

How have economic phases affected international migration flows in the five largest Spanish metropolises? A focus on the ‘post-crisis’ period

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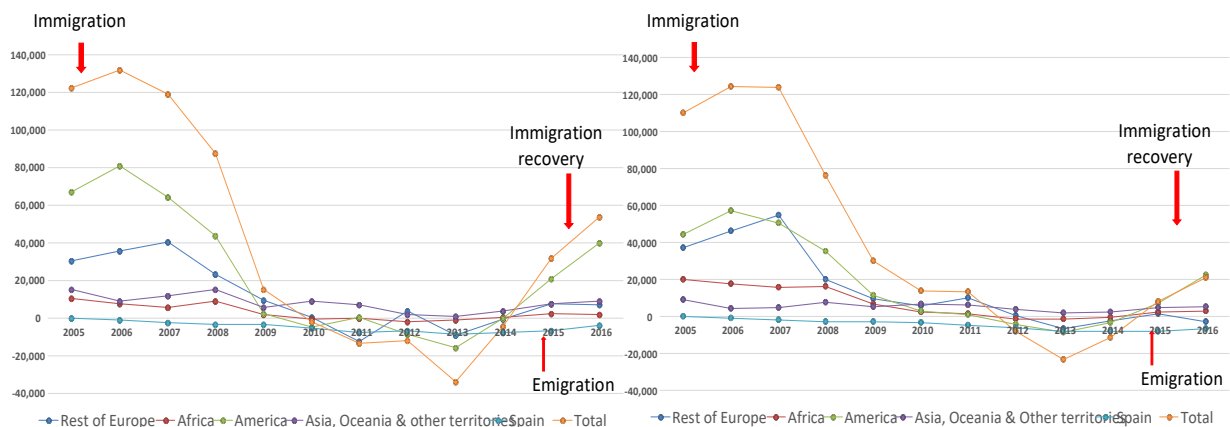
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The paper aims to analyse how the different economic phases that Spain has undergone in the first two decades of the 21st century –expansion (until 2007), recession (2008-2013), and recovery or ‘post-crisis’ (from 2014 onwards)– have influenced foreign-born population stocks and international migratory flows in the five largest metropolitan areas in Spain: Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Seville and Valencia. Using *Padrón Continuo* (municipal register) and *Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales* (residential variation statistics) as data sources, both native and immigrant –born abroad– stocks and flows are analysed. We particularly study differences between a) diverse groups of foreigners –by continental origin–, also comparing them to natives; and b) differences in settlement patterns between urban cores and peripheries.

Preliminary results: migration flow changes

Previous results have shown that international flows switched direction in the crisis years: foreign-born immigrants moving from abroad to the five urban areas during the economic expansion phase, inverted the direction of their flows in the economic crisis years, migrating abroad or dispersing throughout Spain in search of jobs. Consequently, their stocks reduced during some years.

Fig. 1: Net migration between the five urban cores and abroad (left) and between the five metropolitan peripheries and abroad (right), by place of birth, 2005-2016.



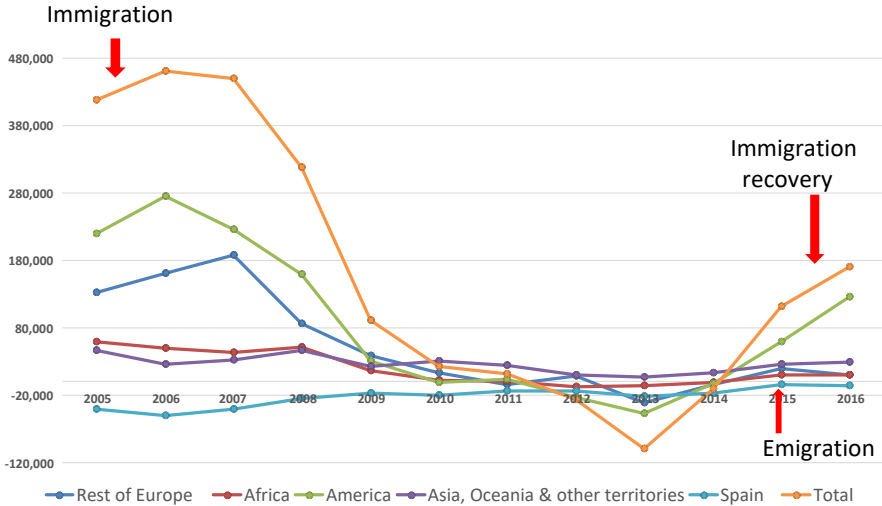
Source: Residential Variation Statistics (INE).

