

Persistence in Recession: Return Migration during the Economic Crisis in Spain

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Abstract

This thesis examines the impact of the current economic crisis on return migration from Spain. With a soaring economy and an abundance of employment opportunities, Spain had attracted an extraordinarily high inflow of migration in the early 2000s. However, with the onset of the economic crisis in 2007 and 2008, such immigrants were among the first to experience the economic downturn and soaring unemployment. Yet, as the economic crisis in Spain persists and unemployment continues to swell, the majority of immigrants surprisingly choose to stay in Spain rather than return to the country of origin. Therefore, with this puzzle, the aim of this thesis is to examine why return migration from Spain is so low. Using the hypotheses of new economics of labor migration (NELM) and migration systems theory (MST) in a complimentary and cooperative fashion, I explore the initial reasons for immigrating to Spain, the social conditions experienced while in Spain, and the effects of economic crisis on immigrants, to identify the various explanations for low return migration. By using both a quantitative and qualitative approach I combine a data analysis of previous reports and scholarly articles with the results of 22 open-ended questionnaires, answered by immigrants currently living in Spain, to demonstrate the significance of various variables which may often be overlooked, such as security and social benefits. Finally, from the results of the questionnaire I suggest a hypothesis which incorporates the influence of settled families and households in the host country on return migration.

Key Words: Return Migration, Economic Crisis, Immigration, Spain, Integration, Security, Family, Income

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Introduction

After joining the European Monetary Union (EMU) in 1999, Spain's economy experienced soaring growth, marked with the potential for continuous success. GDP was on a constant rise, and unemployment was on its way to reaching record lows. This astonishing surge in economic conditions in Spain led to the development of a bubble in the real-estate and housing markets. The formation of the growing housing bubble induced an increasing employment in temporary, low-skill, and specialized work such as in construction. Between 1996 and 2009 more than 6.5 million homes were erected. Construction, while only 9 percent of employment prior to Spain's economic growth, had reached 15 percent by 2007.¹ While the Spanish economy excelled, the country evolved from its historical identification as a country of emigration to becoming one of the most popular destinations for immigration flows in the world. This reversal of migration trends to Spain was not solely fueled by the attractive potential for financial success within the developing Spanish economy, but it was also encouraged by government planning. After the foreign-born population in Spain had grown by millions and the economy was demonstrating potential for increased rapid growth, Spain's economy suddenly dove into recession with the burst of the real estate bubble and the onset of the global financial crisis. The recent immigrants, who had regularly filled cyclical and unskilled positions, were the first to lose work. Yet, as the economic crisis in Spain has raged onward, with an unemployment rate soaring above other countries across Europe, the relative majority of immigrants have chosen to stay rather than return to countries of origin. As the crisis persists, migrants become the center of positive and negative attention around Spain, and many look for explanations for why such persons stay. However, to answer this question one must first understand reasons for why such persons immigrated to Spain.

¹ European Commission, "In-Depth Review of Spain," *Commission Staff Working Document*, 159 (2012): 8

Chapter 1 – Immigration to Spain and the Economic Crisis

1.1 Immigration Initiative

To fuel the development of the economy in the early 2000s and provide for the increased demand for low-skilled labor, the Spanish government not only looked domestically to supply labor, but abroad as well. The government devised a number of initiatives to reinforce and manage mass migration inflows. One such initiative, existing from 2001 to 2004, was called the Plan GRECO (Global Programme to Regulate and Coordinate Foreign Residents' Affairs and Immigration in Spain). The Plan GRECO was devised to protect the rights of migrants by supporting their integration within society, and to acknowledge the effective role of regional governments in implementing integration policies. With the target beneficiaries being migrant workers and their families, this new policy was created to address four areas: the design of immigration to be desirable in Spain, as a member of the European Union; the integration of foreign residents and their families as active contributors to Spain's growth; admission regulation to ensure peaceful coexistence in Spanish society; the management of shelters for refugees and displaced persons.²

Plan GRECO was also structured into multiple levels of cooperative action rather than co-development. In its conclusion it recognized the strict importance of investing in the development of the countries of origin of immigrants. It deemed that the professional experience and training attained by immigrants while working in Spain would later contribute to the growth of their home communities and countries. This idea was organized into 5 plans of action: increase immigrant training so that they may support the growth of the country of origin upon return; provide aid to immigrants during their reintegration in their country of origin; the allocation of savings to finance development in countries of origin; the allowance of micro-credits to help fund productive action in home countries; provide technical support to origin areas.³ It is apparent from this strategic plan that Plan GRECO was partially designed to boost and facilitate temporary immigration, with the ultimate motive of encouraging return migration, which in the end would often be a voluntary decision.

² International Labour Organization, "The Plan GRECO of the Ministry of Interior of Spain."

³ Anna Terrón, "International migration and relations with third countries: European and US approaches," *Migration Policy Group* (2004): 10,

With the role of Plan GRECO in encouraging temporary migration, immigrants from varied locations across the globe massively entered and settled within Spain. Much of this immigration resulted from the attractive pull of available work in the booming construction, tourism, hospitality, and domestic-service industries. As a result, Spain became Europe's leading country of immigration with the inflow of 4.8 million immigrants between 2000 and 2007. This represented a 12 percent increase in population in just seven years.⁴ As the Spanish economy consistently grew at unanticipated rates, the demand for unskilled labor also increased. To meet this demand, the supply for such labor was provided by immigrants willing to do work considered undesirable by most Spaniards. Therefore, Spain attracted and welcomed an unprecedented number of immigrants as the economy soared, and jobs became readily available. With such an avid desire to enter and settle in Spain starting at the beginning of the 21st century, immigrants traveled with a diversity of numbers, origins, and motives.

1.2 Numbers, Origins, and Motives of Immigrant Populations

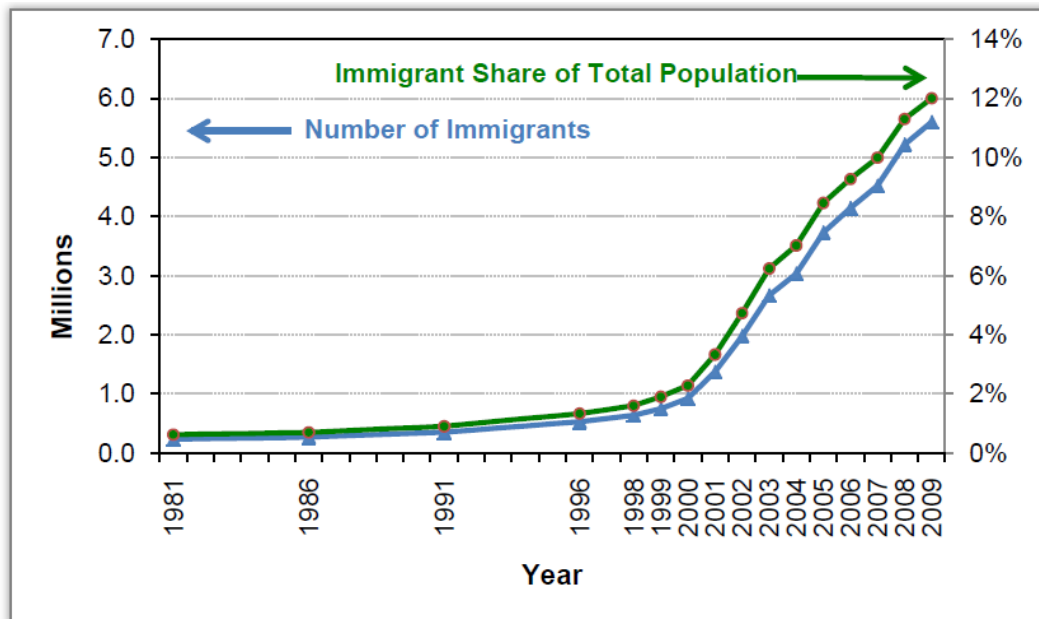


Figure 1⁵

⁴ Michael Fix, Demetrios Papademetriou, Jeanne Batalova, Aaron Terrazas, Serena Yi-Ying Lin, and Michelle Mittelstadt, "Migration and the Global Recession," *MPI-BBC Report* (2009): 38,

⁵ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 97,

Spain, traditionally being a country of emigration, arose to become a country of extraordinary immigration in the early 2000s, especially when compared to previous years. While in 1981 the immigrant population in Spain was about 233,000, it had risen to only 350,000 in 1991 and 750,000 in 1999. However, between 1999 and 2008, the immigrant population grew at an average of 500,000 each year.⁶ This unprecedented immigration upsurge, during the years of Spain's economic growth at the beginning of the 21st century, is presented in figure 1. Figure 1 depicts how immigrants and their share of the total population have increased in conjunction with each other. This shows that Spain's population increase, especially since the beginning of the 2000s, has been due to immigration. While the graph demonstrates the recent prominence of immigration in Spain, one should also note that such immigrants arrive from various locations across the globe.

Immigrant Populations in Spain by Nationality					
	Year 2000		Year 2009		Years 2000-2009
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Growth Percentage
Romania	6,410	0.7	789,892	14.1	12,363.20
Morocco	173,158	18.7	718,055	12.7	314.7
Ecuador	20,481	2.2	421,426	7.5	1,957.60
United Kingdom	99,017	10.7	375,703	6.7	279.4
Colombia	25,247	2.7	296,674	5.3	1,075.10
Bolivia	2,117	0.2	230,703	4.1	10,797.60
Germany	88,651	9.6	191,002	3.4	115.5
Italy	27,874	3	175,316	3.1	529
Bulgaria	3,031	0.3	164,717	2.9	5,334.40
China	19,191	2.1	147,479	2.6	669
Argentina	23,351	2.5	142,270	2.5	509
Portugal	43,339	4.7	140,870	2.5	225
Peru	27,422	3	139,179	2.5	408

Figure 2⁷

Immigrants arriving and settling within Spain, especially during the time parallel to Spain's economic growth period following 1998, came from vastly diverse origins. Throughout this period, between 1998 and 2007, Moroccans provided the largest share of foreign born

⁶ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 96,

⁷ Jose Villaverde, Adolfo Maza, and Maria Hierro, "Regional international migration distribution in Spain: which factors are behind?," *ERSA conference papers*(2011): 20,

populations in Spain. However, this role was replaced by Romanians in 2008 with a presence of 789,892 by 2009, as seen in figure 2. During the same year, the population of Moroccans in Spain was 718,055 and Ecuadorians were 421,426.⁸ As presented in figure 2, between 2000 and 2009 hundreds of thousands of immigrants were entering Spain from all over the world, especially from Latin America. Other top sending countries included the United Kingdom, Colombia, Bolivia, Argentina, Germany, and Bulgaria.⁹ Therefore, one may notice that Spain attracted immigrants from not only developing countries, but also from developed countries. This suggests that Spain's pull extends beyond economic needs.

As immigrants entering Spain arrive from varying countries of origin, their motives for settling in Spain often differ. The majority of people migrating to Spain, after 1998 as the economy began to soar, came from developing countries and poor conditions in search available work and an improved livelihood. Yet, while a significant share of immigration to Spain has been driven by labor market demand, Spain also attracts people for reasons such as family reunification and retirement. For example, persons from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and other northern European countries are attracted to retire in Spain due to the climate and various other factors.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the significant number of persons from countries such as Columbia, Romania, and Ecuador, who often filled amply available low skilled labor positions, brought their families with them. These motivations made Spain a prime country of destination until the impact of the global financial crisis.

