7,4
Rusia	15.702	34.118	49.820	68,5	2,4
Ucrania	38.348	44.965	83.313	54,0	1,0
Norway	9.498	9.392	18.890	49,7	35,4
Switzerland	8.870	9.429	18.299	51,5	38,3
Other countries	30.415	27.870	58.285	47,8	2,0
AFRICA	673.829	385.540	1.059.369	36,4	1,0
AMERICA	803.996	984.684	1.788.680	55,1	2,0
ASIA	192.472	125.174	317.646	39,4	1,5
OCEANIA	1.368	1.167	2.535	46,0	7,0
STATELESS	357	176	533	33,0	3,2
Total	3.017.935	2.729.799	5.747.734	47,5	5,4

Source: INE Padrón continuo data

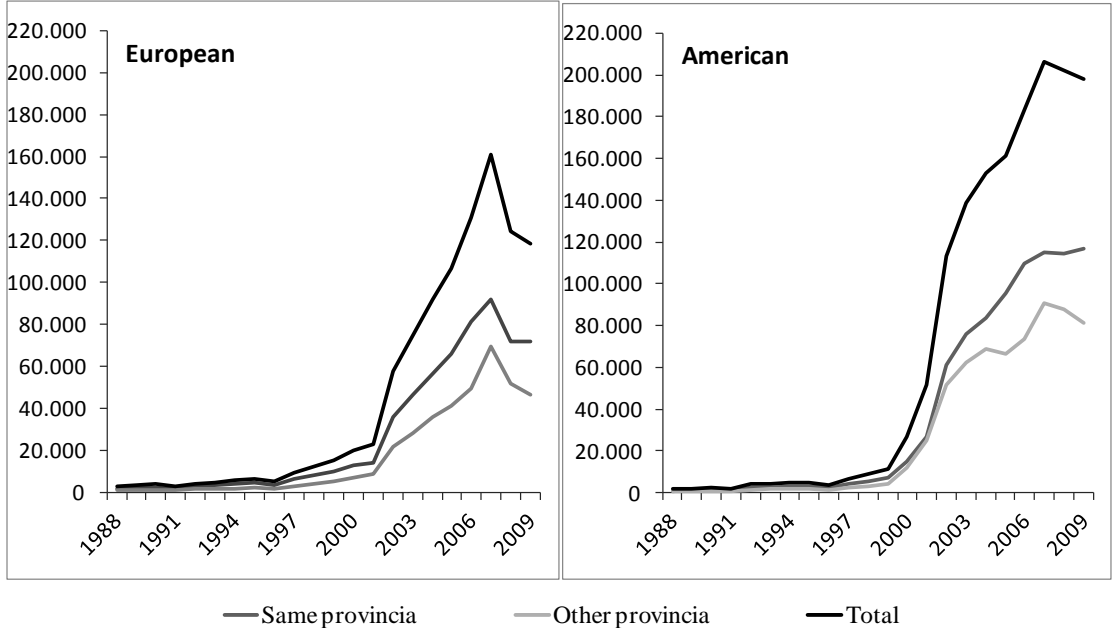
Figure 2. International inflows by nationality continental group. Spain, 1998-2010



Source: INE Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales data.

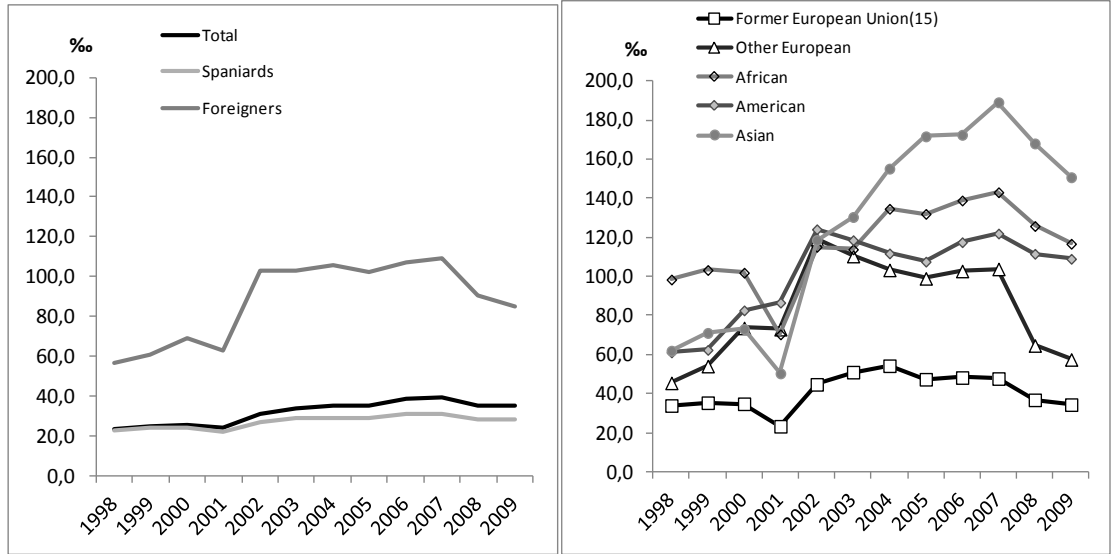
Since the early 21st Century and up to 2007 immigrants' internal migration flows –both between provinces and within each of them– gradually grew due to the ever growing stock of foreigners. Europeans, with 161 thousand internal moves that year (57% of them within the same province, see figure 3), followed the same trend, though the intensity of their flows was lower than those of other continental origins. Figure 4 shows that Asians, Africans and Latin-Americans have higher annual internal migration rates than Europeans. Within the latter, those of the former EU-15 countries have the lowest ones, similar or only slightly above – depending on the year– Spaniards' ones. Recession has decreased all nationalities' internal mobility, but that of Europeans, and more specifically that of those from outside the former EU-15, particularly so. Finally, as the full paper will show, geographical patterns have also been modified by crisis, with some formerly receiving provinces becoming sending ones.

Figure 3. Internal Migration Flows (changes of residence among provinces and within the same province) by continental origin (Europeans and Americans). Spain, 1988-2009



Source: INE Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales data.

Figure 4. Annual Internal Migration Rates (x1000) by nationality, 1988-2009, Spain



Source: INE Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales data