

Moving or Staying Put?
Movement and Settlement of International Migrants in Spain
before and during the Economic Recession

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Abstract

Introduction: During the 2000s Spain became the European country with the largest net absolute migration in the EU, lagging only behind the USA worldwide. Although the replication of sequences from clustering to dispersal by immigrant groups became apparent in Spain during the booming years, the current recession has significantly slowed down internal migration of international migrants thus sparking concern about the formation of enclaves and possible consequences for integration. Aim: The paper makes two contributions not investigated to date. First, it examines internal migration of international migrants before and during the economic recession. Second, it analyses whether or not the formation of immigrant enclaves has accelerated during the economic crisis. Method: First, we combine segregation measures with analysis of internal migration to investigate whether groups are moving towards their own concentrations. Second, we examine the formation of ethnic enclaves by implementing an approach to identify immigrant residential areas according to the degree of encapsulation or group mixing. Data: The paper uses migration flows and population data between 2005 and 2010 derived from Municipal Registers (and released annually by the National Statistics Institute) to analyze movement and settlement of international migrants. Results: The preliminary findings allow us to confirm that whilst some immigrant groups still replicate the assimilation path of outward spatial movement, some immigrant groups have become much more prone to huddle together in spatial enclaves since the beginning of the recession. Implications: The emergence of new settlement patterns of international migrants as a result of the economic recession has been perceived as an expression of severe social exclusion with implications for the development of social policy.

Introduction

The international migration turnaround in Southern Europe has been well documented since the mid-1990s (Aja and Arango, 2006; King et al, 1997, 2000). After recording the second highest net absolute migration in the EU, lagging only behind the USA worldwide (OECD, 2007), the settlement of international migrants in Spain has become a reality, with analysis and concerns about diversity and integration in both academic and policy circles occupying a position high on the debates and the policy agenda. The unfavourable economic outlook has added pressure for policymakers who have to deal with the possible resentment against immigrant populations, and the danger that existing patterns of residential segregation among immigrant groups may amplify over time and lead to discrimination, disadvantage and isolation.

Since the arrival of immigrant pioneers the majority of new migrants have settled in urban gateway cities in Spain. The urban-ness of immigrant origin groups is not unexpected as theories of immigrant settlement have traditionally proposed. Immigrant-origin groups are likely to disperse from the place of original urban settlement and the spatial mixing is expected to be accompanied by assimilation. Recent empirical evidence (Sabater et al, 2012) shows this trend with immigration spreading out to the metropolitan rings of the metro-region of cities such as Madrid and Barcelona, the largest recipients of international migration. However, it is important to note that these predicted changes were also accelerated by an extraordinary period of suburbanisation during which large numbers of new housing were built at an unprecedented rate. The vast supply of housing in Spain met an ideal scenario: the high rotation of homes by Spanish nationals, the demand from immigration and continued low mortgage rates. The consequence is what some scholars call as an ‘institutionally generated migration’ (Brama, 2006: 29). The burst of the housing bubble in 2008 put an end to that story and the financial crisis and its consequences is adding more pressure to immigrant groups who increasingly face more difficulties than Spanish nationals to meet their rent and mortgage payments, thus restricting their freedom of movement considerably. Such factors combined with the geographically specific labour demands are seen as key to explain the current movement and settlement of international migrant in Spain. Recent studies suggest that the drop in internal mobility of immigrant groups since the beginning of the recession is of the same magnitude as the decrease in international migration during the same period (Domingo and Recaño, 2010). Although many immigrant groups who came to Spain as foreign workers and with temporary contracts may opt to return, especially those without social capital and social security, empirical evidence from past recessions in Europe (e.g. ‘oil crisis’ in 1973-74) tells us that only a minority, between 10 and 15 per cent, embarked on that journey (Dobson et al, 2009).

Whilst the changing population composition of Spanish’s neighbourhoods has attracted some public policy attention, little is known about the emerging patterns of internal mobility and the formation of ethnic enclaves since the start of the economic recession, with research assessing the demography of settlement of international migrants just starting to get under way.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to contribute to further understanding of the causes and consequences of the spatial behaviour of recent immigrants before and during the recession by looking at two simultaneous processes: internal migration and the formation of enclaves. This paper builds on the demographic body of work in this area (Stillwell and van Ham, 2010) and it is considered to be an important contribution to the current debate in Spain and elsewhere because it sheds some light on the current situation of residential movement and settlement patterns of international migrants by addressing a number of research questions which are not to date investigated: To what extent selective internal migration has changed before and during the economic recession? Is internal migration currently re-inforcing immigrant concentrations or dispersing them? Has the formation of ethnic enclaves been accelerated due to the severe economic recession?

Data and Methods

This paper uses migration statistics and population data between 2005 and 2010 from Municipal Registers (and released annually by the National Statistics Institute) for analyses of internal migration and immigrant settlement. Residential variation statistics and population counts are derived from el *Padrón Municipal de Habitantes* or Municipal Registers, which constitute the administrative registers where municipality neighbours and in- and out-migrations are processed. Since self-reporting of racial or ethnic background is not used in official statistics in Spain, analyses are focused on aggregate geographical origins and the largest immigrant groups by country of origin. Our smallest unit of analysis is the municipality for migration statistics and the census output area for population counts, the latter with an average of 1,500 residents. Methodologically, we implement the following analytical strategy:

-First, we analyze internal migration by employing two specific measures, migration efficiency ratios and net in-migration rates, in addition to the basic computation of absolute net migration from in- and out-migration. Measures of internal migration are combined with measures of segregation (index of isolation and index of dissimilarity) to investigate whether groups are moving towards their own concentrations and identify the extent to which population movement increases or decreases the sharing of residential space with the 'host' society.

-Second, we implement an approach to identify immigrant residential areas according to the degree of encapsulation or group mixing (Johnston et al, 2002). The approach allows us to classify areas into two main types: *minority enclaves* (where immigrant groups form a majority of the total population) and *host communities* (where the host society forms a majority of the total population). The operationalization of this area typology is further sub-divided, giving six subtypes in all. The minority enclaves are sub-divided into assimilation-pluralism enclaves (the host society is a large element of the population, 30-50 per cent), mixed-minority enclaves (shared by two or more immigrant groups and few members of the host society), polarized enclaves (one immigrant group comprises at least 60 per cent of the total population) and ghettos (a high degree of concentration as with the polarized enclaves, and a substantial percentage of the group's population living in such areas). The host communities are sub-divided into non-isolated host communities (the host society forms 50-79 per cent of the total population)

and isolated host communities (the host society comprises 80 per cent or more of the total population).

Expected findings

1. The selective entry and exit story of international migrants in- and out- of immigrant settlement areas is likely to be severely influenced by the impact of the economic recession, with some immigrant groups still being mobile but others staying put as a consequence of reduced opportunities.
2. Although residential segregation was moderate for the majority of immigrant groups before the outbreak of the economic recession, the effects of selective migration are likely to contribute to greater unevenness and exposure of some international migrants, especially the most recently arrived and most vulnerable groups.
3. Whilst the formation of minority enclaves in Spain largely reflects the recent episodes international mass migration and the processes of chain migration that followed into the original areas of settlement, the possible reduction in the spreading of diversity beyond original areas of settlement is likely to lead to an increase of minority enclaves and a decrease of the number of non-isolated host communities.

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