

## Research Article

# Romanian Migration to the Community of Madrid (Spain): Patterns of Mobility and Return

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The article analyzes the process by which Romanian immigrants to the Autonomous Community of Madrid (Spain) return to their country. Starting with the empirical reality and the theoretical focuses on human mobility as a form of transnationalism, the article emphasises on the characteristics which distinguish the Romanian collective from other collectives of immigrants living in Spain; circular migration that creates work networks. The paper reflects how the intensive mobility contributes to a process that is continuous and partial—hardly ever final. The first part of the article presents the phases of Romanian migration to the Autonomous Community of Madrid. It then delves into the process by which Romanians return to their country of origin, while detailing those factors that influence their decision. The conclusions point towards a renewal of studies on mobility within the framework of the European Union that links the border dynamic with the migration process.

## 1. Introduction

The fall of the Iron Curtain (1989) meant the first exercise of freedom along with the fall of the totalitarian system for the people of Eastern Europe. A people without a tradition of international migration were to experience foreign viewpoints that were directly inspired by the models that were closest at hand, the careers of those exiled by communist governments. This new mobility was to be noted in the global tendencies of migration worldwide. Throughout the past two decades, the migration of Romanians within Europe has been closely linked to the policies of the European Community. As of the 1990s, Spain became one of the destinations of Romanian emigration. While it was slow at first, as of 2002, with the opening of the EC borders as a result of the Schengen Treaty allowing free circulation of Romanians, emigration from Romania became greater. The flow of Romanians towards Spain intensified in 2007 when Romania entered the EU. Madrid has continued to be the Autonomous Community where the majority of Romanians have settled in Spain. Networks that favored intense cyclical mobility between Romania and Spain were formed, which has made

it impossible to closely follow the annual, monthly, and even daily movement by Romanians. Between 2007 and 2009, Spain and other EU countries imposed a moratorium that prevented Romanians and Bulgarians from freely entering the labour market. After 2009, Spain lifted the moratorium and allowed free circulation for Romanians and Bulgarians (The moratorium on the free circulation of Romanian and Bulgarian workers within Spanish territory lasted from January 2007 until the end of 2008. It was lifted on 1 January 2009. Since that date, both Romanians and Bulgarians have been able to circulate freely within Spanish territory in order to work. Until that date, immigrants from the two countries had but limited circulation of up to three months to work without a residency permit in Spain). The ending of the moratorium, however, did not go into effect for all of the countries in the Schengen Area of the EU (Since becoming EU citizens in 2007, Romanians and Bulgarians have had the right to circulate freely for a period of up to three months within the Schengen area, after which time they must have secured a work contract—except in the case of students. In order to work, Romanians and Bulgarians are required to obtain a work permit according to a moratorium which lasts

until 2014, restricting access to the labour market to a list of 150). By the end of 2009, there were 718,844 Romanian immigrants living in Spain; in the Community of Madrid alone, there were 209,085 Romanians or 18.78% of the total number of immigrants. Ecuadoreans follow Romanians in a distant second place with 133,562 immigrants (11.99%). This demonstrates the importance and the high degree of dynamism of the Romanian collective within the CAM. It is important to emphasise on the fact that the opening up of the borders of the EU towards Eastern Europe, and changes to EC law, favored the free movement of workers between Romania and Spain. In this regard, European migration policy and its dynamism are evident, taking into account other parts of the world (such as the Mexico-US border) where immigrants are expecting laws that will negatively impact their movement across borders.

The article analyses the presence of Romanians in the Autonomous Community of Madrid (CAM). The paper will examine the definition of the guidelines for mobility and return that these migratory phenomena currently have. A combination methodology that is both quantitative and qualitative will be used, focusing on four areas of the Community of Madrid which have seen the arrival of most of the Romanians over the last two years, Alcalá de Henares, Coslada, Torrejón de Ardoz, and Arganda del Rey. Following the theoretical proposition as a framework for analysis and the presentation of the methodology utilized, the article focuses on the phases of Romanian migration to the CAM. The central pillar of the work encompassed in the article deals with the process by which Romanian immigrants return to their country, as well as the objective and subjective factors influencing their decision. The conclusions point towards a possible renewal of the study of migration within the EU framework which links the border dynamic with the migration process.

## 2. Building Transnational Migration Framework: Definition of Terms

On a scientific basis, immigrants' mobility and return is considered from the point of view of transnationalism. Transnational migration—as applied in this case to the processes of globalisation, [1]—is characterised by the creation of new models of dual life into which the values of the home country and the country of residence are incorporated, and which is developed within a framework of transnational space [2]. More than a decade has passed since social anthropologists such as Glick Schiller et al. [3, 4] introduced the notion of transmigration to academic discourse. Most social scientists working today on transnationalism would agree that migration is often circular in nature rather than irreversible. Social relations are not bound to fixed places, and migration decisions are not separated from processes of adaptation to a new environment. During the migration process, there is the possibility that new interdependencies are built up [5–8]. Hand in hand with studies on transnationalism, we have witnessed a growing interest in the analysis of migration networks [9–12]. This perception of migration networks as a form of social capital also

underlies assumptions about the existence of transnational social spaces. Faist [13] strives to conceptualise a domain of cross-border social relations he refers to as “transnational social spaces.” He privileges social relations and institutions, defining these spaces as “characterized by a high density of interstitial ties on informal or formal, that is, to say institutional levels” Faist [14]. Guarnizo [15] and Landolt [16] refer to a “transnational social formation”. In this context, circular migration is a form of migration that is managed in a way allowing some degree of legal mobility between two countries. It is a local strategy used by migrants that links social and symbolic capital, and which leads to the use of short-term space-time strategies [17]. Immigrants bring their cultural capital (university degrees) to foreign countries, while their social and symbolic capital remains in their place of origin. Transnational migration is developed in the framework of strong relationships between the countries of origin and destination, based on the premise that migrants have the freedom to decide. In order to mobilise local resources, both the social ties and border symbols established by migrant pioneers are needed [18]. The migration chain takes place, then, if mutual mechanisms, family solidarity, and social relationships work, and if there are networks created within the country of destination [19]. If this self-perpetuating dynamic emerges, then a voluntary chain migration can be developed to which the phenomenon of return as a form of mobility can be introduced. This is the circular labour migration that has functioned between Romania and Spain since 2002.