Figure 1 (left) shows net migration between the five core cities and other countries (left) and between the five metropolitan peripheries and abroad (right). It can be observed that people born in Spain and those born abroad behave differently. Economic expansion attracts foreign-born immigrants to large cities, and subsequently their net migration becomes extremely positive. However, that of natives (light blue line) becomes progressively negative, despite being initially balanced. Not only do Spaniards continue to emigrate during the economic crisis years, but certain foreign groups such as Americans (green line, they are basically Latin

Americans) and Europeans (navy blue line) also incorporate to emigration. The economic crisis leads both groups of migrants to either return to their countries of origin or move to third ones. By contrast, net migration of Africans (brown line) and Asians (purple line) is always positive throughout the whole period analysed. In other words, they are always attracted to the large Spanish urban areas, even during the deepest recession years, and they do not return to their countries of origin. Finally, from 2014 onwards, as a consequence of the incipient economic recovery, net migration of all immigrant groups has become positive. That of natives remains negative, though less. These data series finish in 2016. We will incorporate flow data for the years 2017 and 2018 when data are available (2019 data will not probably be available by the time of the conference).

Figure 2 summarizes net migration between the five urban areas (cores and peripheries jointly) and other areas, adding up flows from and to the rest of Spain and those from and to other countries together.

Fig. 2: Net migration between the five urban areas (cores and peripheries together) and other areas (the rest of Spain and abroad), by place of birth, 2005-2016



Source: Residential Variation Statistics (INE).

It shows that net migration of Spanish-born nationals between the five urban areas and the rest of Spain and abroad is always negative, though this population loss reduces over time. In 2016, it is almost 10 times smaller than in 2006. Despite large cities tend to attract autochthonous people from the rest of Spain, net flows with other countries are still negative.

Regarding foreigners, their migrant behaviour is strongly conditioned by economic cycles. Indeed, during the economic expansion phase, migrants’ net migration between the five metropolitan areas and other areas outside them is positive, as metropolises tend to attract foreign immigrants. Then, net migration becomes negative during the economic crisis – particularly between 2012 and 2014. However, from 2015 onwards, because of economic recovery, net migration has become positive once more.

Fluctuations of (Latin) American flows are to be underlined –it is the origin group with more immigrants during economic growth phases, and more emigrants in recession periods. An easy

procedure to acquire Spanish citizenship could explain this trend. Currently, Latin Americans seem to recover their role as the main immigration group.

In sum, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are the only years in which net migration is negative –because of the economic crisis– in the five urban areas. Before 2011 and after 2015, positive migration growth from the rest of Spain and abroad contributes to their growth. Nevertheless, as foreigners leaving Spain are underreported, positive migratory growth is probably somewhat lower in economic expansion years, and negative growth stronger during the crisis ones.

Preliminary results: Population stock changes

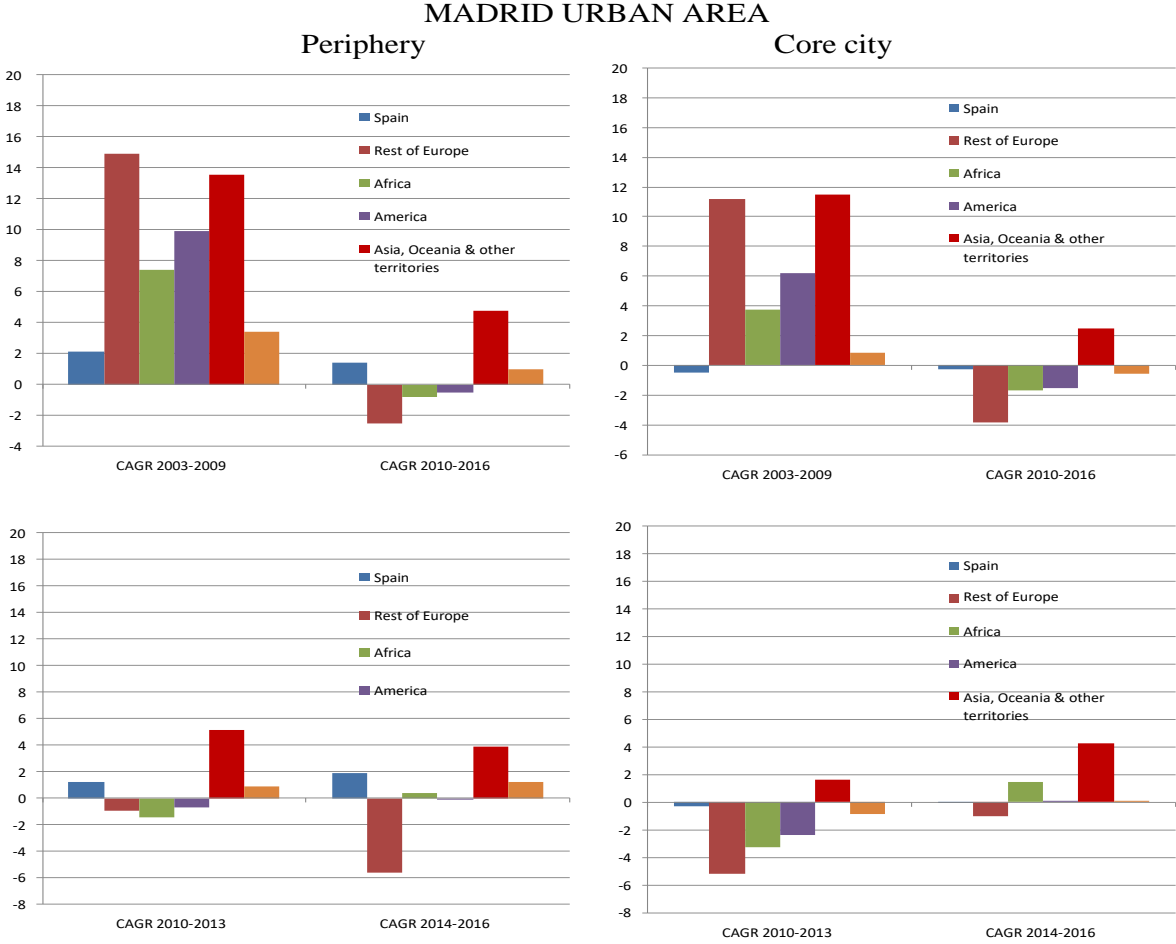
The continuous municipal population register or *Padrón* –which indicates each municipality’s official population on 1st January of each year– has been used as the main data source to analyse stock changes during the 2003-2018 period (2019 data will be available soon). This source shows that the five main Spanish FUA gained population during the economic boom years, but that the economic recession changed this trend. Initially, all five urban areas continue to grow, though at a lower rate. Then, in 2012, four of them start to lose population. Barcelona and Valencia decrease until 2014, Madrid, up to 2015, and Bilbao, up to 2016. Seville is the only exception, as its population remains stable during all those years. Population figures seem to start to recover in 2015 or 2016, depending on the case, those of Bilbao being the only exception.