1.3 Economic Crisis in Spain

Spain, after joining the European Monetary Union (EMU) in 1999 experienced subsequent economic growth, as exemplified by its average real GDP of 3.7% per year and the creation of 7 million jobs between 1996 and 2007.¹¹ However, it was this confidence in the

⁸ Michael Fix, Demetrios Papademetriou, Jeanne Batalova, Aaron Terrazas, Serena Yi-Ying Lin, and Michelle Mittelstadt, "Migration and the Global Recession," *MPI-BBC Report* (2009): 38,

⁹ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 97,

¹⁰ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 97,

¹¹ European Commission, "In-Depth Review of Spain," *Commission Staff Working Document*, 159 (2012): 5

stability of the market, and the expectations of further economic growth throughout the 2000s which resulted in a growing number of imbalances. In particular, joining the EMU led to a diminished country risk premium which allowed for low interest and cheap loans, and subsequently a surge in capital flow from foreign investors eager to take advantage of investment opportunities.¹² This, combined with the lack of regulation, and rather, reinforcement from the Spanish government, led to a boom in the construction and real estate market, which then employed a significant portion of immigrant workers. The Spanish economy became exposed to substantial vulnerabilities such as the overwhelming and under regulated accumulation of private debt, the over reliance on temporary and specialized employment, and rising housing prices. Each of these concerns could not be sustained once confronted with the global financial crisis in 2007, and consequently, the Spanish economy went from boom to bust.

Late 2007 and 2008 marked a devastating turning point for Spain's GDP and unemployment rate. It was between the third quarter of 2008 and throughout 2009 that Spain's GDP declined for six consecutive quarters.¹³ This reversal of GDP demonstrated a drastic drop in Spain's economic activity, and as a result, a significant drain on the heavily immigrant employed construction sector. Immigrants, who are prone to work cyclical jobs such as construction or service work, were highly susceptible to soaring unemployment. Between spring 2007 and winter 2009 1.6million people lost their jobs in Spain, 800,000 of which were in the construction sector.¹⁴ From late 2007 to mid-2010, the unemployment rate jumped from 7.9 percent to 18.1 percent for native Spaniards, while immigrant unemployment increased from 12.4 percent to 30.2 percent.¹⁵ The economic crisis has since continued in Spain, leaving much of the population in meager and worsening conditions, and a government scrambling for answers with outlier

¹² European Commission, "In-Depth Review of Spain," *Commission Staff Working Document*, 159 (2012): 6,

¹³ Eloisa Ortega, Juan Penalosa, "The Spanish Economic Crisis: Key Factors and Growth Challenges in the Euro Area," *Documentos Ocasionales*, 1201 (2012): 9

¹⁴ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 95

¹⁵ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 102

unemployment rates recently soaring beyond 26% for the total population.¹⁶ Yet, while living conditions grow worse for native-born Spaniards, immigrants continue to face even poorer circumstances.

1.4 Ineffective Voluntary Return Programs and Low Return Migration

Since many immigrants, allowed to enter Spain through initiatives such as Plan GRECO, were partly assumed or expected to be temporary, that is how they have been treated as the Spanish government attempts to combat a discouraging and worsening unemployment rate. With the substantial decay of the Spanish economy since 2008, the Spanish government has explored methods to encourage immigrants to voluntarily return to countries of origin. Not only Spain, but other countries, such as the Czech Republic and Japan, have initiated pay-to-go schemes which provide financial compensation to unemployed immigrants in exchange for their return to the country of origin. Spain established and practiced its first voluntary return program, known as PREVIE (voluntary return program for immigrants in socially precarious situations), in 2003 in order to encourage non-EU immigrants to return to their countries of origin. However, despite providing travel stipends and tickets home, PREVIE only assisted the return of about 500 immigrants a year between 2003 and 2007, and almost 1600 immigrants with the start of the crisis in 2008.¹⁷

With a worsening economic crisis and a threatening surge in unemployment, in November 2008 the Spanish government created and initiated a new voluntary return program called APRE (program for early payment of unemployment benefits to foreigners). As part of the program, foreign persons, who had worked in Spain and were eligible for social security, could collect their accrued unemployment benefits in two installments: 40 percent before return and 60 percent upon return in the country of origin. Such persons are also entitled to paid transportation costs to return home and a 50 euro stipend to help with travels to the nearest Spanish airport. Also, foreigners accepted by the return program must give up documentation, such as residence and work permits and they must leave the country within 30 days and agree not to return to work

¹⁶ ("Country Notes: Recent Changes in Migration Movements and Policies" 2012)

¹⁷ Kristen McCabe, , Serena Yi-Ying Lin, and Hiroyuki Tanaka. Migration Policy Institute, "Pay to Go: Countries Offer Cash to Immigrants Willing to Pack Their Bags."

in Spain within the following 3 years.¹⁸ On average, APRE participants receive a total of about 9,149 euros.¹⁹ This is an abundant amount of money to be received when already unemployed, when other family members apply for the program, and when converted into the currencies of the home country such as the US dollar in Ecuador or the Boliviano in Bolivia.

Despite the appealing benefits of APRE, much like PREVIE, relatively few immigrants have participated in the initiative. As of April 2010 only 11,419 persons had partaken in the voluntary return program. However, the majority, about 98 percent, of applicants were from Latin America. Foreigners from other locations around the world have shown to be unresponsive to the APRE program. For example, Moroccans are one of the most prevalent populations currently living in Spain, have had a consistent history of migration and settlement in Spain, and make up a significant portion of potential applicants for APRE; yet by April 2010 only about 29 Moroccans had applied for the program.²⁰

Immigrant Population in Spain 2004-2013(millions)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Spanish	40.16	40.38	40.57	40.68	40.89	41.10	41.27	41.44	41.53	41.54
Foreign-born	3.03	3.73	4.14	4.52	5.27	5.65	5.75	5.75	5.74	5.52
Total	43.20	44.11	44.71	45.20	46.16	46.75	47.02	47.19	47.27	47.06
% Foreign-born	7	8.5	9.3	10	11.4	12.1	12.2	12.2	12.1	11.7

Figure 3²¹

While voluntary return programs have demonstrated a failure to appeal to the majority of potential applicants, regular return migration from Spain has also shown to be limited. Figure 3 illustrates the population of foreigners, in the millions, in Spain over the last 10 years. The foreign-born population increases from 3 million in 2004 to 5.75 million by 2010, roughly 4

¹⁸ Kristen McCabe, , Serena Yi-Ying Lin, and Hiroyuki Tanaka. Migration Policy Institute, "Pay to Go: Countries Offer Cash to Immigrants Willing to Pack Their Bags."

¹⁹ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 109

²⁰ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 109

²¹ Insituto Nacional de Estadistica, "Notas de Prensa."

years after the beginning of the economic crisis. It is clear that an unusual portion of foreigners have returned home or to another country with the decrease to about 5.52 million at the beginning of 2013. However, relative to the immigration surge in Spain since the beginning of the 21st century, there is no doubt that the majority of migrants have decided to stay.

1.5 Reactions to Migration

With the foreign population in present day Spain millions more than its total of under 1.5 million in 2000, and unemployment rates soaring beyond 27 percent for the total population in the first quarter of 2013, the Spanish government and citizens have directed particular attention to immigration.²² Considering the overabundance of supply but no demand for work, Spain looks to limit immigration to protect jobs for Spanish citizens. Meanwhile, as the economy worsens, blame is increasingly placed on foreigners. People need or want to have a scapegoat to blame for economic hardships and deteriorating living conditions, and the vulnerable victims of such scapegoating are immigrants. This has led much of Spain down a path of growing racism and xenophobia. In fact, such xenophobic discourse has appeared amongst politicians and political parties.²³ During recent years, xenophobia has become a vital platform during local and regional elections across Spain. Therefore, as Spain's economic conditions grow more unstable, unemployment continues to rise, and xenophobic ideals are shared, the decision of the majority of immigrants to stay, rather than return, is certainly a key issue and puzzle in Spain.

²² Reuters, "Spain Unemployment Rate Hits Record 27.16% in First Quarter."

²³ United Nations Human Rights, "Spain must make a priority the fight against racism, now more than ever ."

Chapter 2: The Return Migration Puzzle and Literature Review

2.1 Debates and Puzzles

The subsequent effects of the economic crisis on migrants have resulted in various unusual puzzles. As posited by macroeconomic theory, job seekers are expected to move away from high unemployment areas. Yet, with the soaring unemployment rates and other ensuing conditions, such as increased xenophobia, decreased availability of resident permits, and pay-to-go programs, many migrants choose to stay. Of Spain's pay-to-go programs, only about 10% of potential candidates have applied.²⁴ The lack of participants and the ineffectiveness of pay-to-go programs, such as in Spain, has proven to be a recent puzzle shared by other countries such as the Czech Republic. By examining explanations for low return migration from Spain, one may be able to develop suggestions for why other countries also face such low return migration and unsuccessful voluntary return programs.

2.2 Aims and Research Questions

Therefore, the scope of this research will be to answer the question: why do migrants remain in Spain despite the economic crisis?" Ultimately, the aim is to explore the generally unknown world of return migration and to develop a greater understanding for why immigrants do or do not return migrate during economic crisis. By examining this puzzle of low return migration from the immensely immigrant populated country of Spain, and then comparing the findings with the results of related research, this thesis identifies variables which significantly influence decisions to stay or return. However, in order to answer the higher order question of why immigrants stay, I first examine, in sequence, lower order issues which ultimately influence return migration. Firstly, I examine why migrants immigrated to Spain. If there is an absence of the initial reasons to immigrate, then there must be other factors which induce decisions to stay. Secondly, I explore what conditions immigrants face while in Spain, such as integration or security. If such conditions are superior to the country of origin, then migrants have additional reasons to stay. Finally, I address the influence of the economic crisis and the higher question of why immigrants stay. The sequence of these interrelated questions ultimately defines the various variables which influence return migration from Spain. Before devoting special attention to the

²⁴ BBC World Service, "Migration and The Global Recession."

case of Spain, it may be pertinent to first explore first the literature and research regarding return migration.

2.3 Literature Review

As much of the information regarding the low return migration from Spain during economic crisis has been researched and organized by organizations such as the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Remesas, and departments for migration in various countries, little has been achieved by scholars to explain this phenomenon. In fact, relatively few scholarly articles have been written about return migration in general. Yet, as swelling interests in the academic world reflect the intertwining of relationships between migration flows, remittances, and economic conditions, a growing body of literature has recently become available regarding return migration and economic crisis.

An example of such expanding immigration literature is found with the article *Sovereignty and International Labor Migration: The "Security Mentality" in Spanish-Moroccan Relations as an Assertion of Sovereignty*, in which author Gregory White uses the theoretical framework of Migration systems theory (MST) to depict the attachment of Moroccan migrants to Spain. White provides an explanation for labor migration from Morocco into Spain using migration systems theory, which identifies the influence of ties such as colonialism, culture, politics, trade, and investment flows, and how such ties also encourage further migration.²⁵ However, while White's article reveals influential factors for deciding to immigrate, it does not describe the relationship between economic crisis and return migration.