Thus, *return migration* is a subprocess of international migration that reactivates patterns of human mobility. The existing research [20] seeks to explain why and when immigrants return to their home societies. It has primarily explained the return through economic development in the country of origin. In particular, research attention focuses on the “cooperation” and “codevelopment” between countries of destination and countries of departure and programmes of “voluntary repatriation of third country immigrants.”

Romanian immigration, and especially the process of circulatory mobility which includes return, is scarcely analysed. However, [21] and Radu [22] detected and analysed circular labour migration as a life strategy. [23–26] analyzed the process of the integration of Romanians in receiving societies (France, Italy, and Spain), and transnational practices. American authors [27] make reference to Romanians' circular labor migration to Spain. For his part, [28] noted that immigrants from Eastern Europe show an inclination towards mobility as well as towards the capacity of creating extensive networks throughout Europe. An area of such characteristics is built upon precarious and ever-changing solidarities, and its actors are men and women who are prepared to emigrate at any moment and overcome distances and barriers.

In Spain, among the few studies on the processes of immigration of Romanians, we should mention [29–31]. It is evident then that there is a need to look at international studies that, besides looking into the current policies for integrating immigrants, understand their idiosyncrasies, how they perceive themselves within the receiving society and the probability of their returning to their country

of origin given the current economic situation. What is proposed below is an attempt to analyze the intentions of Romanians in the Community of Madrid to return home, taking into consideration the great mobility starting in 2002 and further intensified by EU policies in 2007.

### 3. Methodology and Sources

For the purposes of this article, a combined qualitative-quantitative methodology was used. At the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, the Spanish National Statistical Institute (INE) did an extensive study called the National Immigrant Survey (ENI) that sampled 15,500 persons. In the sample, the Romanian collective represented 9% of the total number polled (meaning a total of 1,330 persons), which was due to the fact that the nationality constitutes the largest immigrant group in Spain. The surveys of the Romanian immigrant population were conducted throughout Spain. Although a year has elapsed since the collection of the data from the ENI relative to the current project, there are significant similarities. It is also important to point out at this point that the economic crisis, as reflected in the lives of immigrants, has greatly affected the decision making on the part of the persons interviewed and thereby changed the plans from the results obtained in the aforementioned survey, making it now antiquated in the resulting conditions. (One must take into account that researching a process as dynamic as Romanian immigration entails a certain risk, given that the numbers are never real, they change daily, as does the manner in which they change, and the opinions of the potential interviewees are affected by the problems of the crisis within the context of their migration). The data utilized belong to the Spanish National Statistical Institute (INE) and are based on the municipal population registries (*Padron Municipal*) for the years encompassed by 1996–2008 (the data is available at <http://www.ine.es/>).

In addition, the article utilizes information obtained from surveys and in-depth interviews that were conducted within the framework of the project entitled “*Fronteras y flujos migratorios de la Europa del este*” (Borders and Migratory Flows of Eastern Europe), which was carried out by the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Spanish National Research Council) between January 2007 and December 2009. The field work was done during the months of November 2008 and May 2009 in four municipalities of the Community of Madrid: Coslada, Arganda del Rey, Alcalá de Henares, and Torrejón de Ardoz, which were chosen because of their high levels of Romanian immigrants. (According to data for 2007, Alcalá de Henares had 14,284 residents registered as Romanian in origin. Coslada had 11,822, Arganda del Rey had 8,046; and Torrejón de Ardoz had 5,778. The next municipality was San Fernando de Henares, which is located a considerable distance away, with 3,775 Romanian migrants.)

According to data from the Spanish National Statistical Institute for 2008, Romanians in the municipalities surveyed represent close to 28% of the total Romanian immigrant population. There were approximately 200 interviews conducted in each of the municipalities (The sizes of the samples

were 209 migrants in Coslada, 206 in Arganda del Rey, 201 in Alcalá de Henares; and 216 in Torrejón de Ardoz. The variance in the sample is due principally to the difficulty encountered in the field work (blocking the networks due to a refusal by some persons to answer the survey).). The qualitative survey was complemented by in-depth interviews that were conducted with Romanians in the four communities already mentioned (Within the framework of the project, there were 75 in-depth interviews with Romanian males and females of working age. The author conducted interviews in Romanian and digitally recorded, with the permission of the research participants, and translated them before undertaking the analysis. The interviews were completed during November 2008 and May 2009. Respondents were found through a mixed range of snowball strategies. In addition, detailed notes of all interviews were taken by the researcher. Verbatim transcription and comparison of the transcripts against the field notes assured data accuracy.). Given the great amount of data obtained, we have opted to utilize the thematic theme/subtheme analysis, which is a good example of the technique of reducing data for qualitative research [32]. The advantage of thematic analysis is in its flexibility, both in terms of the variety of data sets it can be applied to, as well as its compatibility with different research paradigms.

Data in the municipal registry indicated that, for 2009, Romanian immigrants were found throughout Spanish territory, while in the Community of Madrid, there were Romanians registered in all of the administrative units. However, we have decided to analyze the return of Romanians in the Community of Madrid, given that the differences between the Autonomous Communities are consistent; Madrid has 206,000 Romanians registered in its territory (29% of the total), followed by the Community of Valencia (19% of the total). These numbers show that a great part of the flows of Romanian immigrations was directed towards the Autonomous Community of Madrid.

### 4. Between Romania and Spain (Madrid): Phases in the Migration Process

Romanian immigration can be distinguished from that of other groups in the rest of the world because of its specific characteristics: (1) it is a relatively recent phenomenon (since 1990); (2) it is directed towards the countries of southern Europe, where significant immigration networks were created in recent years; (3) it is characterised by temporary labour that is expressed as intense circular migration.