If only urban cores are analysed, all five main cities decrease their population during the crisis period. Barcelona loses inhabitants between 2009 and 2014, Valencia between 2009 and 2015 and Bilbao between 2009 and 2016. The same occurs in Madrid, but from 2010 to 2015, and Seville from 2010 to 2016. Since then, the cities of Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia are growing once again, though this is not the case of Bilbao and Seville.

Suburban municipalities also show changes throughout the period analysed. In Madrid and Seville urban areas, they have not stopped growing, though their population increases less since 2010, because of the economic crisis. Urban fringe areas in Valencia slightly diminish in 2012 and 2013, as did those of Barcelona in 2013 and 2014. The only exception is Bilbao metropolitan area, as its peripheral municipalities lose population since 2013 and have not recovered it since then.

Focusing on foreign-born population, it increases everywhere –core cities and peripheries– in all the metropolitan areas studied during the economic boom years. See for instance Figure 3, which shows annual growth rates for Madrid Urban Area. Asians (red bars) are the only foreigners that always grow, even significantly during the economic crisis period. The other four immigrant groups are, to a greater or lesser extent, affected by economic changes. In this sense, Americans –basically Latin Americans– (purple bars) and Europeans (brown ones) are the hardest hit, as their numbers decrease during the recession phase. Africans, in the Bilbao urban area, and Europeans, in the cities of Barcelona and Valencia, also show a peculiar behaviour. In the first case, they grow during the entire economic crisis period, and in the latter, they increase from 2014 onwards.

Fig. 3: Core city and periphery population changes by place of birth, 2003-2016: Cumulative Annual Growth Rates (CAGR)



Source: *Padrón continuo* (continuous municipal population register).

Focusing on the so-call post-crisis period (from 2014 onwards), preliminary results show that, due to the incipient economic recovery, four of the five urban areas are attracting foreign-born immigrants once again, so their foreign-born population stocks are increasing in both cores and peripheries. The exception is Seville, as the number of foreigners living there decreases more between 2013 and 2016 than in the previous three years.

By contrast, the five urban areas lose Spanish-born population migrating abroad during the entire period studied, though, in comparison to deepest economic recession years, negative net migration is currently reducing.

Considering foreign-born and Spanish-born populations together, large urban areas are becoming increasingly attractive. This global tendency is to the detriment of rural areas and of non-metropolitan small and medium size towns, which lose population because of negative net migration. Emigration of (mainly skilled) young people who move to large cities in search of greater educational and employment opportunities is particularly problematic. In this sense, this research wants to be a significant contribution to improve our comprehension of the reasons why some population groups are attracted to or rejected by specific metropolises, as a first step to subsequently analyse residential segregation within large urban areas.