

# Analysis of the return of migrant in Spain in crisis

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## Abstract <sup>1/</sup>

The paper present a preview of the preliminary results of the research project about the migratory return process of immigrants in Spain. The research follows a methodology based on the triangulation of three research methods: the statistical analysis of requests for assistance to return, the categorical thematic discourse analysis of a series of interviews to different profiles of people, from chosen Spanish regions: Catalonia, Valencia and Madrid, and five chosen nationalities: thre from Latin America (Bolivian, Colombian and Ecuadorian); one form Africa (Marroco) and one form Eastern Europe (Rumania) and a documentary analysis of the evolution of the various administrative procedures and programs established for the assist return to Spain, complemented by a series of interviews with government officials and NGOs involved in the proceedings involving assisted return. In this paper we present at first, the quantitative significance of the phenomenon of "return" on the set of migration flows affecting Spain, in the context of "Crisis".

Keywords: International migration, return migration, Spain

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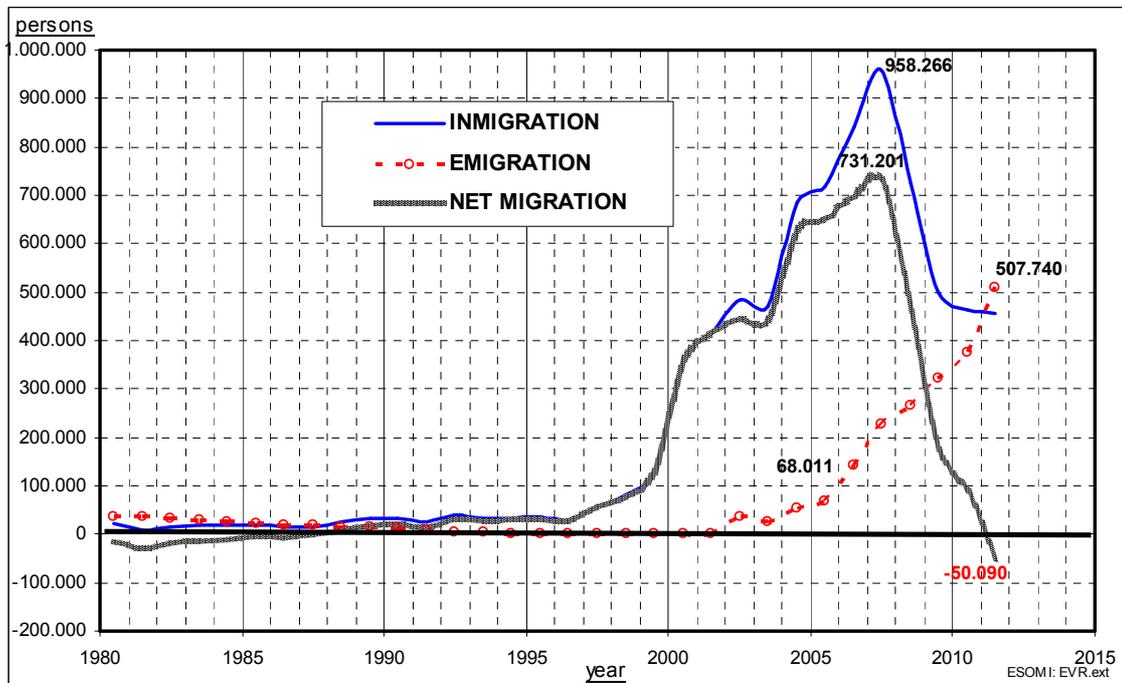
1- The study is part of the research project entitled "Immigrants Return Process," funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation of the Spanish Government (CICYT 2009-11; CSO2008-03651).

## 1. Status of international migration flows.

Migratory movements affecting Spain have experienced an explosive history in the last 15 years. In 1996 there was a net migration of 28,000 persons a year, in 2001 were 400,000 and in 2007 came to 700,000 <sup>2/</sup>. Since then its volume has fallen rapidly, in 2010 had fallen to 90,000 and, according to provisional data developed by INE, in 2011 will register a negative migration balance, about minus 50,000 persons and is not expected to recover during the current year 2012 (see Chart 1).