Following the global economic crisis, the circulation of Romanian migrants became even more intense, including a significant movement between east and west, with a partial return to the country of origin. Romanian migration to Spain, specifically, the Autonomous Community of Madrid, came in three phases: during the first period (1990–1994), it was relatively small and was constituted by pioneer migrants; the few who could find solutions in the midst of the scarcity of the time. The second period, 1994–2002, was characterised by the acceleration of the mechanisms of mobility despite the difficulty in obtaining the necessary visas, and the great

amount of clandestine activities. In 2002, the borders within the Schengen area were opened to Romania. This led to the third phase, 2002–2009, in the migration process. This was the period of the most intense migration of Romanians to Spain (Madrid), characterised by the appearance of the phenomenon of circular labour migration that was based on the networks established during the preceding decade. Another characteristic was the step taken from geographical borders to cyber-information borders, which contributed to the modification of migration strategies and the creating of mobility capital. Since 2002, there has arisen a culture of transnational circular flows on the internet as a strategy for social exchange and solidarity among families, friends, neighbours, and acquaintances. (The mechanism of circular labour mobility can be explained, thus, migrants leave their own country and work for a period of time in foreign lands, return to their homeland, and remain for a time while in general they invest the earnings obtained during their stay. Later, they return to the same foreign country, or another, where they have a network of fellow country men or acquaintances. It is in this context that migrant networks are formed, through which those who wish to make a temporary stay in foreign countries may receive support and assistance from migrants who have gone on before them. Therefore, a circular migrant is a person who engages in mobility between the country origin and the country of destination at least once per year. Circular migration came about as a consequence of the evolution of European integration, which was stimulated by Romania's entry into the EU and the free circulation of labor.) It was following that time that the circulation between various regions of Romania and municipalities with the Autonomous Community of Madrid became more intense. (Figure 1 Map). This phase can be classified as one of consolidation, remigration, and transnational density, as the families (children, parents) of those persons who undertook their migration plans also emigrated. It is at this point that the antecedents of this type of migration can be found among Mexicans [33]. It is because of remigration that migration cultures emerge [34], comprising several generations and defining social spaces, communities, and transnational circuits. As was indicated earlier in this article, transnational Romanian migration was enhanced by EU community legislation and the opening of borders.

Over the last five years, in the four populations analyzed here, there has been an increase in the proportion of Romanians relative to the total number of immigrants. Coslada, Arganda del Rey, and Alcalá de Henares reached their goal during the period 2002–2006, which is to say, after the opening of the Schengen border region to Romania (Figure 2). They form a part of the immigrants that adopted circular labor mobility as a kind of migration, as a life strategy that allows them to overcome the crisis in their country's transition towards democracy and a market economy. The newest community is in Torrejón de Ardoz, with only 12% of those immigrants who arrived during the 1990s, and more than 70% of the immigrants who arrived between 2002 and 2006.

These networks that were created over the last few years and which function in the municipalities analyzed here are

quite dynamic. Currently, the dispersal of Romanians is linked not only to the arrival but also to the mobility and return of these immigrants to their country of origin. While we cannot at present clearly indicate a process of returning to Romania, it is certain that as of 2009 there has been a type of return that is part of the process of circular mobility on the part of Romanians. We can call this *partial return*. This type of return is linked to the strategy of Romanian immigrants, utilized within the context of an expanded EU, which favors the free circulation of people and labor (which since 2009 has favored the labor market in Spain). It is thus that immigrants return for a brief period to their home country, having observed first hand the characteristics of the current labor market, and decide whether to stay for a season and make use of the market demand for their labor or, on the contrary, return to Spain to look for better opportunities. In making their way between their home country and Spain, Romanians have created what Ruggie calls the “area of places” [35], and “area of flows” [36, 37]. These ideas identify the conceptual space between the processes of exchange without borders and the fluidity of space and time in a cosmopolitan society [38] of networks (Castells, 1996, op. cit) [37].

## 5. The Return of Romanian Immigrants to Their Country of Origin

The return of Romanian immigrants is linked to the economic crisis affecting Spain, especially its immigrant community. In 2010, the rate of unemployment among immigrants to Spain reached 45% [39].

At the beginning of the analysis, we point out that, besides the results of the quantitative survey, we will use the results of the in-depth interviews that we conducted with Romanian immigrants in the Corredor del Henares (where the majority of Romanian immigrants live). The results show that the number of persons affected by unemployment and the struggle to survive in Spain and Romania continues to grow.

However, it is risky to venture what the future of Romanians' mobility in Spain will be if the current situation continues. This has an accentuated dynamic, because of the effects of the economic crisis in Romania and Spain and the impact that said effects will have on the morale of the interviewees. Besides, intentions to return do not have to be interpreted as decisions. Therefore, when interviewees affirm, “I think I will return to my country,” it does not mean “I will return in one month, or next year.” What the data shows is the estimation of the conditions under which Romanians would choose to return home and the specificity of the categories of migrants with the opportunity of returning or remaining. Of course, the intention of returning is an objective that can be more or less structured. It is never isolated. It is probably linked to families' plans, their plans for their children's futures and personal plans for jobs or life.