Gijs Beets and Frans Willekens effectively explore the influence of economic crisis on migration flows in *The Global Economic Crisis and International Migration: An Uncertain Outlook*. Looking at evidence from previous economic recessions and scholarly literature, the researchers demonstrate that the 1973 crisis did not cause large waves of return migration; only about 10 to 15 percent of guest workers in Germany returned home while the majority stayed. Also, the 1997-1999 Asian financial crisis had only a slight impact on migration flows throughout the region. Looking at the current economic crisis in Spain, the authors observe that immigrants are reluctant to leave despite the provision of incentives in exchange for not

²⁵ Gregory W. White, "Sovereignty and International Labor Migration: The 'Security Mentality' in Spanish-Moroccan Relations as an Assertion of Sovereignty," *Taylor and Francis Group*, 14, no. 4 (2007): 696,

returning to Spain within 3 years. From these historic examples, as well as many others, the research determines that voluntary return programs are generally ineffective, especially when such initiatives cause migrants to lose their opportunities to return to the host country for a period of time. Beets and Willekens conclude that low-skilled labor migrants are the persons most affected during economic crisis, while family reunion, marriage migration, and remittances are affected less than predicted. They also find that those migrants who heavily invest in their immigration to another country are more likely to stay rather than return to the country of origin.²⁶ From this article one may deduce that Spain fits a historical pattern of migration during economic crisis as the vast population low-skilled labor migrants were the most affected during the crisis, the majority of immigrants have decided to stay in Spain, and voluntary return programs have shown to be ineffective. Yet, while the research draws an evident pattern between past migration flows and economic crises, it does not delve into the individual and complex explanations for return migration.

Authors Hein de Haas, Tineke Fokkema, and Mohamed Fassi Fihri completed research which aimed to determine under what circumstances Moroccan immigrants in Europe were likely to return home. Presented in their paper, titled *Return Migration as Failure or Success?*, these authors decided to examine the individual and contextual factors which may affect return migration decisions. The paper uses data collected from 2,832 surveys to test the hypotheses of neoclassical migration theory (NE) and new economics of labor migration (NELM) in providing explanations for the return migration of the second largest non-EU population in Europe, Moroccan migrants. Under NE, immigrants, acting individually, are more likely to return to the country of origin if they fail to integrate, improve their lives, or find better work when migrating. With the NELM perspective, immigrants, acting for the livelihoods of families and households, will only return once they have saved and remitted enough financial and human capital. Through NELM, people may postpone return migration and subsequently settle permanently if they are unsuccessful in integrating within the society of the host country. While recognizing the comparatively low return of Moroccan immigrants, the survey found that Moroccans were more likely to consider return as time passed; the probability of return was found to be higher among

²⁶ Gijs Beets, and Frans Willekens, "The global economic crisis and international migration: An uncertain outlook," *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 7 (2009): 24-27,

the most educated rather than unqualified migrants; those who invested more in Morocco were more willing to consider return; being treated worse than non-migrants also positively influenced return decisions; social ties to the country of origin increased likelihood of return while attachments to persons in the destination country did have a significant effect on return. These results only partially support the hypotheses of NE and NELM. Reinforcing NE, the study revealed that socio-cultural integration within the host country influence decisions away from return. The NELM argument was also moderately upheld as investments and social relationships with persons in the country of origin had a positive influence on one's decision to return and that such a decision to return would be more likely to occur after achieving economic success in the receiving country. As the findings within this research cannot fully validate the hypotheses of each theory, the authors proclaim that using the theories in a complementary fashion may be a more efficient way to explain the complexity of return migration decisions.²⁷ However, while successfully providing insight to the return migration decision process, the article does not account for one of the dynamic themes of this thesis, how economic crisis may influence immigrants to return migrate.

Paulo Boccagni and Francesca Lagomarsino examine the ramifications of the global financial crisis on return migration from Europe with their article, *Migration and the Global Crisis: New Prospects for Return? The Case of Ecuadorians in Europe*. The paper initially notes how Western Europe became a land of opportunity with a high demand for low-skilled labor and welcoming immigration policies which encouraged mass Ecuadorian immigration since the 1990s. However, opportunities reversed as such low-skilled labor positions became vulnerable to the recent global financial crisis. Particularly looking at the voluntary return initiative APRE, started by the Spanish government in 2008, the authors present that by June 2009 a small number of just over 4,000 unemployed immigrants had applied for the program. However, about 50 percent of such applicants were Ecuadorian, which accounts for only 5 percent of potential Ecuadorian recipients of the policy. The ineffectiveness of this voluntary return program is recognized to be due to faulty design. First, the incentive to return was the payment of remaining unemployment benefits, yet if persons had exhausted their unemployment benefits then there is little motivation to participate in the program. Second, the return program was concentrated on

²⁷ Haas Hein, "Return Migration as Failure or Success?," *International Population Conference* (2009)

immediate departure, and therefore reaching the attention of single individuals rather than families.²⁸ This further affirms the NELM theory which hypothesizes that persons act in the interest of households and families and that return may happen in time if the majority of investments are made in the country of origin. As this article does bring the subject of return migration under the umbrella of economic crisis, it may help and be more appropriate for this thesis to examine an article on return migration during economic crisis, which elaborates more on the case of Spain.

Finally, research which incorporates the main ingredients from the previous mentioned literature as well as the principal theme of this thesis, return migration from Spain during economic crisis, is presented in an article by Tanja Bastia titled *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Return Migration in Times of Crisis*. Bastia examined the decision process of return migration during economic crisis by using observations from the Argentinean crisis in 2001 and current economic crisis in Spain. The author used semi-structured interviews with returnees in Cochabamba, Bolivia from Argentina in 2002 and Spain in 2008 and with Bolivians in Buenos Aires in 2003 and in Spain in 2009. With the case of the Argentinean crisis in 2001, Bastia found that the majority of persons had initially planned to migrate temporarily and use the money gained while abroad to invest in their country of origin. This compliments the NELM theory which hypothesizes that migrants postpone their decisions to return until they achieve their objective, such as saving enough capital. Successful migrants, with stable jobs and flowing income, could endure the worsening economic crisis, while the relatively unsuccessful migrants also decided to stay to avoid ridicule upon return to the country of origin. When considering the current economic crisis in Spain, Bastia found that migrants would prefer to stay in Spain rather than return to Bolivia, despite the inferior work conditions and salaries in Spain. One consistent explanation for this choice was that returning to Bolivia meant an improbability reentering Spain in the near future.²⁹ However, as this research coincides with the dawn of the economic crisis in Spain, 2008 and 2009, there is room for further exploration of return migration during the crisis.

²⁸ Paolo Boccagni, and Francesca Lagomarsino, "Migration and the Global Crisis: New Prospects for Return? The Case of Ecuadorians in Europe," *Journal of the Society for Latin American Studies*, 30, no. 3 (2011): 292-293

²⁹ Bastia, Tanja. "SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO? RETURN MIGRATION IN TIMES OF CRISES." *Journal of International Development*. (2011): 592-593

While Bastia's article, *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Return Migration in Times of Crisis*, provides a compelling explanation for return migration during the Argentinean crisis in 2001, the results of the study on return migration from Spain may have been premature as Spain's economic crisis has grown profoundly worse since 2008. However, this may expose an opportunity. With the previous research on return migration during economic crisis being limited, especially when considering the case of Spain, the world of return migration is considerably open to be explored. Yet, one may use the available tools of certain previous research, such as Bastia's study in Argentina and Spain, as building blocks to assess current trends of return migration. Especially when observing Bastia's work in Spain in 2008, one may use up-to-date research to determine how return migration decisions have been affected as the economic crisis has persisted.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Examining the current trends of the return migration during economic crisis opens a window of opportunity to examine the validity and limitations of existing migration theories relevant to return migration. However, just as there is a deficit of scholarly articles pertaining to return migration, there is also a gap in available theoretical analysis. Yet, as the phenomenon of increasing migration patterns continues to parallel the growing influence of globalization, original attempts are being made to theorize immigrant integration, transnationalism, and migration processes. Like many other fields of research, migration is complex. As noticed in the push and pull approach to explaining migration, a multitude of factors influence one to be either pushed from the state of origin, and/or pulled to a receiving state. Incentives present in the decision of whether to leave or to stay range from the appeal of better economic conditions, to family or cultural networks. While theorists often aim to attain a one-size-fits-all explanation for migration processes, the complexity and broad nature of the subject makes such a task problematic as concluded in the previously mentioned article by authors Hein de Haas, Tineke Fokkema, and Mohamed Fassi Fihri.

Considering the limited and fragmented set of migration theories pertaining to return migration, to develop a greater understanding one should utilize a theory which best describes the present case studies, but also incorporates complimentary theories. While reaching beyond the overly general approach of the push and pull explanations, the decisions regarding whether to stay in the host state or return to the country of origin are best analyzed under new economics of

labor migration (NELM). NELM, an approach developed by Stark in 1991 as a response to neo-classical migration theory, posits that migration can only be seen from a household and family livelihood perspective rather than individual decision making.³⁰ This differs from conventional neo-classical migration theory which sees migration as an income maximizing technique for individuals. NELM assumes the notion that households send particular individuals to receiving states in order to increase income potential. The money earned is then remitted back to the sending state to spread out income risks, improve living conditions, and spur investment. Since the purpose of migration is to improve the condition of the state of origin, return migration will only occur once the migrant has successfully remitted or saved enough capital. If the migrant experiences financial difficulty, then return migration is postponed until success is achieved.³¹

Yet, while NELM clearly explains why an immigrant would “choose” to leave the sending state and stay in the receiving state, it lacks in providing a detailed and expansive explanation on how the migrant decides on the state of destination, which may also contribute to the migrant’s future decision to stay. As neoclassical migration theory too narrowly defines migration within the frame of the individual, other theories such as migration systems theory incorporate broad elements which affect one’s decision on whether to stay or go. Within migration systems theory factors such as colonial ties, social networks, and political, economic, and cultural relationships influence where a person migrates. The degree of importance of certain factors may develop a causal path for migration. As such relationships bridge the gap between societies, geographic location begins to play a lesser role in decision making. This may be exemplified by the relatively high Ecuadorian and Colombian populations in Spain. Coupling new economic labor of migration and migration systems theory, I will examine the decision process of migrants previous to and during economic crisis.

To help explore why return migration from Spain is so low, these theories will be applied to cases of migration in Spain through three separate steps:

³⁰ Haas Hein, "Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration," *International Migration Institute* (2010): 8

³¹ Haas Hein, "Return Migration as Failure or Success?," *International Population Conference* (2009): 4,

- A. Within the 1st step new economics of labor migration will be utilized to explain why migration soared in Spain during its economic boom period previous to 2007. As posited by NELM, migrants travel to locations where potential for greater income is available. After joining the EMU in 1999, Spain integrated further within the European Union with the Euro. Afterward, Spain began to experience the beginnings of an economic boom period. To fuel this growth, immigration policies were introduced to ease the influx of legal migration. Each of these attractive factors in Spain proved it to be a prime opportunity for immigrants hoping to gain income and remit money to improve living conditions within the country of origin.
- B. The 2nd step incorporates migration systems theory to better analyze why or how immigrants choose the state of destination. While migrants travel to locations where the potential for income is much higher, as recognized by NELM, their decisions are also influenced by a variety of other factors. MST acknowledges that migrant populations also decide where to go according to cultural, political, economic, social networking, and colonial factors. Such cultural factors explain why during Spain's economic boom, the majority of Ecuadorian migrants chose Spain as the country of destination rather than the, closer in proximity, United States. The growing Romanian population may also be attributed to social networks and shared Latin based history. These ties may support factors which encourage decisions to stay, such as social integration.
- C. After explaining why and to where migrants choose to immigrate, in the 3rd step I will return to NELM to analyze why the majority of migrants in Spain have decided not to return to the country of origin despite government incentives. Here NELM posits that migrants will only return once the immigrant considers their "project" to be successful. This success may be identified as sending sufficient remittances, enhancing living conditions in the state of origin, or saving what may be considered enough capital. Using Bastia's previous research I demonstrate how decisions to postpone return were affected by economic crisis.