Will we be again a sending country of migrants?. Historically we have recorded negative balances until the second half of the eighties, in other words we stop being a country of emigrants 25 years ago <sup>3/</sup>. In those years there was a change of situation of Spain in the international migration system, we went from the "sending countries", where we had belonged continuously since the last decades of XIX century <sup>4/</sup>, and we entered in the "immigration countries" <sup>5/</sup>.

Figure 1. Spain 1980-2011. International net migration.



Source: Own elaboration (ESOMI-UDC). INE data. Population Census, "Padrón de Habitantes" and Residential Variation Statistics.  
1980-1984: Spanish Emigration corrected with data from European host countries. Estimating immigration of foreigners.  
2011: Estimate INE-EPOBA

- 2- Data from the Residential Variation Statistics (EVR in spanish), the National Statistics Institute (INE).
- 3- In little less, only in 22 years, since the late 80, according to the residue of the population growth equation.
- 4- Except short exceptions (First World War)..
- 5- North America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Africa, Western Europe, including most recently to Italy and Portugal also.

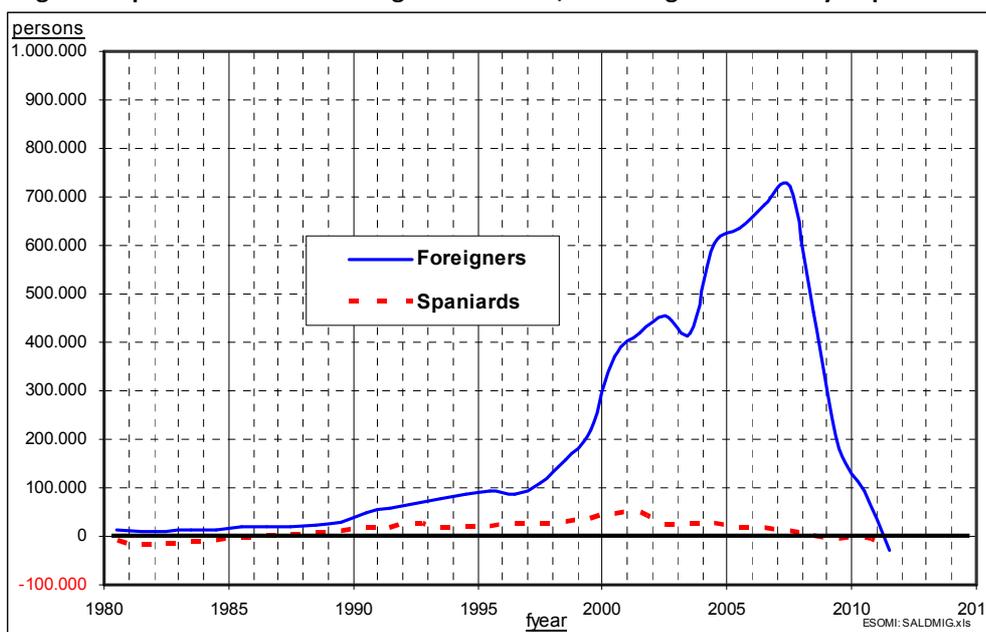
This change in status was accompanied by the release in the predominant subject of our migration from the 90 foreigners came to dominate international migration in Spain. They still dominated in 2011, last date for which figures are available.

The recent period (1990-present), has been characterized by a progressive increase in immigration of foreigners (6,600% increase, equivalent to multiplying by 30 the 30,000 immigrants in 1990) and a negligible emigration until 2005-06, that has been rising since then, adding the "return" of foreigners to a weakened Spanish emigration.

As is known, the strong contribution of foreign immigration peaked in 2007. In the next year begun to be felt shock effects of the financial, economic and labor crisis in Spanish society. From 2008 there is a sharp decrease immigration (which has almost reduced by half), as well as continues to increase the emigration (which has doubled between 2008 and 2011).