The intention of returning is, therefore, a social phenomenon that is part of the migratory project in its totality, of the circle of movement in which the individual finds himself when he emigrates and when he is subjected to the social reality in which he circulates and lives. Therefore, we

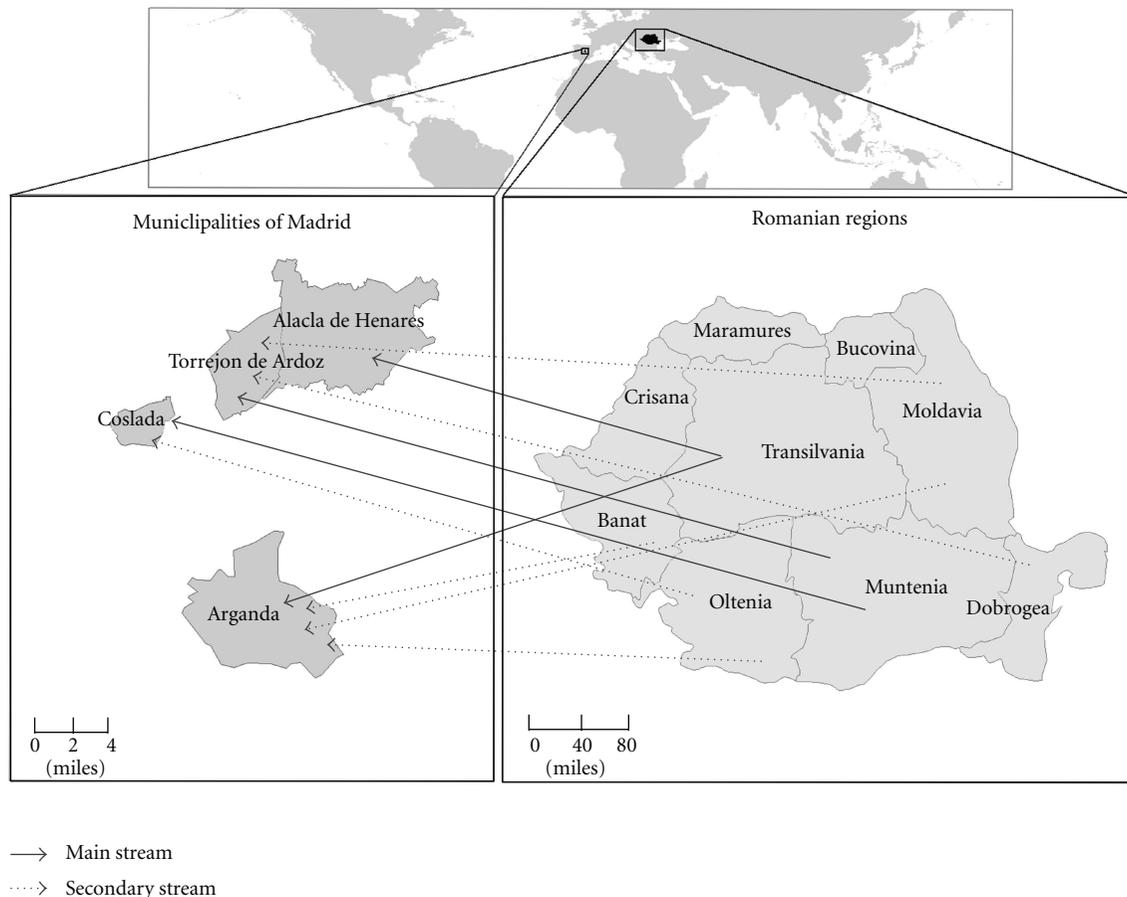


FIGURE 1: Map Immigrant flows from Romania to municipalities in the Community of Madrid. (p. 9) Source: INE. Own elaboration.

will try to utilize the intention of returning as a point of reference for understanding the moment in which we find ourselves now.

According to the surveys, 71% of the Romanian immigrant population in the CAM wishes to return to their country at some point in the future. When interviewees introduce specific conditioning factors into the conversation, this percentage is lower. When questioned about the time of their departure, only 47% of those questioned said that they wish to return to their country within the next five years. Finally, when asked about the probability of return, those who were certain or very certain about returning to their country within the next five years represented only 39% of the total number of Romanian immigrants in the CAM. Those who declared that there is a significant probability of return over the next five years have structured return plans.

The weight of Romanian immigrants in the CAM who are concerned about the potential loss of work was relatively small in 2008 (only 14%), while in 2009 it had grown to 55%. Similarly, the weight of those who expected that the next six months would be bad or very bad, from the perspective of work or personally, grew from 19% in 2008 to 60% in 2009. Meanwhile, the percentage of short-term optimists (those who believed that in the next year things would improve)

dropped from 77% in 2008 to 25% in 2009. Noteworthy is the great difference in percentages obtained from the two surveys. This shows that Spain's economic crisis has had a great impact upon Romanian immigrants in the last year.

The intention of returning can be differentiated not only on the basis of degree and intensity, but also according to the immigrants' typology (Figure 3). The combination of the foreseen time interval for their return and the probability of return to Romania offer a varied typology of intentions. Thirty-two percent of Romanian immigrants said that they wanted to return to their country within the next few years, averring that this is a great probability ("certain"). Twenty-nine percent of those interviewed affirm that they "come and go", and, therefore, maintain a partial and continuous return. Thirty-nine percent of those interviewed hold intermediate intentions of returning.

The intention of returning home from Spain seems to be, principally, a personal and family decision that is linked to the end of the economic and social transition in Romania. Return to one's country of origin is a decision among Romanian immigrants to Spain that is influenced by unemployment or the fear of losing employment found, as well as the resources and experiences gained from migration and feelings of identity.

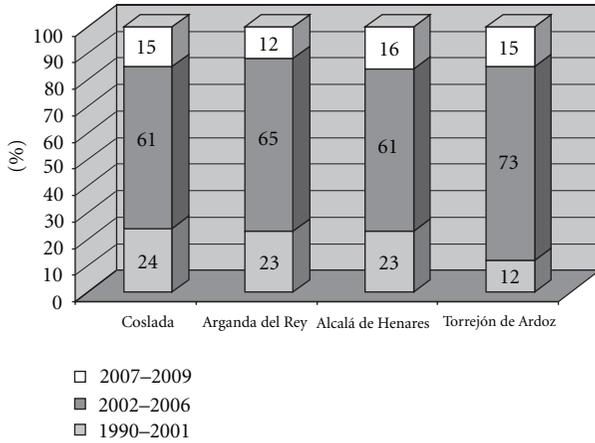


FIGURE 2: Period of the arrival of immigrants in the four municipalities (%). (p. 9) Source: Survey, 2009.