In walking through each step, this coupled theoretical framework will be applied to better analyze a sequence of factors which influence the puzzle of low return migration from Spain.

Chapter 3: Methodology

After demonstrating the principal approach of this thesis, the presentation of the independent variables and dependent variable, and an explanation for the case selection, this methodology section then describes the structure and the purpose of using two different styles of analysis. Finally, before entering the first level of analysis, this methodology section presents limitations of the research.

IVs and DV

This research has been conducted to explain the causes of the dependent variable, lack of return migration from Spain during economic crisis, by examining the consistency of three particular independent variables in the study and exploring other possible variables. The first independent variable is the economic standing of the country of origin. Immigrants in Spain may not be willing to return migrate because the potential for economic prosperity may be even worse in the home country. The second independent variable is the understanding of immigration as a “project”. Often consistent with new economics of labor migration (NELM), if the purpose of the migration is to improve one’s living conditions within the country of origin, immigrants will only return once enough capital is remitted or saved. Finally, the third independent variable is the geographical proximity of the host country to the country of origin. Considering the increased risks of travel, exacerbated by distance, one may perceive return migration to be less likely if the country of origin is of greater distance or may even consider migrating to a new country.

Building Block Approach

An article which I utilize for a building block approach is Tanja Bastia’s work titled *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Return Migration in Times of Crisis*. Within the paper Bastia uses Spain as a case study through which to examine return migration during economic crisis. However, the research was completed in 2008 and 2009, at the beginning of the economic crisis in Spain. Since that time Spain’s economy and unemployment have consistently grown worse, with immigrants, especially low-skilled migrants, being amongst the most effected. By building from Bastia’s research on return migration from Spain at the start of the crisis, I am able to examine how return migration decisions have been impacted by the persistent economic crisis. Ultimately, combining the relevant research of Bastia with available quantitative information will allow me to determine consistent and more general explanations for lack of return migration during times of financial crisis.

Case Study Selection

Spain poses a valid and appropriate case for looking at return migration during economic crisis due to its continuous financial instability, its recent transition from a land of emigration to one of immigration, its latest history of mass inflow of immigrants, and its response to

immigration with voluntary return programs. In particular, Spain has shown to be a consistent outlier regarding record rates of unemployment. One would expect such unemployment rates to dramatically influence the decision of immigrants to leave, as immigrants are the first to suffer the loss of work. With Spain's considerably high immigrant population, economic downturn and unemployment rates have induced increasingly xenophobic mentalities in society, also influencing return decisions.

3.1 Data Analysis

The initial phase of the research relies primarily on the quantitative approach of data analysis. This section also uses qualitative research from interviews conducted by Tanja Bastia in 2008 and 2009 regarding return migration during economic crisis. Utilizing this method provides a platform upon which I will further illustrate and highlight recent conditions facing immigrants and immigration in Spain. Statistical information is sourced from an array of reports conducted by organizations such as the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística. These reports reveal details ranging from increased remittance flows to immigration rates by nationality. Then, by looking at information obtained through interviews regarding return migration from Spain during the economic crisis as it stood in 2008 and 2009, I describe how such quantitative data applies to actual experiences. This development of an initial data analysis supplies a structure from which the second phase of analysis then builds.

3.2 Questionnaires

Sources of Questionnaires

Shifting to a more qualitative approach, the second phase of analysis utilizes questionnaires to illustrate a more in-depth understanding and personal interpretation of why the majority of immigrants in Spain do not return migrate in times of economic crisis. Differing from the previous step, this phase aims to answer the research question by incorporating a direct investigation of the units of analysis, immigrant populations and potential candidates for return migration programs. While gaining access to immigrants willing to answer questionnaires may be difficult, I used three particular methods to contact potential persons to answer the questionnaire. The first strategy was to ask for the help of personal contacts within Spain in order to access candidates. Secondly, I utilized immigration NGOs and associations throughout Spain as a link to eligible persons able to complete the questionnaires. Finally, I used the "snowball effect" to my advantage. This means that following each successfully completed questionnaire, I asked the person if they are able to recommend another potential person to complete the questionnaire. However, to remain consistent with the notion of return migration as a general decision facing all immigrants, this thesis distinctly abstains from bounding the research within an ethnic lens, and therefore, questionnaires have been completed by immigrants regardless of their country of origin.

Type of Questionnaire

Purposefully, the field research used at this stage of analysis has been conducted in a manner similar to the methods used by Bastia in her research of return migration from Spain, so to allow for the comparative analysis. However, while Bastia conducted research through semi-structured interviews, my field work will be completed through open-ended questionnaires, due to time constraints. During the research I was able to obtain a total of 22 questionnaires. The questions are open-ended so to make room for flexibility and elaboration. This has allowed me to obtain more in-depth information regarding immigrant return migration decisions. The questionnaire is written in both English and Spanish and may be completed in either of these two languages depending on the comfort level of the candidate. The simple use of a questionnaire, open-ended structure of the questionnaire, and language preference, are valuable tools which may reduce miscommunication and provide a less stressful environment for both researcher and candidate. Candidates are also given the option to opt out of answering questions which they find to be too personal or intrusive. In this way, the questionnaire provides an environment in which the candidate does not feel uncomfortable or obliged to answer in specific way. Finally, I let each participant know the topic, and expected number of questions prior to filling out the questionnaire. This allows the candidate to be sure that they are comfortable and prepared to complete a questionnaire regarding return migration.

Questions

While the open ended nature of the questionnaire allows for flexibility, the following questions are explored within the questionnaire in sequence. First, the questionnaire aims to achieve basic information from each participant with questions pertaining to the immigrant's current age, age of arrival in Spain, gender, country of origin, current occupation, and occupation prior to migrating to Spain. This provides one with a basic understanding of the person's background and their necessity to adjust to employment differences. Second, the questionnaire inquiries into the social relationships and ties sustained with society in the country of origin and within Spain. This measures the degree and significance of social investments conducted locally or within the sending country. Next, a series of questions are used to develop an understanding of why immigrants choose to go to Spain, and how the economic crisis has influenced their living conditions and future plans. Then, questions are utilized to directly investigate the conditions under which immigrants have considered or would consider returning to the country of origin. Following the previous two sections, an in-depth knowledge of the relationship between return migration and the economic crisis should be achieved. Finally, the study explores the awareness immigrants have of voluntary return programs. The results of this final section may provide an explanation for why the participation in voluntary return programs is so low.

The open-ended nature of particular questions helps provide in-depth explanations for the research question of this thesis. Following each questionnaire, I then transcribe the collected information and organize the results within a single document. Once the information is fully

collected, I compare the results to identify common themes facing immigrants regardless of country of origin.

3.3 Limitations of Research

This research will be limited by three factors. First, the access to participants available to support the research and complete questionnaires is decreased by time constraints and available funding. The field research was completed in less than two months, during which I was only able to receive 22 responses to questionnaires. With more time, the credibility of the research may be enhanced with more candidates to complete the questionnaires, and onsite research. However, with the time available, I worked from Budapest in collaboration with immigrant associations and personal contacts located across Spain, using social media to find immigrants to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, samples may be biased towards immigrants whom avidly work with or associate with immigrant associations. Secondly, open-ended questionnaires are difficult to tabulate and summarize. Responses may not directly correspond to the questions asked, which makes interpretation and answer collecting challenging; this would be avoided if, in case of future study, research is completed with open, semi-structured interviews, allowing for elaboration. Thirdly, this research is limited to an ongoing process. Presently, the economic conditions and increasingly unemployment rate continue to alter return migration decisions. Future decisions to stay in Spain or return to the country of origin may sway as immigrants endure continuous financial hardship in Spain, if the economic conditions fail to improve, and if the Spanish government enacts further measures to deter inflow immigration and encourage voluntary return migration. Despite such limitations, the available open-ended questionnaires, while not conclusive, provide abundant information that, when combined with previous reports and data, allow and support hypothesis generating and suggestions which are transferable to further research.

Chapter 4: Theory and Data Analysis of Migration Processes: Spain

Using both quantitative and qualitative information, this initial section of research aims to examine Spain migration processes through a combined theoretical framework. As previously noted by authors Hein de Haas, Tineke Fokkema, and Mohamed Fassi Fihri, in their paper titled *Return Migration as Failure or Success?*, using theories in a complementary fashion may be a more efficient way to explain the complex world of return migration. Therefore, this section uses a combination of New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) and Migration Systems Theory (MST) to examine why the majority of persons do not return migrate during the economic crisis in Spain. However, to pinpoint an explanation for low return migration, as described in the *Aims and Research Question* section, it is pertinent to first understand the common initial reasons for immigrating to Spain. While this is rarely done, explaining the original decision to immigrate to Spain may reveal an indication as to why current return migration is so low. Combining MST and NELM, this preliminary section uses quantitative information from reports written by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to explain immigration to Spain. Then the research uses Tanja Bastia's qualitative research, titled *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Return Migration in Times of Crisis*, as a building block approach to identify explanations for low return migration during the economic crisis in Spain. This will then lead into my personal field research.

4.1 Immigration to Spain and New Economics of Labor Migration

The core claim of new economics of labor migration (NELM) is that households and families, rather than individuals, consider migration as a livelihood strategy used to overcome financial and development constraints within the country of origin. The notion is that persons migrate from a sending country to a host country to gain a better standard of living and a higher income. Immigrants then remit the saved money to the country of origin to increase income, spread out financial risks, and improve living conditions. The migration also provides the immigrant with a prime opportunity to sustain personal ties, save money, and make individual investments in the country of origin.³² Therefore, while fulfilling the objective of improving the livelihoods of families and households, immigrants continue to invest in their own future both socially and financially. These sustained economic and social ties may then provoke motivations for return migration in the future once enough money has been attained and saved. Immigrants are therefore likely to choose a host country with a high demand for labor and potential for growth. One country which fulfilled such desirable characteristics at the end of the 1990s was Spain.

³² Hein de Haas, and Tineke Fokkema, "The effects of integration and transnational ties on international return migration intentions," *Demographic Research*, 25, no. 24 (2011): 759,

Spain provided a ripe opportunity for migration at the starting gate of the 21st century as its astounding economic growth and liberal immigration policies fueled a swelling demand for low-skilled and intensive manual labor. Between 2001 and 2008 Spain's unemployment reached impressive lows with the creation of about 4.7 million new jobs. However, only about 2 million of these jobs were filled by Spaniards, while the rest of the jobs, 2.7 million, were taken by immigrants. Between 2000 and 2007 Spain had an influx of foreign population, 60 percent of which from Morocco, Romania, Colombia, and Ecuador.³³ Mass numbers of people immigrated to Spain from these locations and others to escape inferior economic conditions and to take advantage of Spain's attractive employment and economic growth. In fact, several countries in Latin America, from which a vast number of persons immigrated to Spain, faced economic crisis at the end of the 1990s, coinciding with Spain's soaring economic growth period. For example, banking crises in 1998 and 1999 quickly drove the economies in Colombia and Ecuador into recession with drastic and significantly climbing unemployment rates.³⁴ Meanwhile, the two largest foreign populations in Spain came from the countries of Morocco and Romania, which have traditionally faced financial instability and are prone to high rates of emigration, to take work in low-skilled jobs.³⁵ As the majority of migrants emigrated from such locations of economic hardship to the attractive and optimistic Spanish economy in search of higher wages and stability, the results included a substantial outflow of money to sending states.