The increase in emigration occurs in both foreigners (+92%) or Spaniards (+82%). But the decline in immigration occurs only among foreigners (-40%), whereas among the Spaniards has increased (+25%) but not enough to compensate the outflow. The result is a negative net balance of both foreigners and Spaniards (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Spain 1980-2011. Net migration abroad, according to nationality requirement.**



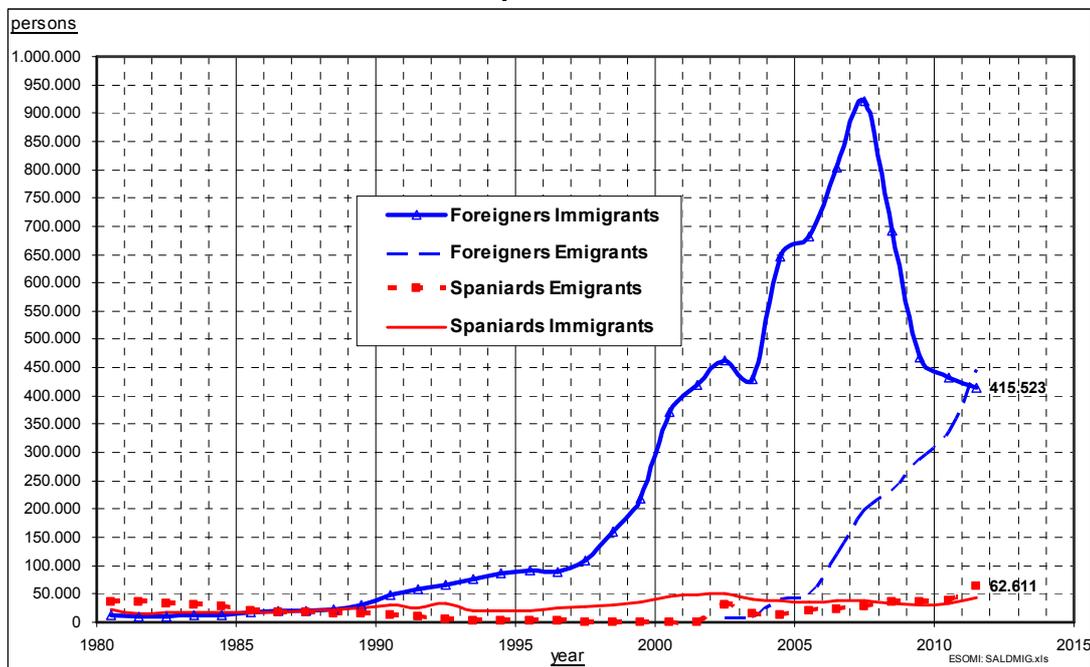
Source: Own elaboration (ESOMI-UDC). INE data. Population Census, "Padrón de Habitantes" and Residential Variation Statistics.  
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Comparing the return flows of the Spanish and foreigners, we must in the first case there is a positive contribution: the return of former emigrants is a stream that is part of immigration. In the second case, we have a loss: the output of foreign immigrants is part of the emigration. En la inmigración de españoles, el retorno propiamente dicho (la vuelta de un emigrante) ha ido descendiendo en paralelo a la disminución de su volumen total.

Mientras en 1998, dos de cada tres inmigrantes españoles (66%) habían nacido en España, en 2010 la proporción había descendido a uno de cada dos (47%).

Despite the effects of mortality of old Spanish immigrants and the subsequent depletion of the group has decided to return, the stock of Spanish emigrants (Spanish Population Resident Abroad-PERE- INE data) has been increasing in recent years, because of the naturalization of descendants of immigrants (the second and third generations of Spanish emigration) and the recent rise in Spanish emigration. In the near future is likely that the return spanish stream will increase again. To the degree that begin to return those who are emigrating now (which are growing every year since 2010. See figure 3).

**Figure 3. Spain 1980-2011. Migration flows abroad, according to nationality requirement.**



Source: Own elaboration (ESOMI-UDC). INE data. Population Census, "Padrón de Habitantes" and Residential Variation Statistics.

1980-1984: Spanish Emigration corrected with data from European host countries.

Estimating immigration of foreigners.