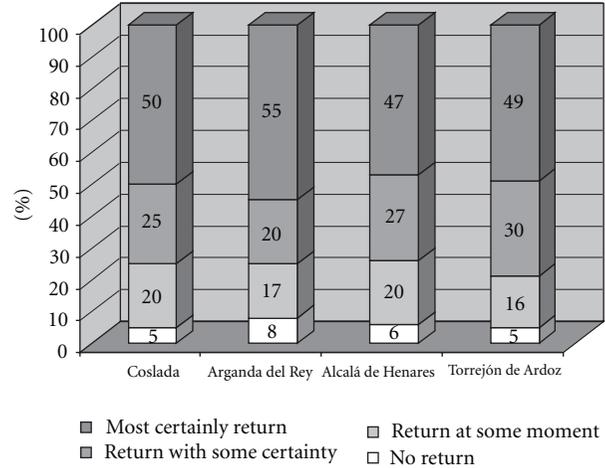


FIGURE 4: Return: according to Romanian communities interviewed (%). (p. 13) Source: own elaboration. Prepared by the 2008-2009 survey.

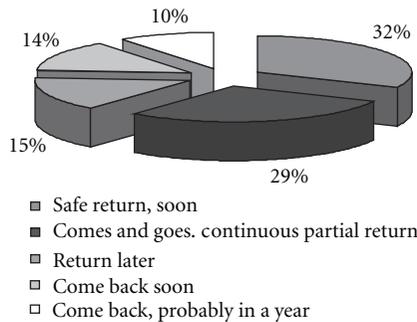


FIGURE 3: The typology of return intentions. (p. 12) Source: Own elaboration. Prepared by the 2008-2009 survey.

### 6. Factors That Favor a Decision to Return

Among the factors that favor a return to one’s country of origin are economic conditioners and human capital (understood as the level of education and knowledge of the Spanish language), or the immigrant’s own situation, found between “here and there” and without a clearly delineated plan. [40–42]. As can be observed in (Figure 4), in the four surveyed communities that have the greatest concentration of Romanians in the CAM, those interviewed noted, for the most part, a desire to return to their country of origin.

Among those who do not wish to return, along with those who are undecided and want to return at some point in the future, we can distinguish between persons who arrived in Spain more than a decade ago, those who have permanent work permits, and those who have undergone family reunification. Of course, among those surveyed who indicate an imminent and certain return besides the unemployed, we can add those who have never had a work permit, resident documents, or registration. These are immigrants who work within the intense circulatory migration to which we have frequently alluded in this analysis. More exactly, these are women who work as domestics in janitorial services, childcare, eldercare, and those who have never had a work

contract. In Table 1, we can see some specific characteristics that aid in understanding the phenomenon of return.

We note how Arganda del Rey has the greatest percentage of persons who wish to return to their country. Besides the reasons adduced here, this can be explained because it deals with persons whose average age (40–45 years) surpasses the total average, those who are considered “older” in the logic of migration.

It is supposed that persons older than those mentioned above have complied with their duty of working abroad in order to be assured of a “tranquil” old age in their country of origin, which seems to be a factor favoring the decision to return. In Arganda, 30% of the population is older than 45 (the pioneers of Romanian immigration, as opposed to 22% in the four populations surveyed). For reasons that are difficult to identify with the available data, the weight of Romanians who live as couples in Torrejón (25%) is much greater than the sample as a whole (17% of the total in the 4 communities). Youth, or a possible family breakdown, may explain the desire to return to one’s country of origin or emigrate to other countries, as noted in the in-depth interviews:

*“We would certainly go to a country in the north. Not to Romania, not now, because we have time to work more and travel the world. As of now, what is likely is that we will go when the summer and the heat come. Then, once we are without money, we would have to think about Sweden or Norway. I have been told that they earn a lot there. So, here, neither one of us has a job or documents. Nor registration...” (A couple interviewed in Torrejón de Ardoz. Voice of an unemployed man, 25 years old). Date of interview: May 10, 2009.*

Religion can also be an important factor influencing the decision on the part of immigrants about returning [43]. We see that there is a greater propensity to emigrate among those manifesting higher levels of faith. At the same time, the most religious are not Orthodox but Seventh-Day Adventists.

*“We will return, yes, because our situation is different. We are Adventists, and on Saturdays we have to worship.*

TABLE 1: The Predominant profile in the four Romanian communities surveyed in the CAM.

	Arganda del Rey	Coslada	Alcalá de Henares	Torrejón de Ardoz
Age	Older: 28% compared to an average of 22%		Youth: 54% compared to an average of 45%	
Marital status		Married but separated 4% compared to an average of 2%	Singles: 42% compared to an average of 32%	They live in couples: 25% compared to an average of 17%
Education	University			Secondary
Language skills	Good		Very good	
Occupation		Domestic service: 29% compared to an average of 23%		Careers: 30% versus 23%
Religion	Pentecostales: 10% compared to 4% of total sample	Adventist: 28% versus 9% of total sample	Orthodox: 91% versus 79% of total sample	Orthodox: 86% versus 79% of total sample
Attendance at religious services	Monthly	Weekly	Reduced	
% of cohabiting				Big
% of cohabiting				
The approximate time of arrival		1995–2001		2007–2008
Intensity of relations with Romanians				
Connections with Spain			Intense	Weak
			Largely	lesser extent

Source: Prepared by the 2008–2009 survey.

*Here, it is difficult for us to be permitted that...Everything has an influence...But we will return.” (A 50 year-old woman employed as a domestic in Coslada). Date of interview: May 3, 2009.*

There are important factors that can be distinguished, therefore, in the decision on the part of immigrants when they plan to return to their country of origin.