Outflow of Remittances per Quarter, Total and per Foreign –Born Person 2000-2010

³³ Ramón Mahía, Eiko Thielemann, and Rafael de Arce, "Migration Policy and its Impact: A Comparative Study with a Focus on Spain," *LSE Migration Studies Unit and CIEES* (2010): 10-11,

³⁴ Andrés Felipe Arias, "THE COLOMBIAN BANKING CRISIS: Macroeconomic Consequences and What to Expect," *BORRADORES DE ECONOMIA*(2000): 2,

³⁵ David Reher, and Miguel Requena, "The National Immigrant Survey of Spain: A new data source for migration studies in Europe," *Demographic Research*, 20, no. 12 (2009): 268,

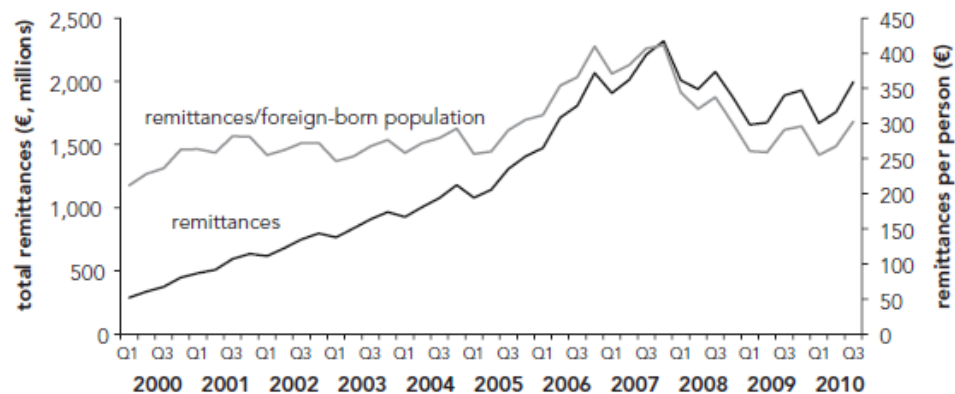


Figure 4³⁶

An important product of Spain's substantial migration influx at the beginning of the 21st century was a surge in remittances, a key issue increasingly being acknowledged by the academic world and embraced by NELM, but given little attention by neo-classical migration theory. Figure 4 effectively depicts this substantial rise in an outflow of remittances from Spain relative to the foreign-born population. As one may notice, in the period of Spain's economic growth and migration inflow, between 2000 and 2007, remittance outflow was on a constant rise from years previous. Yet, even as Spain's economy collided with global financial crisis in 2007, total remittance outflows remained at rates considerably higher than in the years prior to Spain's economic growth period. In fact, between the first three quarters of 2009 and the first three quarters of 2010, total remittance outflows grew by about 4 percent.³⁷ This information reveals that over time, immigrants not only sustain social and economic ties with their communities and countries of origin, but they also remain dedicated to provide economic support when faced with economic crisis. These persistent ties may provoke return migration when the immigrant is continuously faced with the drain of a relentless economic crisis or has saved enough money to return. In this way, sustained remittance flows demonstrate a continued connection with the sending country which may encourage future migration flows and return.

As previously noted, central to NELM is that migration is a decision made in consideration of the livelihood of families and households, rather than individuals. The information revealed by figure 4 effectively supports this claim as remittances sent by migrants to their countries of origin surged alongside increasing immigration and remained relatively constant even during economic crisis. Therefore, the livelihoods of families and households continued to be important to immigrants, who migrated to Spain for higher wages and stability,

³⁶ Ibrahim Sirkeci, and Dilip Ratha, "Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond," *The World Bank*(2012): 259,

³⁷ Ibrahim Sirkeci, and Dilip Ratha, "Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond," *The World Bank*(2012): 259,

as Spain's economy surged and deteriorated. Also consistent with NELM is that immigrants migrate to locations where they may receive higher wages, security, and stability. As noted in the previously presented empirics section, a majority of immigrants migrated to Spain from countries facing economic crisis or consistent financial instability. Many of such immigrants found work in low-skilled jobs and the money to invest in their personal lives in Spain, and households in the community of origin. By understanding the explanations for immigrating to Spain, such as to earn a higher income to better support family and households, one may determine reasons for why migrants do or do not return to countries of origin. In this case, as supported by NELM, immigrants maintain ties with families and communities of origin, which may motivate future return. However, looking at solely economic reasons for immigration leaves a blind eye to the varied and complex world of migration processes. Therefore, it may be pertinent to incorporate a second theory to fully identify other reasons of outward migration, and how such reasons may influence return migration in the future.

4.2 Immigration to Spain and Migration Systems Theory

New economics of labor migration (NELM) and neo-classical migration theory rightly recognize the pull of increased income and financial stability in migration processes, and this is accurately depicted with the mass inflow of migrants into Spain at the start of the 21st century. However, by looking further one may notice multiple and diverse explanations for immigration, which ultimately impact decisions to stay. For example in the case of Spain: Why did the majority of immigrants travel in significant numbers from countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco and Romanian and not from other economically unstable areas around the world which also faced economic crisis at the end of the 1990s such as with the Asian financial crisis from 1997 to 1999 and the financial crisis in Russia at the end of 1998? This suggests that the highest populations of immigrants in Spain may have been pulled to Spain for reasons in addition to money. One theory which effectively looks beyond the attraction of increased income and may be useful in identifying factors which influence return migration, such as social integration, is migration systems theory (MST).

MST, developed by a geographer in 1970 named Mabogunje, centers on the core notion that specific places facilitate increased migration patterns between each other through the continuous inflow and outflow of goods, money, information, ideas, and people.³⁸ This means that between certain countries ties are built and developed upon, inducing an increase in migration flows between the two particular countries rather than other possible locations of migration. While the previous claim is prevalent amongst other popular migration theories such as world systems theory or network theory, migration systems theory takes a general step forward by hypothesizing that such connected countries do not necessarily need to be

³⁸ Hein de Haas, "The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36, no. 10(2010): 1593,

geographically close, and that there can be multiple states with a developed connection with a single state.³⁹ This is evident within the current case considering the developed ties and the geographic location of what are consistently sending countries, such as Colombia and Ecuador, relative to Spain. Within countries, linked by colonialism, trade, politics, and culture, social networks are built between families, friends, and households as they are separated by distance. These formed connections with the society of the host country may then facilitate integration processes. However, if there are fewer ties with the receiving country, then integration may prove to be difficult and therefore lead to increased chances of return migration in the future. This may then explain why migrant populations in Spain are so extraordinarily prevalent from certain countries and not others.

Immigrant Populations in Spain by Nationality					
	Year 2000		Year 2009		Years 2000-2009
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Growth Percentage
Romania	6,410	0.7	789,892	14.1	12,363.20
Morocco	173,158	18.7	718,055	12.7	314.7
Ecuador	20,481	2.2	421,426	7.5	1,957.60
United Kingdom	99,017	10.7	375,703	6.7	279.4
Colombia	25,247	2.7	296,674	5.3	1,075.10
Bolivia	2,117	0.2	230,703	4.1	10,797.60

Figure 5⁴⁰

Between the years 2000 and 2009 foreign-born populations in Spain predominantly arrived from the countries of Romania, Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia, as presented in figure 5. While potentially higher income was a major pull factor for immigrants, people were drawn to Spain by other means, which explains why immigrants arrived in extraordinary numbers from certain locations and not others. In looking at figure 5, the growth percentage increase of populations in Spain was above 1,000 for countries such as Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Notice that Ecuador grew from being 20,481 to 421,426, Colombia's migration population increased from 25,247 to 296, 674, and Bolivia astoundingly surged from 2,117 to 230,703 immigrants in Spain. Meanwhile, foreign-born populations in Spain increased by over 100,000 between 2000 and 2009 from other Latin American countries such as Argentina, which jumped

³⁹ Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor, "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review*, 19, no. 3 (1993): 454,

⁴⁰ Jose Villaverde, Adolfo Maza, and Maria Hierro, "Regional international migration distribution in Spain: which factors are behind?," *ERSA conference papers*(2011): 20,

from 23,351 to 142,270, and Peru, increasing from 27,422 to 139,179.⁴¹ This indicates a potential pull factor and trend, uniquely existing between Spain and Latin America, which extends beyond simply monetary gains.

As hypothesized by MST, links and sustained relations may be established between countries through former colonization and migration. There is considerable evidence to prove that such historic ties, such as colonization, language, culture, and former migration settlement, have influenced recent migration patterns. This is exemplified with the current prevalence of Brazilians in Portugal, and Jamaicans in the United Kingdom.⁴² This claim is just as valid when considering Spain's relationship with much of Latin America as the three previously mentioned key immigrant sending countries of Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador, as well as other major source countries of immigration flows to Spain such as Argentina and Peru, were former colonies of Spain and have since sustained ties, cultural connectivity, and established personal networks. In fact, with Spain's history as a country characteristic of emigration, having the highest emigration rate out of any other European country prior to World War 1, the majority of such migrants traveled, settled, and built networks in former Spanish colonies of Latin America.⁴³ Therefore, despite distance, social ties and networks, developed between much of Latin America and Spain through colonization and former migration flows, have opened a channel through which ideas, information, money, and increased migration may flow. This massive flow and counterflow of migration between Latin America and Spain demonstrates the limitation and failure of my third independent variable, geographical distance, to explain low return migration. In fact, the increasing remittance flows and technologically advancing social media support and expand already existing social networks which then encourage migration decisions and family unification between the two locations. Easing this migration process is language, as Spanish is a shared language between much of Latin America and Spain. Once immigrants from Colombia, Bolivia, or Ecuador enter Spain, their knowledge of Spanish and their formerly established social ties help their integration within the Spanish society, while someone from Russia or Korea may have more difficulty adapting to the new environment. As colonization and language helped to form vital social networks between Latin American and Spain and subsequently encouraged the flow of money, information, and increased migration patterns, similar explanations may be used to describe the drastic surge in foreign-born populations from Morocco and Romania.

⁴¹ Jose Villaverde, Adolfo Maza, and Maria Hierro, "Regional international migration distribution in Spain: which factors are behind?," *ERSA conference papers*(2011): 20,

⁴² Adela Pellegrino, "Migration from Latin America to Europe: Trends and Policy Challenges," *IOM Migration Research Series* (2004): 20,

⁴³ Barbara Schmitter Heisler, "Sending Countries and the Politics of Emigration and Destination," *International Migration Review*, 19, no. 3 (1985): 478,

Illustrated in figure 5, between 2000 and 2009, Romanians and Moroccans became the most highly prevalent foreign-born populations in Spain. Moroccans increased their population size in Spain from 173,158 to 718,055, and the foreign-born population of Romanians astronomically soared by 12,363.20 percent from 6,410 to 789,892. While also intrigued by the potential of increased financial security and facing less geographic constraints than immigrants from Latin America, other explanations may be used to determine the exceptionally high immigration rates of Moroccans and Romanians to Spain. In particular, Morocco was formerly a partial Spanish colony and a French colony, which explains, like with migration between Spain and former Spanish colonies in Latin America, why Moroccans have historically migrated, settled, and developed social ties with persons in both France and Spain, and thus encouraged further migration flows with the personal flow of money, and information. Though fairly recent, Romanian immigration to Spain has been facilitated by settled family networks, the availability of movement throughout the Schengen area without restriction after 2001, and a shared cultural identity and romance language.⁴⁴ In Romania, people regularly sustain a cultural connection and affinity for Latin culture, often demonstrating a clear familiarity with Spanish and Latin American pop culture and cinema. Regarding language, Spanish is a popular language learned in Romania, sometimes used before English.⁴⁵ With Romanian and Spanish both descending from Latin, learning Spanish becomes a more uncomplicated task. This cultural and language similarity increases the attraction and association to countries such as Spain. For these reasons of colonial history, developed social networks, shared culture, and similar language, combined with economic pull, Morocco and Romania have become primary foreign-born populations in Spain.