2011: Estimate INE-EPOBA

Meanwhile, in the emigration of foreigners predominates return over 95% of all recorded output between 2002 and 2010 have been of people born abroad, and we know, as shown below, that most of them return to their country of birth. However, we should clarify that the proportion has declined slightly since 2002 (98%) to 2010 (96%). These two percentage points were won, obviously, by foreigners born in Spain, as a sign that the crisis has delved deeply and return of complete families (with children born in Spain) following the departure of migrants themselves.

The return has historically been a major current in any migration process, the fact that many have not returned don't means that some of them have done it (López de Lera. 2010). The "return streams" have grown in same way as the transportation has

approached the migrants to places of destination and origin (in time, money and access). In Europe today the proportions of returnees may be about 50% (Ireland, Belgium, United Kingdom) or 25% (Netherlands), in USA is estimated of around 19% (OECD, 2008: 171).

The change of sign of net migration in Spain was consolidated in the nineties. Years when Spanish emigration continued to decline and was gradually growing foreign immigration. This was led, at first, by Europeans who came to Spain to spend their retirement, at this "residential leisure flows (López de Lera, 1995) was soon joined labor migration flows from North Africa and Latin America, in the first half of the XXI century, and from Eastern Europe during the second half. The superposition of these currents, which were overlapping, generated at the beginning of XXI century a immigration intensity (10-12 net immigrants per thousand persons<sup>6/</sup>) which exceeded that of the most intense periods of emigration (to early XX century, -6 net migrants per thousand people) and placed Spain among the countries which received more immigrants per year in developed countries.

Currently the sharp drop in most immigration flows and increased emigration make you wonder if the last two decades can be taken or not as a parenthesis in the history of Spanish immigration.

One could argue that, on the one hand, the intensity of the decline in immigration will not recover, as a direct effect of the labor market crisis because of the construction crisis, caused in turn by the financial crisis of 2007. The capacity of the Spanish labor market demand looks like it will take years to recover, unless we find a new sector of intensive use of labor, as was the construction. Do not seem that tourism can have the same capacity, but will certainly help as well as employment related with elderly care services.

However, it can be argued against, that both the need for young adult population by Spanish demography<sup>7/</sup>, as situation of scarcity of opportunities in countries of origin (Latin America, Africa) and the coming retirement of the generation of European "baby boomers"<sup>8/</sup>, brings hope to recover the flow of immigration in the medium and long term, although in much lower than before.

The above was related to the inputs, but with respect to the outputs we find an increase in emigration flows, which also respond largely due to the socio-economic crisis generated from 2007. Just as in immigration, in emigration foreigners largely

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6- López de Lera, 2006, pp 236 y 237.

7- According to the latest projections of the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE, 2010), excluding international migration, the population of working age from 20 to 59 years old will decrease by about 220,000 people per year between 2011 and 2015 and of 270,000 per year between 2016 and 2020.

Including international migration, INE estimates that Spain will have a negative net balance abroad and anger down over time, this deficit of 20-59 people would increase to 230,000 between 2011 and 2015 and will decrease to 260,000 in 2016 and 2020.

In the one case as in another we will have a deficit of more than 200,000 people a year through 2020. Although not all people in this age group are economically active, they are mostly.

This deficit is common to most European countries, varying in volume by country (EUROSTAT, 2010 and UN 2010).

8- Between 2015 and 2029 will be retiring the generations born between 1950 and 1964. This deficit is common to most European countries, varying in volume by country.

predominate over the Spanish, although a little less<sup>9/</sup> (see Figure 3). The departure of foreigners will continue in 2012 and continue over the medium -long term as "natural" reflux of immigration, whether in the form of return or re-emigration. The Spanish emigration seems to will increase in coming years, due to the crisis and the inability of Spanish labor market to generate a growing supply of new skilled jobs and well paid, and then probably will remain at a similar level the present, around 50,000 people per year

These data should be taken with great care, given the uncertainty that characterizes the path of migration flows. His intensity is a combination of factors both micro (individual and family situations) and macro (linguistic affinities, religious, political environments, legal regulations ...) whose modelization is resist for researchers

## 2. Situation of return flows.

Considering as "return": the return of an emigrant to his "home country". From the perspective of the "countries of destination," the study of the "return" includes the outputs of his "immigrants" (analysis of return of the received immigration) and the arrival of his emigrants (analysis of the return of the suffered emigration).