## 7. The Importance of Family in Decision Making about Return

Families play an important role in deciding to return, in at least two aspects [44–47]. In the first place, the persons having the greatest probability of returning are those who are unhappy about the effects that, from their point of view, living in Spain and the CAM has had upon their family. Secondly, the propensity to return to their country of origin is greater among families who live in Madrid without their children or partner.

At this point, it is necessary to point out the family character of Romanian immigration to Madrid in particular and Spain in general. A third of the Romanians living in the CAM came alone, while two-thirds came with their families or parts of them. This is, then, a “family” migration within whose framework we can distinguish three subtypes: (1) the immigrant and partner (16% of the total immigrants), (2) a couple plus other family members (children, for the most part, 27% of the total immigrants), (3) the immigrant

accompanied by family members who are neither husband nor wife (26% of the total immigrants).

The propensity of returning to their country of origin is greatest among immigrants who are in the CAM with their families. Forty-six percent of them say that they will certainly return, very shortly, to their home country. When the family group in migration includes children, then the propensity to remain in the CAM increases (38% of those who are in this family situation).

Almost half of those who have a negative view concerning the effects of migration has had upon their families declare that they are thinking about returning to their home country. For the intermediate categories, situated among those definitely emigrating and those who will most probably return to their home country, the perception as to the effects that migration has on their families is not very influential.

## 8. On the Road between Here and There: The Importance of Circulatory Mobility

The factors that condition the intention of returning or (re-)emigration, partial return and continuous return are essentially linked to the desire to improve one’s quality of life, the search for a safer place to live, and the fear of losing or not finding work [48–50]. With the economic crisis that affected immigrants most of all, but also services, Romanians in Spain encounter the same lack of existential and social security—in the current system—that is familiar to them in

their home country. They are caught in a circle of comings and goings, with no possibility of finding a single place to live. In the words of Roman [51], Romanian immigrants live a “crisis of discourse,” since they have no “vocabulary of finality” and have no words to “justify their own actions or beliefs; they have no words to express what is happening or going to happen in their own lives.” We see, among many of those interviewed, the consolidation of what Leccardi [52] calls “short-term thinking”, an individual strategy that stems from the impossibility of finding work or of organizing their lives along the lines of profession. According to Leccardi, when uncertainty reaches the point of being the norm, when the accidental and unexpected cannot be controlled through reflection, the normal ability to think in the long term is lost.

The persons interviewed are seen in the impossibility of openly answering the questions that affect their decision to stay or leave for their home country. They are guided by short-term thinking, a condition pointed out by Sayad [53] when he identifies the sense of “provisory definitude” as an intrinsic characteristic of the experience of migration. Sandu [54], for his part, sees in this type of migrant a continuous “evaluator” of the situation in his own country and of the receiving country, which in this case is Spain.

*“I go from one house to another, from Spain to Romania, and back again, without deciding. I do not know...we’ll see. During the summers, I work in my country, and in the winters I work here if anything comes up. And I receive unemployment compensation at the same time, because I was receiving social security for a while in Spain.”* (A 46-year-old unemployed man in Arganda del Rey). Date of interview: May 2, 2009.

According to Sandu (2008 op. cit.), [54] the most important factor that immigrants take into consideration about their return is the desire to consume and continue to consume. According to the author, immigrants return because they prefer to consume in their own country, in their place of origin, in conditions in which they have accumulated resources for the desired consumption in the environment that they believe to be the most appropriate. While they have not discarded the possibility of returning to Spain or immigrating to another country, the context does matter.

*“I have worked a lot and I want to return to live tranquilly in my home, in my city, in my country. I do not see why I should live in Spain as a foreigner forever. Immigrants: that’s what they call us. If there is no work anywhere, then I will go home and rest for a couple of years until things change. I have enough saved for that. Then we’ll see. Because maybe I will have to return. If things get even worse over there, I would return again...or I would go to another country where things are better.”* (38-year-old woman from Coslada. Caretaker of aged persons). Date of interview: November 18, 2009.

Therefore, return may be voluntary, but in the current situation it will be conditioned by the economic crisis, the lack of work and the uncertainty about the near term in a society where immigrants are the first to suffer the vicissitudes of unemployment.

*“Because, we are the first to lose our jobs. Have you seen it? Have you seen the queues at the employment centres? I work taking care of old people, and they have never given me a contract. For that reason they have never let me go;*

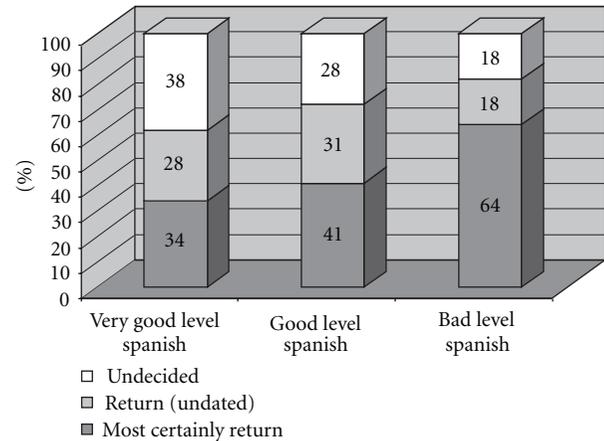


FIGURE 5: Return: according to Romanian communities interviewed (%). Source: Own elaboration. Prepared by the 2008-2009 survey.

*they have no reason to do so. But my husband will have to return to Romania and live there because he lost his job in the construction industry. With what I earn, we cannot live together here.”* (A 42-year-old woman from Torrejón de Ardoz, caretaker of the aged). Date of interview: May 30, 2009.

## 9. The Importance of Knowing the Language: A Fundamental Factor in Deciding to Return

The knowledge of the language of the receiving country is one of the most dynamic indicators of the intention of return [55, 56]. The values of this variable change slowly over time. Social integration is practically impossible if the immigrant does not learn the language. However, what does it mean to know the language well? Of those interviewed, 30% have an adequate knowledge of the language, in the sense that they may have access to the public spaces of Spain. As can be noted in Figure 5, the weight of those who intend to return to their home country grows from 34% for those who know the language very well to 41% for those who know it well, and to 64% for those who do not know the language well. According to the data obtained, Romanians who live in Alcalá de Henares know the language best, while those in Arganda del Rey know it least.