The main immigrant flows to Spain between 2000 and 2009, from Romania, Morocco, and multiple countries of Latin America, exemplify migration destination explanations which stretch beyond the individual economic reasoning of neo-classical migration theory to fit the main hypotheses of migration systems theory (MST). In accordance with MST, extraordinarily prevalent Moroccan and Latin American migrants have been pulled to Spain through colonial and historical connections. Meanwhile, also supporting the MST claims, Latin American and Romanian persons immigrate to Spain with the attraction of similar language and cultural identity. Unanimously, each of these foreign-born populations have dynamically developed social networks with populations within Spain which encourage the increased flow of ideas, information, remittances, and subsequently, migration flows and family unification between Spain and sending states. These compound reasons, for choosing Spain as a state of destination, ultimately converge into one factor which influences levels of return migration, integration.

⁴⁴ Cristina E. Bradatan, and Dumitru Sandu, "Before Crisis: Gender and Economic Outcomes of the Two Largest Immigrant Communities in Spain," *International Migration Review*, 46, no. 1 (2012): 227,

⁴⁵ Neysa L. Figueroa, "Exploring Language and Culture in Romania," *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*, 4, no. 2 (2012): 4,

Historical connections, social networks, cultural identity, and language massively affect one's ability to integrate within a new society; absent of such ties, one may be more inclined to return migrate. If persons are connected to these social networks, being friends or family, within the receiving country before migration, there is a likelihood of receiving integration support upon entry. However, even without such links, a migrant's knowledge of society and environment of the place of destination will also facilitate integration with Spaniards.⁴⁶ Unmistakably, there is a direct correlation between socio-cultural integration and return migration: the more someone is integrated within the sociocultural framework of society, the less likely they are to consider return migration.⁴⁷ However, as social ties with locals within the receiving country has a negative effect on return migration, sustained social connections with friends, family, and households within the country of origin positively influence decisions to return.⁴⁸ While this factor of social connectivity with the country of origin is hypothesized with MST, it remains consistent when returning to new economics of labor migration (NELM).

4.3 Return Migration and New Economics of Labor Migration

As the central claim of NELM is that people migrate to support the livelihood of families and households within the country of origin, it is reasonable to believe that such persons sustain social contact with people in the country of origin. In accordance with NELM, migrants have an interest in integrating within the host country to improve networking and enhance opportunities for increased income; this does not necessarily result in permanent settlement. In fact, NELM posits that return may be postponed, possibly indefinitely, if the migrant is unable to integrate within society, or if they have been unsuccessful in saving, remitting, or investing enough money or human capital to support themselves, family, or households upon return to the country of origin. The end result may be permanent settlement if the immigrant is unable to achieve financial goals due to economic crisis.⁴⁹ Ultimately, in accordance with the combined hypotheses of NELM and MST, return migration decisions rest upon sustained social ties with families and households in the country of origin, integration within the society of the host country, and the successful attainment of financial and human capital to support livelihoods in the country of

⁴⁶ Veronica de Miguel, and Mark Tranmer, "Personal Support Networks of Immigrants to Spain: A Multilevel Analysis," *CCSR Working Paper* (2009): 19,

⁴⁷ Hein de Haas, and Tineke Fokkema, "The effects of integration and transnational ties on international return migration intentions," *Demographic Research*, 25, no. 24 (2011): 774,

⁴⁸ Hein de Haas, and Tineke Fokkema, "The effects of integration and transnational ties on international return migration intentions," *Demographic Research*, 25, no. 24 (2011): 774,

⁴⁹ Hein de Haas, and Tineke Fokkema, "The effects of integration and transnational ties on international return migration intentions," *Demographic Research*, 25, no. 24 (2011): 759,

origin. Evidence of these reasons for return migration has surfaced with recent research on the influence of economic crisis on return migration.

In an article titled *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Return Migration in Times of Crisis*, Tanja Bastia attempts such research by examining the effects of the economic crisis on return migration from Spain in 2008 and 2009. From a series of interviews with returnees in Bolivia from Spain in 2008 and Bolivians in Spain in 2009, Bastia finds that migrants were frequently reluctant to leave Spain and would stay and avoid returning to Bolivia, even if that meant accepting less income and worse working conditions. Meanwhile, others interviewed, while also establishing their desire to stay longer in Spain, had little choice but to return to the country of origin to support and take care of family. The results indicate that much of the reluctance to return was due to the introduction of visa requirements and voluntary return programs which restrict possible future returns to Spain. As this research was completed too early during the economic crisis in Spain to receive conclusive results, Bastia had also completed interviews regarding return migration during the Argentine crisis in 2001. From this case the findings revealed that those who had achieved average success returned to Bolivia from Argentina, while the least successful and the most successful decided to stay. The most successful had invested in their lives in Argentina to return, and the least successful would not return until they achieved their financial objectives.⁵⁰

The results of Bastia's research on return migration during the Argentinean crisis in 2001 and Spain's economic crisis in 2008 demonstrate evidence to support NELM hypotheses regarding return migration. For example, the Spain case confirms NELM's notion that individuals migrate to provide better support to family and households, as many of the persons interviewed, while reluctant to return, did so to care for their children and family left in the country of origin. Also, the conclusion that migrants were reluctant to return and subsequently willing to accept lower wages to stay in Spain indicates a willingness to postpone decisions to return until one is ready or forced. Finally, the results of return migration during the Argentinean crisis in 2001 support NELM's hypothesis that success in the host country influences return migration. In particular, individuals postponed return until they had achieved average success, while unsuccessful migrants chose to stay until they could reach their objectives. Conclusively, Bastia's article reinforces the importance of combining MST and NELM as it notes that migrants regularly sustain social ties within the country of origin, migrate to improve family livelihoods, and optimistically postpone return until enough capital is achieved. However, Bastia's results regarding return migration from Spain are limited as they were found at the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 and 2009 and before a long term, exhausting effect had tested the will of immigrants to stay. Therefore, it is pertinent to reexamine recent return

⁵⁰ TANJA BASTIA, "SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO? RETURN MIGRATION IN TIMES OF CRISES," *Journal of International Development*(2011): 592-593,

migration from Spain after years of straining economic crisis, to explain why return migration remains relatively low, and to test whether the results continue to support NELM and MST hypotheses.

Chapter 5: Return Migration Field Research

In order to update and reinforce the limited research on return migration during economic crisis, with a particular focus on Spain as a case study, I have designed a questionnaire which aims to identify the multifaceted factors which influence return migration. As detailed in the *Aims and Research Question* section, from the field research I first identify the conditions immigrants face while in Spain; then, I explore reasons to initially immigrate to Spain; finally, I examine the influence of the crisis and reasons to return migrate. The sequence of these interrelated questions illustrates the numerous factors which influence return migration decisions. Initially the questions achieve a basic knowledge of each migrant's gender, age, and country of origin. The next section of questions then examines the relationship of the migrants with their country of origin, establishing a clear understanding of prior and current occupations, and social integration with networks in the country of origin and within Spain. This allows me the opportunity to interpret the importance of social ties with family and households, and how such ties influence return decision making. The following questions then target the person's reasoning for migrating to Spain and how the economic crisis has impacted their livelihoods. Reasons for immigrating to Spain indicate the level of stability, conditions, and the options people face upon entry into Spain, which ultimately impact decisions to return. Meanwhile, questions on the economic crisis reveal the degree of impact the economic crisis has on immigrants and their decisions to stay, as well as the importance of financial conditions when deciding to stay or leave. The central role of the questionnaire then directly pinpoints the factors which impact return migration decisions. Finally, the questionnaire explores one's knowledge regarding incentives to return home and voluntary return programs. The results then provide an explanation for why the voluntary return programs have proven to be relatively limited and unsuccessful. While analyzing the results of such questions, I test the effectiveness of the combined hypotheses of NELM and MST to explain return migration. This will build from Bastia's previously mentioned research on return migration from Spain at the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, and identify if the explanations for return migration have remained consistent.

5.1 Basic Information

In specific collaboration with Acolvalle, a supportive non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Valencia, Spain, particular immigrant associations in regions across Spain, and personal contacts, I was able to collect a total of 22 completed, open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaire was answered by immigrants living in differing locations throughout Spain and coming from various countries across the globe. This was done in order to develop an understanding of migration as a whole, rather than simply the influence of unique bilateral relations and factors on return migration. However, by interacting with active immigrant associations in Spain, many of the participants came from the largest foreign-born populations in Spain, while the majority represented countries from Latin America. The current average age of

persons who completed the questionnaire is in the late 30s, between 37 and 38, and the average age of arrival in Spain was about 27 years old. Just over half of the participants were male. While the partaking persons were given the option to complete the questionnaire in either English or Spanish, the majority of the responses were in Spanish. Therefore, for this thesis, the following answers and results are translated into English.

5.2 Occupation and Social Ties

Country of Origin	Gender	Current Occupation in Spain	Occupation in Country of Origin
Mexico	Female	unemployed student	n/a
Romania	Female	administrative assistant	tourism agent
Colombia	Female	social worker	social worker
Colombia	Female	commercial or sales representative	promotion and sales
Ecuador	Female	local project manager for FADE Foundation	manager of sales and purchases in United States investment company
Bulgaria	Female	translator	secondary teacher
Venezuela	Female	unemployed	professor
Morocco	Male	manages business	n/a
Colombia	Male	flight attendant	student
Peru	Male	graduate student, unemployed	industrial engineer
Senegal	Male	unemployed	professor of Arabic and the Koran
Morocco	Male	unemployed	commercial work
Colombia	Male	unemployed	mechanic
Peru	Male	unemployed	civil servant
Colombia	Male	NGO representative	auditor
Peru	Male	IT, computer technician	IT, computer technician
Ecuador	Male	carpenter	accounting advisor
Colombia	n/a	cleaner	proprietary trader
Senegal	Male	garbage man	agricultural work
Colombia	Female	lawyer	lawyer
Colombia	n/a	administration	teacher
Peru	Male	security guard	laboratory technician

Figure 6 Occupation Transformations

After collecting basic information from each participant, the next section of the questionnaire aimed to determine if immigrants have accepted worse working conditions or lower salaries to stay in Spain, as concluded in Bastia's previously mentioned research. Indeed,

as the results present in figure 6, several immigrants were not only left with a work position of lower social status, but many even became unemployed. A proprietary trader had to pick up work cleaning, while professors are without work. Within the table one may see differences between genders as the majority of males picked up worse work, while many of the women attained similar jobs in Spain as in the country of origin. This may reflect initial migration to Spain as many males gained cyclical and unstable work, such as construction, and how the economic crisis has negatively influenced the conditions immigrants face while in Spain. As Spain's economic growth, prior to the crisis, established an economic pull to persons across the globe, it is interesting to acknowledge that with the current absence of the initial incentive to enter Spain, the country continues to sustain an extraordinarily immense foreign-born population. Therefore, it is appropriate to examine other factors which may affect migration processes.