In a first approach will limit those terms to the outputs of "immigrants" (persons who have born abroad) and the return of "Spanish" emigrants (persons who have born in Spain). However, not all foreigners who migrate back to their countries of origin. May migrate to another country, a third country. So that only a proportion of the emigration of foreigners can be regarded as "return" strictly speaking. In our case, we use the "birthplace" to identify the "return" of foreigners. We will discuss **return in cases match the country of destination with the country of birth.**

Before proceeding, should be clarify that data published by the INE of the Residential Variation Statistics (RVS) on "emigration" are very recent, the earliest dating from 2002<sup>10/</sup>, so that the improvement of this series impact significantly in their analysis . Its recent evolution shows rapid growth, as has been seen in Figure 3, in which has been affected the incorporation of new categories of "data".

In 2004 it appears explicitly the category of "unknown" countries of destination, which affects almost exclusively to foreigners. This makes the weight of aliens in immigration rises from 38 to 76%. In 2006 appear the category of "low by expiration"<sup>11/</sup>, which, by definition, affects only the "extracomunitarian foreigners without permanent residence" and that raises the weight of foreigners in the total migration to 90% in 2010. These last two categories have been growing faster than the rest, they have become mainstream among foreigners, and reaching 89% in 2010 (see Chart 4).

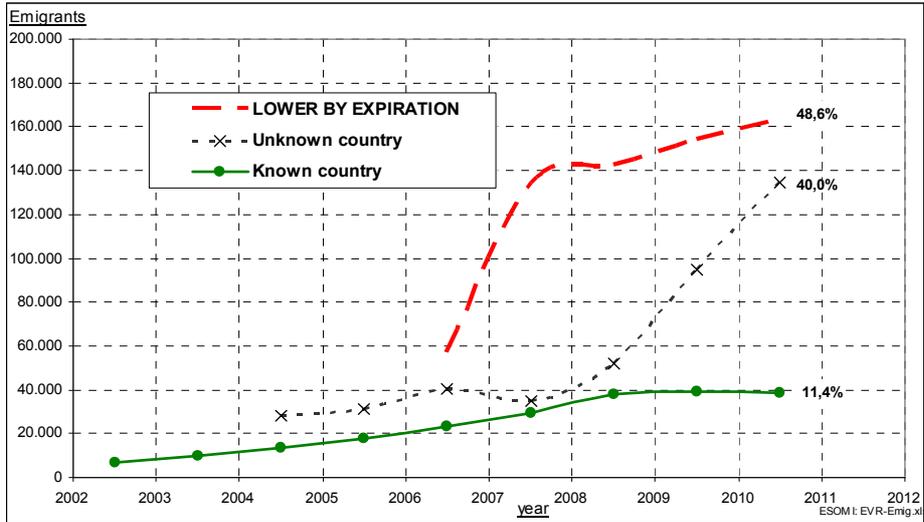
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9- While the Spanish return is just over 5% of total Spanish immigration (EVR), the output of spaniards is a little more than 10% of Spanish emigration.

10- Before then there was another statistic, that of "assisted emigration of Spanish," but, as its name suggests, only covered the departure of Spanish who accepted official aid to emigration.

11- Correspond to the implementation in 2005 of the Organic Law 14/2003, enacted two years earlier, which forced the extracomunitarian foreigners who had no permanent residence to "upgrade" its high municipal census every two years, otherwise the local authorities are allowed to eliminate them the municipal register.