Being older, having a limited amount of education, and working in the construction industry appear to favor ignorance of the Spanish language. The difference in the level of knowledge of the language is an effect of the composition of the population. Better knowledge of the Spanish language in the area of Alcalá de Henares, for example, is associated with the fact that it is a city with a great number of young people with a certain level of education. However, Arganda del Rey has the highest concentration of older people who work in the construction industry.

*“No, I do not speak well. Since I always worked with Romanian people, I never practiced. I could never find a job here. Besides, at my age and without knowing about computers, it seems difficult. If it is not with a Romanian business person, but they are less and less common.”* (A 50-year-old unemployed

*man from Arganda del Rey.*) Date of interview: November 10, 2008.

With respect to resources, the people who have the greatest probability of returning are distinguished for having the highest levels of income (an average of 1,000 to 1,200 Euros per month), which is materially good in Romania. At the same time, they have a relatively lower level of education and scant knowledge of the Spanish language. The result is that those persons most likely to return to their country of origin are those who have accumulated income higher than the specific average for Romanian immigrants, but who did not integrate into Spain because they did not know the language.

### 10. Return According to the State of Mind at the Time of Interview

The intention of remaining in the CAM or returning to the home country is not merely the result of an equation on the basis of the immigrant's resources and the status, combined with his experience with immigration, civil status, religious affiliation or community profile (We understand state of mind, within the context of this analysis, as a dominant orientation—positive or negative—in the contextual and diffuse evaluation of segments proper to life, as relating to the expectations of the persons interviewed.). The propensity to return to Romania is greater among those immigrants unsatisfied by their life in Spain, in comparison with the life they led in Romania before emigrating.

Health is an important factor to take into consideration, relative to the state of mind of the person interviewed. Of those interviewed, 58% noted that they need medical attention and that they are not well.

*"Here, I cannot go to the doctor; I do not have a card, nor does he understand me. This is not life. I will have to go to a pay clinic, but I will do so in my home country where I have to pay, but at least the doctor understands me."* (A 34-year-old female domestic worker from Alcalá de Henares). Date of interview: May 20, 2009).

Some are content with what they have been able to accumulate from the financial point of view in Spain, even though they recognize that they worked nonstop and made sacrifices along the way.

*"I earned a lot of money, see, while working non-stop. But that is not life. No, I will not do that for the rest of my life because I just cannot take it anymore."* (A 45-year-old male construction worker from Coslada). Date of interview: May 20, 2009.

According to those interviewed, in Romania "there will be work, because my country is being built," and besides "schools in Romania are better; there the studies are harder and better than in Spain."

*"Yes, of course I will return, since my son is almost of school age. I have to give him a good education. I think that since my husband is out of work and schools are better there in Romania, and since we have saved quite a lot, we will return home."* (A 28-year-old female domestic worker from Torrejón de Ardoz). Date of interview: November 30, 2008.

In May 2009, almost 75% of the Romanians of the four communities where interviews took place felt that within 1 to 2 years, the employment prospects for Romania would improve. However, with regard to jobs in Spain, only 17% of those interviewed believed that it would improve in the future. It is not that immigrants believe that the situation in their home country will improve more, but that they recognize that it is only there where they can work in accord with their training. Optimism about the economy has, then, an important role in deciding about a return home. However, a subjective factor must also be taken into account. It is that the persons interviewed who had decided to return to their country of origin indicated that the Romanian economy could become much better, while those who had decided to remain in Spain believed that the Spanish economy would be better.

The influence of opinion on the economic situation in plans to return is a hypothesis that must be verified and analyzed. Therefore, the debate over whether to stay or leave is influenced by the level of income associated with working. Many of the persons interviewed, despite the recognition that they are working beneath their level of education, know that it is possible that in the medium term there may be more jobs available in Romania but that Spanish salaries are better than Romania's and that they will continue to be so for a very long time, so it "compensates for the sacrifices." Thus, an immigrant wishes not only for a job in the receiving country but also for a job that pays more than what is available in the country of origin. From this point of view, the conclusions are clear: 90% of the Romanians in the CAM interviewed are certain that in Spain they can earn more than in Romania. Therefore, the problem is not the place of work but, above all, that the work be well paid. Immigrants make more or less diffuse evaluations about their own situation, with consequences for their plans to stay for good or return to their country of origin. Family, job, income and health are, of course, essential issues in their decision making.

*"I do not know what to tell you, because I am no longer young. . . My husband is dead, he is no longer here, and my health is not very good. . . I will stay a little longer because I get a pension there, and here I am okay in a house taking care of a woman who is a little older than me. . . I am all right. When I am no longer able, I will return home to Romania."* (A 65-year-old female caretaker from Arganda del Rey). Date of interview: May 13, 2009.

Returning to Romania as a plan is significant and depends on the situation of those interviewed, and the situation is conditioned by their life experiences in the two countries. The manner in which they currently live in the CAM compared to their life in their country of origin and the manner in which they perceive their future in relation to jobs and institutions in Romania in comparison to those in Spain determine the projections that immigrants cast for their future in relation to the space they call a place to live.

The evidence above confirms that subjective states of mind, which may or may not be created in relation to objective data, count a great deal in the decisions to return to one's country of origin. Nostalgia for one's country (a preference for one's place of birth or initial socialization) can

play a role in stimulating a desire to return home. At the same time, the realistic critique of the bad situation of the country of origin compared with the receiving country can be a real reason in making the decision not to return to Romania.

*“No, I no longer go back. Besides, I have been here for more than 10 years and would not return because of the situation there. There are many inconveniences, a lack of roads. . . I would not be able to go to work. But what am I saying? What job am I talking about? I do not think that I would even know how to find a job there. . . It is another world.”* (A 32-year-old male technician from Arganda del Rey). Date of interview: May 18, 2009.