<i>Social Ties within Country of Origin</i>					
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Partially</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Living Together with Family in Spain	10	5	3	-	18
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Internet, Social Media</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Mail</i>	<i>Visits</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Contact with family and friends within the country of origin	14	15	1	3	30
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Before, yes</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Remittances Sent	10	4	4	-	18

Figure 7 Social Ties within the Country of Origin

As previously noted within the data analysis section of this thesis, new economics of labor migration (NELM) posits that migration is a mutually interdependent strategy in which individuals migrate to gain increased income, which they remit to help families and households to overcome financial difficulties in the country of origin.⁵¹ Therefore, for this claim to be

⁵¹ Hein de Haas, and Tineke Fokkema, "The effects of integration and transnational ties on international return migration intentions," *Demographic Research*, 25, no. 24 (2011): 759,

verified, then immigrants must essentially sustain strong ties with family and friends within the sending state. Such information is evidenced in figure 7. When asked if their family was living with them in Spain the majority of respondents, 10 out of 18, answered yes, which provides evidence against the claim that migrants individually leave to support families in the country of origin. However, from following questions it appears that this response was skewed towards answering yes, as many immigrants have settled and formed families of their own in Spain. Evidence of this first question being a misunderstanding is demonstrated in the results of the second question, in which every respondent reported regular contact with family within the country of origin, primarily being through the internet or on the phone. The biggest support for NELM's hypothesis is presented with the results of the third question, which asks if the participants send remittances to family or friends in the country of origin. The majority of respondents, 10 out of 18, do continually send remittances to the sending country, even with common loss of employment or worse working conditions. 4 other participants divulged that they had once sent money, but were no longer able to do so because of the economic crisis. This may also be the case for the remaining 4 persons who mentioned that they do not currently send remittances. From these results it is evident that this case of immigration to Spain supports NELM's main notion that migrants are dedicated to providing financial support to families and households of the sending state. However, it is evident that many migrants have settled families in Spain, creating a dual household where investments are made in both the host country and the country of origin. These formed households may influence conditions and experiences, such as integration within the host country, which may affect decisions to stay.

<i>Social integration with Host country</i>				
Responses	Little Integration, still feels like a Foreigner	Simple Integration, feels at home	Initially Difficult, but Easier with Time	Total
Explain Social Interaction in Spain	5	9	3	17

Responses	Yes, as Long as Possible	No, will Leave when Necessary or Possible	Total
Plan to Stay in Spain a Long Time?	12	6	18

Figure 8 Social Integration in Spain and Duration of Stay

Explained within the data analysis of this thesis, migration systems theory (MST) hypothesizes that migration systems are developed between countries through which large numbers of persons, capital, and information flow and counterflow. Remittances and information between people and families further influence the flow of migration.⁵² Decisions to migrate between the systems of countries are initially established through historical, colonial, and cultural linkages.⁵³ With such ties one may expect immigrants to integrate with ease in the host country. Noted in the first responses of figure 8, this is the case for the majority of immigrants in Spain, while for some others, it's merely a matter of time and adaptation. As translated into English, one respondent stated, "The experience in Spain has certainly been satisfactory because it is a country where I could find many things from Peru, and the spoken language is the same, whereby the adaptation I've had has been quite good."⁵⁴ However, 5 respondents mentioned considerable difficulties and even cases of discrimination. One person mentioned "The truth is, to live and interact as an immigrant in Spain is not easy, there are times when you really feel you are in another country because the Spaniards still do not accept diversity and intolerance becomes stronger."⁵⁵ Upon further examination, 4 of the 5 persons, to cite poor integration or discrimination later described previous or current plans to return to the country of origin or another country of destination. This supports the hypothesis delivered in the *Immigration to Spain and Migration Systems Theory* section of this thesis and MST by revealing a distinct correlation between integration, which may be eased by various ties, and decisions to stay, even during economic crisis.

As seen at the bottom of figure 8, the majority of immigrants plans to stay in Spain despite disappearing opportunities and cited discrimination. In fact, other than the 4 persons who had declared plans to leave, while in reference to poor integration, only 2 more persons had considered plans to leave. As well as issues with difficult integration, 3 of the 6 persons who consider leaving cite the influence of the deteriorating economic conditions as a factor in the decision process, while 1 person references the end of schooling. With only 6 persons considering plans to leave, twice as many persons declared plans to stay for an extended period

⁵² Hein de Haas, "Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective," *COMCAD Arbeitspapiere - Working Papers*, no. 29 (2007): 33,

⁵³ Roel Jennissen, "Causality Chains in the International Migration Systems Approach," *Popul Res Policy Rev*, no. 26 (2007): 414,

⁵⁴ Original Language: ("La experiencia en España ha sido ciertamente satisfactoria, ya que es un país donde he podido encontrar muchas cosas del Perú y el idioma que se habla es el mismo, con lo cual la adaptación que he tenido has sido bastante Buena.")

⁵⁵ Original Language: ("Si La verdad vivir e interactuar como inmigrante en España no es fácil, hay momentos que uno realmente siente que esta un otro país porque los españoles aun no aceptan la diversidad, y la intolerancia se hace más fuerte.")

of time. 8 of the 12 migrants planning to stay specifically mentioned the reason to stay was due to a marriage or desire to provide a better future for their children. Such evidence hints at a limitation of new economics of labor migration which posits that individuals migrate to support family and households within the country of origin. Thus, with such evidence for reasons to stay, this definition of family and household should be expanded beyond the country of origin to include family and households formed or settled in the host country. This settlement, integration with host country social ties, and family formation could ultimately provide a new explanation for low return migration from Spain. However, other various and combined explanations were used detail why such persons preferred to Spain rather than return to the country of origin, such as security, better social benefits, and work.

In order to determine further reasons to stay in Spain rather than return to the country of origin I asked: What opportunities does Spain provide that the country of origin does not? Of the 27 answers I received, a relatively considerable number of respondents answered in a way consistent with my first independent variable, that the economic situation within the country of origin is just as bad as, or even worse than the economic conditions in Spain. If the conditions in the home country are just as bad as in Spain, as 7 of the respondents claim, then there is little reason in making the effort to return and reintegrate in the country of origin. However, other responses to this question delivered new independent variables which were not expected, previous to this field research, to explain low rates of return migration. In fact, 21 of the 29 answers described various variables, other than economic conditions, which relate to social conditions within Spain and influence decisions to stay in Spain rather than return to the country of origin. Separate from the pull of economic conditions, 4 of the responses cited Spain as providing a superior quality of life when considering healthcare and education. Repeatedly combined with the previous response, 5 persons noted that Spain will provide a better future for the family and their children in the long run. This further reinforces the notion and suggestion of the previous paragraph, that the formation of new families and households within the host country drastically reduce chances for return migration. Finally, one specific response emerged 12 times from the results of the questionnaire; Spain provides a safety and security that does not exist within the sending country. Surprisingly, security, while not usually connected to return migration processes, was the most frequently cited opportunity that exists more in Spain and not in countries of origin. The persons who referenced Spain's opportunity of superior security came from Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico. Despite the modesty of this research, and the bias towards Latin American countries of origin, the frequency of which security was referenced within the questionnaire points to a factor which should not be overlooked, and thus brought to the foreground of return migration research. In fact, the independent variables of newly established families and households, social benefits, and security, while often clouded by economic migration, should be factors expected to influence migration processes.

5.3 Reasons for Immigration to Spain and Influence of Economic Crisis

Reasons for Migrating to Spain	Frequency	Statement
Better Work, Economic, Social Opportunities and Stability	11	“In Colombia, there was an acute economic crisis in the 90s, I lost my social status, and had urgent debts...” ⁵⁶ (Colombia) “The economic crisis in Ecuador in 1999” ⁵⁷ (Ecuador)
Marriage, and Raise or Join Family	8	“I am married to a Spanish citizen, therefore, I decided to come (to Spain) to have a future more promising for me and my kids...” ⁵⁸ (Colombia) “In search of better opportunities for my family” ⁵⁹ (Peru)
Education	4	
Spanish Nationality	1	
Language	2	
Political Motives	1	
Not a Choice	1	

Figure 9 Why did you choose to come to Spain?

As detailed within the data analysis section of this thesis, initial decisions to immigrate to a country may reveal explanations for why one does or does not leave such country. Figure 9 displays an organization of the responses to the question: Why did you choose to come to Spain? Of the open-ended responses, two answers were provided most frequently: increased opportunity and family. Expectedly, the majority of explanations, 11 out of 28, noted Spain’s pull of potential work or economic opportunities, and superior security. For example, as mentioned in the statements, various persons left to escape financial crises in other countries. As one would expect such persons would become vulnerable with the onset of the economic crisis in Spain. Yet, only 2 of the 11, which immigrated to Spain for economic or social reasons, detailed the possibility of return or finding a new destination if the conditions grow worse within the next year. However, what should receive significant attention is the second most frequented response: marriage, and to raise or join a family. As noted in the statements section of figure 9, many of the

⁵⁶ Original Language: (“En Colombia, hubo una aguda crisis económica en los 90, perdió mi estatus social, y las deudas apremiaban...”)

⁵⁷ Original Language: (“Crisis económica en Ecuador 1999.”)

⁵⁸ Original Language: (“Estoy casada con un ciudadano Español, así que decidí venirme para formar una familia, y tener un futuro más prometedor para mí y mis hijos...”)

⁵⁹ Original Language: (“En busca de mejores oportunidades para mi familia.”)

reasons to enter Spain were to provide a better future for the family or children. Out of the 8 of the 11 to migrate to Spain for reasons relating to family, 6 mentioned that they would stay in Spain as long as possible, often for their children's future, or because the significant other was able to sustain work. When families settle and invest in a country it takes much more money and effort to resettle in another country, therefore decisions to emigrate may be postponed. This is exemplified with the failure of voluntary return programs which, as described by Boccagni and Lagomarsino through the literature review, are aimed at an immediate departure that is more manageable for individuals than families. This evidence for the significance of family, when making immigration decisions, reinforces NELM's notion that people migrate to support family and households. However, this case suggests that new families and households are settled within the host country which may indefinitely postpone decisions to return.

<i>How the economic crisis has affected decision to live in Spain?</i>	Frequency	Statement
Unaffected by the Crisis	5	"My situation honestly both work and sentimental, are not affected and if I am out of work (situation I hope not to) my husband has job security." ⁶⁰ (Ecuador)
Affected but plan to stay	11	"Obviously because of the economic crisis, many times I go through the idea of coming back to my country or look for better opportunities in another country, but at the end I decide that I have my family here and it is not easy to work as a lawyer in another country..."(Colombia)
Affected and plan to Leave	3	"The truth, to stay in Spain is definitely not my goal; it is safer to return to my country because one can encounter more opportunities right now." ⁶¹ (Colombia)

Figure 10 Has the economic crisis affected plans to live in Spain?

While not fully conclusive, figure 10 supports the evidence that many immigrants in Spain choose to postpone departure despite the economic crisis. When asked about how the economic crisis has affected decisions to stay in Spain, only 5 out of 19 persons explained that they were unaffected due to sustained employment. Only 3 persons stated that they would leave because of greater opportunities in the country of origin, or because of graduation from school. When 11 other migrants were asked this question, they each referenced reasons to stay. While

⁶⁰ Original Language: ("Sinceramente mi situación tanto laboral como sentimental, no están afectadas. Y de quedarme en el paro (situación que espero no se de) mi esposo cuenta con estabilidad laboral.")

⁶¹ Original Language: ("La verdad quedarme en España definitivamente no es mi meta, lo más seguro es que regrese a mi país porque en el encuentro más oportunidades en estos momentos.")

some explained that the conditions in the home country were even worse than in Spain, such as with inferior security or lower life guarantees, 7 of the 11 migrants cited reasons related to family, such as to provide a better future for the children or because a significant other still has work. This brings further evidence to NELM, in which immigrants postpone decisions to return, even during economic crisis. Yet, rather than return, immigrants stay, not because of investment in the home country, but because of new household and family investments in the host country.