**Figure 4. Spain 2002-2010. Foreign emigrants abroad.**



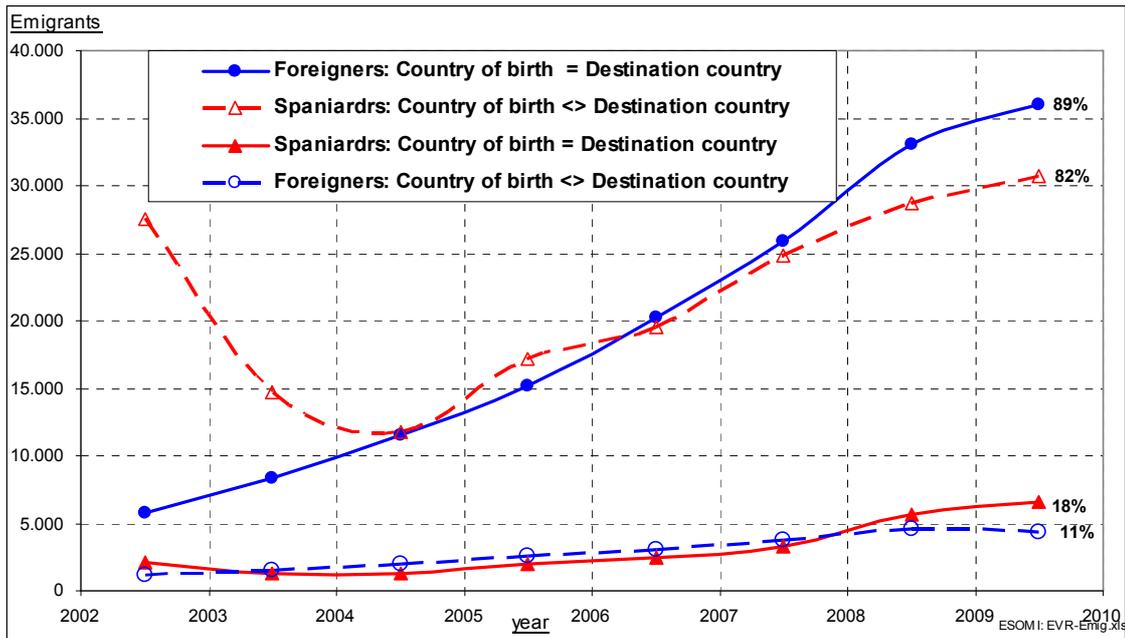
Source: Own elaboration (ESOMI-UDC). INE data. Residential Variation Statistics

Applying the proposed return definition (person who returns to his country of birth) to the EVR data limits the analysis to the outputs which is known the destination country (11.4% of the total in 2010. See Figure 4 .) This will allow to include and distinguish both municipal outflows of foreign immigrants who have gone to their country of birth, as the Spanish outflows (born abroad, 2nds generations) who have left to their country of birth. These outputs should be considered as returns since their situation is no different from the rest: they came to Spain looking to improve their situation, the crisis has thwarted his plans and return to their countries of origin/birth.

As can be seen in Figure 5, the importance of the return is very different among the recent Spanish and foreign emigration. While in Spanish emigration predominates the outflows to third countries (82% in 2009<sup>12/</sup>), ie the output of Spanish young adults who are looking for work "outside". By contrast, in the foreign emigration is the return the mainstream (89%), ie the return to the country of origin of immigrants who were unemployed or unable to pay their mortgages.

**Figure 5. Spain 2002-2009. Emigration abroad, according to nationality and relationship between country of birth and country of destination (% of total known country).**

12- EVR data. % On total outflows with known destination country.