5.4 Decisions to Return Migrate

With the majority of immigrants determined to survive the crisis in Spain, when asked about whether conditions will improve, 13 out of 15 explained that the situation will soon improve. However, when asked what options would be available if the economy does not improve, 15 out of 20 persons clearly stated that they would leave Spain, while only 5 believed that they would stay. Out of this 15, 10 mentioned that they would return home, while the other 5 would attempt a new destination. Yet, when this question was brought under a shorter time frame and migrants were asked what their options would be if they could not find work with a 6 to 12 month period, 8 out of 20 were determined to stay, while 12 would leave, 6 of which would attempt a livelihood in a new country of destination. While the results are modest, in comparison to previous results, when people are optimistic about economic turnaround then return migration is lower, with a significant interest in other social goods such as security, health, and education for themselves and their family. When an economic forecast is increasingly bleak in the long term, then decisions to return migrate or to search for a new country of destination increase and decisions to postpone return decrease. Therefore, the influence of persistent and draining economic crisis demonstrates a limitation of NELM which posits that migrants will postpone return until they are successful in saving or investing enough capital.

Yet, considering that the majority of immigrants within this case are still optimistic about Spain's future, the next question aimed to determine under what conditions migrants would return to the country of origin. Without the fear of persistent and worsening economic crisis, the findings provided partial support for my second independent variable and the central hypothesis of NELM, which claim that immigrants return to the country of origin once they have successfully gained enough capital. Out of the 18 provided explanations, 6 persons explained that they would return after saving sufficient money. 3 of these 6 migrants stated that they would use such capital to start a business in the country of origin. While these results illustrated evidence, as limited as it may be, for one independent variable, they also revealed another independent variable which I had overlooked prior to this research, employment. 7 out of 18 answers described employment as an acceptable reason to return to the country of origin. Therefore, if one of the main pull factors of Spain's economy at the beginning of the 21st century, employment, were significantly available in the country of origin, then one would expect considerably higher rates of return migration. However, in reality, as many of the immigrants within this case are optimistic of Spain's economic future, it may take more than

saved capital and limited monetary incentives, such as with Spain's voluntary return program, to convince immigrants to leave Spain's attractive security and public benefits to return to a country of origin, which may have similar or worse employment opportunities.

5.5 Knowledge of Incentives to Return and Voluntary Return Programs

Voluntary Return Migration				
Responses	yes	no	partially	Total
Aware of voluntary return program?	13	4	3	20
Under what conditions would you apply?	3	13	–	16

Figure 11 Voluntary Return Programs

In fact, incentives and voluntary return programs have shown to be unsuccessful in encouraging significant flows of return migration. As previously mentioned, Spain's current voluntary return program, APRE, offers the payment of accumulated unemployment benefits in two payments: 40 percent while still in Spain, and 60 percent after returning to the country of origin. In exchange, participants must return to the sending country within 30 days of the initial payment, must be accompanied by family unless a person has a separate residence permit, and must not return to live in Spain within a period of three years.⁶² Only about 11,419 immigrants had participated in the program by spring of 2010, representing only a small percentage of potential applicants.⁶³ The final section of the questionnaire aimed to interpret why pay-to-go programs are so unsuccessful. As seen in figure 11, when asked about their particular awareness of Spain's voluntary return program, 13 out of 21 total responses demonstrated knowledge of the program and what it offered. 3 persons stated that they had heard of the program, but knew very little of what the program provided. Only 4 persons had no knowledge of Spain's voluntary return program, 2 of which are currently unemployed. These results modestly suggest that the majority of immigrants are aware of voluntary return programs, but choose not to apply; meanwhile persons who may benefit the most from the program may not know of it. As many persons proved to be aware of the voluntary return program, I asked under what conditions they would consider applying for it. Of the 16 responses, I found that 13 immigrants would not or could not apply for the return program for various reasons. 4 of such persons mentioned that they had no plans to return, 4 other immigrants had become Spanish nationals and were no longer

⁶² BACOM, "Boletín informativo: Plan de Retorno Voluntario APRE. Definición y estadísticas."

⁶³ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios Papademetriou, , Aaron Terrazas, , and , "Migration and Immigrants Two Years After the Financial Collapse: Where Do We Stand?," *MPI-BBC Report* (2010): 109

eligible for the program, and the remaining persons believed the program didn't provide enough for the family to return or that they had already expended all unemployment. 2 of the 3 immigrants, who would apply, cited that they would only do so if they could not find work, while the last person said they would apply in the moment that they could no longer provide for the family. The results of this final section of the questionnaire reinforce the points made in the previously mentioned articles by Beets and Willekens, Boccagni and Lagomarsino, and Bastia, that voluntary return programs are generally ineffective in generating considerable return migration. Similar to the claim of Boccagni and Lagomarsino, the results of this questionnaire show that people fail to apply for the voluntary return program because they have already settled family or gained nationality, making decisions to return more complex, and the subsequent postponement of return. Such results further suggest the acknowledgement of family and settled households within the host country when researching other cases of return migration and pay-to-go programs.

Conclusion

While this fieldwork, limited by the low number of responses, does not provide conclusive results when presented alone, it does have the potential to elicit evidence for or against theories and suggest further hypotheses when combined with available data and information. Presented within the fieldwork and the first section of the data analysis is evidence, in support of new economics of labor migration (NELM) and Migration Systems Theory (MST), that immigrants sustain ties with family and households within country of origin through the flow of remittances and information. However, evidence from the fieldwork does not support the hypothesis from NELM that such ties encourage return migration. In fact, connections with family living in Spain encourage decisions to stay. The second section of the data analysis and the fieldwork provide further evidence for MST as immigrants choose countries of destination through cultural and social ties, which facilitate increased integration. However, through the fieldwork another limitation of NELM is established as 4 out of 5 persons demonstrated a correlation between poor integration and decisions to return migrate, rather than postponing the stay until integrated within society. Finally, Bastia's article, within the third section of the data analysis, demonstrates evidence for NELM as unsuccessful persons postponed return during the Argentinean crisis in 2001 until they had achieved average success. However, this support for NELM is not fully identified with Bastia's study of return migration from Spain and my fieldwork. In fact, both studies demonstrate that immigrants make conscious decisions to stay with family as opposed to migrating to provide more income for the household, with Bastia finding that migrants returned to care for children and family, and the questionnaires demonstrated that people stay in Spain to provide family with better social benefits. This supports NELM's notion that family is at the center of migration, while also revealing limitations of the theory.

A main theme appeared when organizing the results of the fieldwork questionnaires which provided an alternative role of family and household than presented in NELM. As hypothesized by NELM, people migrate to provide more capital to family and households in the country of origin; they then postpone return until successful. Within the research, I found that people form and settle new families and households while sustaining ties with family in the country of origin. The migrant then decide whether to leave or stay based on the best quality of life available for the family. In this case, many migrants choose to stay in Spain, despite the crisis, to provide family with security and social benefits. Therefore, while sustaining NELMs notion that family is central to migration decisions, the results suggest that upon migration immigrants establish and settle families within the host state, making decisions to return more complex and dependent upon which country can provide the best available quality of life, with increased influence of other factors such as security and public benefits.

While the field research is modest and therefore cannot provide a definitive explanation for return migration, it has suggested some unforeseen independent variables which influence return migration. For example, as unemployment and integration within the host country expectedly influence return migration, other variables such as security, public benefits, and available employment often appeared as more common reasons to decide to stay. As seen with the question regarding opportunities provided by Spain, 21 out of 29 answers detailed reasons to stay in Spain that did not include economic conditions. Of the motives to stay, security and quality of life were amongst the most common reasons. Also, the questionnaires reinforced the importance of each of such factors when one makes decisions regarding the best available environment to support family. This illustrates a vast and complex web of factors, which ultimately influence decisions to return or stay, centered on the family and household. The suggestion of these new independent variables could provide a broader understanding of return migration decisions as the scholarly research on migration processes continues to swell.

Appendix



Central European University
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Questionnaire/Cuestionario

This questionnaire has been designed to give us some information on immigration patterns during economic crisis. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. You may answer the questions in either English or Spanish. If you do not feel comfortable answering any of the questions, feel free to leave them blank.

Este cuestionario ha sido diseñado para darnos alguna información sobre los patrones de migración durante de la crisis económica con fines puramente de investigación académica. Por favor, conteste las preguntas de la forma más completa posible. Puede responder a las preguntas en Inglés o Español. Si no se siente cómodo respondiendo a alguna de las preguntas, puede dejarla en blanco.

Gender |Sexo: Male| Masculino ☐ Female |Femenino ☐

Age|Edad: _____ **Country of origin| País de origen:** _____

Age of arrival in Spain|Edad en que llegó en España: _____

Current Occupation|Ocupación actual: _____

Occupation in country of origin |Ocupación en su país de origen: _____

Does your family live with you in Spain? | ¿Su familia vive con usted en España?_____

Describe how you remain in contact with friends and/or family in the country of origin | Describa cómo permanece en contacto con familia y amigos en su país de origen.

Do you send money to help support family and friends in the country of origin? If yes, how and why is this money sent? | ¿Envía dinero para apoyar a su familia y amigos en el país de origen? En caso afirmativo, ¿cómo y por qué se envió este dinero?_____

Explain why you chose to come to Spain. | Explique por qué decidió a venir a España._____

Do you plan on living in Spain for a long time? Please explain what it is like to live and socially interact in Spain as an immigrant. | ¿Planea vivir en España por mucho tiempo? Por favor, explique lo que se siente al vivir e interactuar socialmente en España como un inmigrante.

What opportunities does Spain provide that your country of origin does not? | ¿Qué oportunidades ofrece España que su país de origen no ofrece?

**How has the economic crisis affected your decision to live and work in Spain?
¿Cómo es que la crisis económica ha afectado su decisión de quedarse y
trabajar en España?**_____

**Explain how you expect the economic situation to change in Spain. Do you
think it will improve? | Cómo espera usted que la situación económica siga en
España. ¿Cree que va a mejorar?**_____

**What options do you have if the economic situation in Spain gets worse? | Si la
situación empeora, ¿qué opciones tiene?**_____

**If you were not able to find work in Spain within a 6-12 month period, explain
if you would consider returning to the country of origin or continue to live
and search for work in Spain. | Si usted no pudiera encontrar trabajo en
España en un período de 6-12 meses, explique si consideraría volver a su país
de origen o se quedaría a buscar trabajo en España.**

Describe any moment, since 2008, in which you considered returning to your country of origin? | Describa cualquier momento, desde el año 2008, en que haya considerado a volver a su país de origen.

If you have considered returning to the country of origin, how and when would you like to go back? | Si usted ha considerado volver al país de origen, ¿cómo y cuándo le gustaría volver? _____

Under what conditions would you return to the country of origin? | ¿En qué condiciones volvería a su país de origen?

What obstacles would you face if you wanted to return to your country of origin? | ¿Qué obstáculos enfrentaría si quisiera volver a su país de origen?

Please explain your awareness of the Voluntary Return Program instituted by the Spanish government? | ¿Por favor, explique si sabe en qué consiste el Plan de Retorno Voluntario del gobierno Español? _____

If you are aware of it, under what circumstances would you consider applying for it? | Si sí lo conoce, ¿En qué circunstancias consideraría usted a solicitar o aplicar para él (el Plan de Retorno Voluntario)?_____

Please explain if your country of origin offers any incentive to return. | Por favor diga si su país de origen ofrece algún programa para que los migrantes vuelvan.

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. I truly appreciate your support and patience with my research. | Muchas gracias por participar en este cuestionario. Aprecio mucho su apoyo y su paciencia para esta investigación.

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