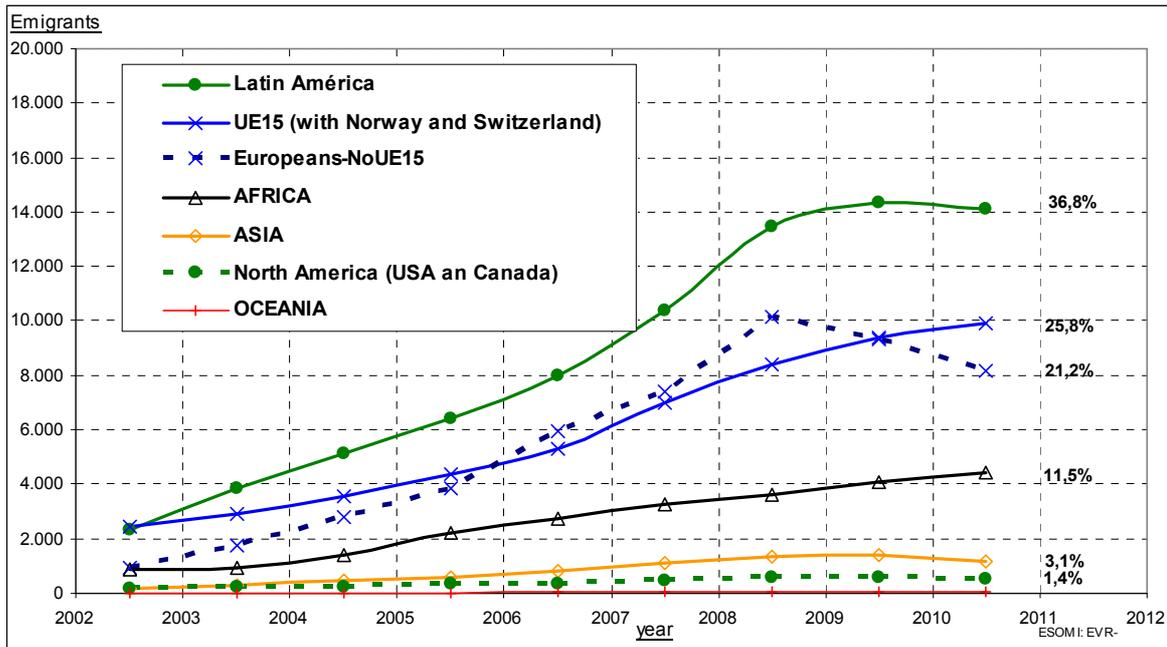


Source: Own elaboration (ESOMI-UDC). Exploiting microdata Residential Variation Statistics, provided by the INE.

If focus our attention on the return of foreigners, you can see than in the emigration of foreigners dominated the return of labor immigration from Latin America (37% of outflows with known destination country. See figure 6). In particular the return of Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Colombians, followed at a distance, of Brazilians and Argentines. Together these 5 Latin American countries account for a quarter of the emigration (24.3%)..

Some distance from the three previous groups, follows the return to African countries (12%), although in this case we are talking mostly of Moroccans (8.3%). Finally we found the migrants heading to Asian countries (3%) and to North America (1%).

**Figure 6. Spain 2002-2010. Emigration of foreigners abroad, by region of destination**  
(% of total known country).



Source: Own elaboration (ESOMI-UDC). Exploiting microdata Residential Variation Statistics, provided by the INE.

Given the volatility that characterizes the current situation in European countries, including Spain in his own right, is very risky to venture forward-looking, and caution should be taken with the opinions that follow. In any case, it is expected that the importance and composition of these groups changed somewhat in the coming years, as the potential migrant populations will dwindle and depending on the evolution of immigration flows.

Among the Latin America streams there are countries whose relative position has improved relative to the Spanish economy (Argentina, Chile, Colombia), which is expected to reduce immigration from them and keep the propensity to return. This view, of common sense must also be taken with caution because there are cases that contradict it, as the example of Brazil, a country whose GDP has been growing at rates of 4% before the crisis and 7% in 2011 and each once we receive more immigrants (10,000 immigrants per year on average from 2001-05 to 20,000 in 2006-10).

The Latin Americans return is followed by two European groups, in the first place the return of immigrants from Central and Western Europe (26%), particularly Germans, English and French. And secondly the return of Eastern Europeans (21%), most notably a country, Romania, which itself encompasses 12.5% of the total and is the country with more emigrants since 2005.

Among European streams is expected to increase the inflow of immigrants for residential leisure mainly from the 15 countries of the European Union before the enlargement, so that the return flow will continue feeding<sup>13/</sup> and keep its importance in the total. Is unknown what can happen with the immigration from Eastern European countries because they are affected, such as Spain, by the European crisis, the maintenance of the

13- Upon reaching the last years of age, when health suffers and loses autonomy, some return to where his family or where they want to rest finally.

return will depend on maintaining a certain level of immigration that will feed back the return, otherwise it will languish quickly.

The return to Africa, mainly Morocco, is likely to maintain its current level in the medium and long term, since it is a migratory relationship maintained for many years and may recover much of the level of immigration that had before 2008, which will be assured a steady stream of return in a slight increase.

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