## 11. Feelings of Identity

Another category of factors that operate independently in conditioning the decision to return or remain abroad is associated with feelings of identity [57, 58]. The immigrants who are most inclined to return to their home country are those who manifest a growing degree of loyalty to the people, place, and country of origin, and who simultaneously declare that they have little affection for the region that has received them. The immigrants who have decided not to return to Romania manifest the symptoms of being uprooted. They sense that they have few ties to their people, region, or even the country of their birth. This symptom appears to diminish as intentions of definite emigration appear to change to well-structured intentions of return. Of those who are oriented towards remaining in Spain, 19% say that they are emotionally linked to Romania, in comparison to those who wish to emigrate, 58% of whom say that they are emotionally linked to their country of origin.

*“I believe that we have to return there, where we were born. Why should we stay here? To die here? When we have a native language, our own land, a family? . . . We do not have a house yet, but that is why we are here. To work and return.”* (A 40-year-old male construction worker from Torrejón de Ardoz). Date of interview: May 22, 2009.

Even for those who wish to remain in Spain, the attachment they feel for that country is manifested in a relatively lesser manner, as evidenced by only 25% of those interviewed. The results appear to indicate that remaining abroad is more an uprooted identity with respect to one's place of origin than a consolidation of affection for the receiving country. It should be pointed out that the strongest feeling of identification with Romania is not manifested among those who have decided to return soon; it is strongest among those who plan to return later. It is possible to think that those who put off their return are those who feel the closest link to their country of origin. They decided to return but expect to achieve most of the objectives of their emigration: most probably, earning the material gains necessary to help their return home in such time as their country of origin manages to emerge from the crisis.

## 12. Return and Life Plans

Besides returning to their country, Romanian immigrants in the CAM showed that they have other plans that imply mobility. It is thus that a third of those who plan to remain

in Spain are thinking about moving to another municipality or Autonomous Community within Spain. The motivation for moving within Spain, regardless of whether or not the emigrants wish to remain in Spain, is based not only on jobs and wages but also on lifestyle.

Those interviewed manifest their desire to change because they have not found work, have a desire to live elsewhere in Spain, or believe there “are too many Romanians here.” This indicates the existence of a segment of immigrants that tries to avoid the negative connotations of living in large communities of fellow Romanian immigrants. Why? It is possible that, due to the intense circulatory migration, the level of crime is higher. However, other factors may also play a part. It is possible that the negative image some immigrant groups have while competing in the local market, may spring from sources other than crime. In situations where local institutions favor the employment of immigrants in the underground economy, negative stereotypes and behavior of this type are readily associated with those groups most representative of immigrants, as in the case of Romanians.

The tendency to bring family members together in Spain is shown to have diminished. Forty-five percent of those who say that they will soon return to Romania assert that their children's future is in both countries. It is to be observed that there is a certain level of vexation on the part of those interviewed when asking about their plans to return.

*“Now, with the European Union, my daughter can study wherever she thinks is best. And she does speak Spanish. Why not do it here in Spain? What a way of deciding for people: that if you are from Romania, then to Romania you must return. Well, no. . .”* (A 46-year-old male construction worker from Arganda del Rey). Date of interview: November 2, 2008.

The interviewees who have children make projections of their future that are closely linked to their plans for migration. The causal relationship can be established in both senses: I decide to return to the country because my children's future is in Romania, or I see my children's future in Romania because I have decided to return there. In the sphere of family decisions, interaction and multiple feelings coexist. The fact is that three quarters of the Romanians who have decided to repatriate feel that their children's future is in Romania.

However, the way in which events in the future will take place is another matter. For now, the data obtained in the surveys clearly show that the Romanians who circulate in Europe are viewing the world in a way that is increasingly from a trans-border perspective, in terms of “not abroad,” nor in Romania, or “as at home,” “as in Spain,” or in other words, they travel from “home to home”.

## 13. Some Final Conclusions and Considerations: Towards a Mobile Citizenship?

Throughout this article, Romanian immigrants to the Autonomous Community of Madrid (CAM) have been linked to repatriation, or return, as a form of circulatory labor migration. By using a combined methodology, we

analyzed the return this has gained over the last two years, since the economic crisis began. We point out that return migration is not only a life plan but also a state of mind influenced by the current situation in which society in general finds itself. As a plan it implies, over time, a project of returning to one's country of origin with the possibility of personal advancement and strong connections to other life plans. As a state of mind, it is defined by a dominant degree of discontent that is linked to the effects of migration upon the family.

The study we have done and whose partial results we offer in this article indicate a social reality that is far from being a dichotomy, immigrants who stay and immigrants who leave. As we have seen, there are several categories of immigrants from the point of view of return or repatriation. Among these, we have distinguished those who are definitely planning to return, the undecided, those who come and go and those whose return is partial and never definite.

We can conclude that understanding the phenomenon of Romanian migration in the Autonomous Community of Madrid signifies understanding the phenomenon and the dynamics of Romanian immigration to Spain, the EU and the world. There is an explanation. After the opening of the European borders following the Schengen Treaty in 2002, free circulation for Romanians was permitted throughout the EU and resulted in significant movement of Romanians from their country, especially to Italy and Spain. Since they did not need a visa to move within the EU space, Romanians could circulate for a period of three months within the aforementioned space. The situation intensified as of 2007 after Romania entered the EU. It grew even more at the end of 2008 when the moratorium on Romanian and Bulgarian labor migrants was lifted. The boundaries between home and away, local and global, traditional and detraditionalized, and here and there have become increasingly blurred [59]. In a world without borders, the logic of perpetual mobility entered into their scheme; the process of provisional return to the country of origin or, in other words, the life of a citizen involved in circulatory mobility between two countries, two worlds, and two languages.

Thus, to conclude, within the space that emerged from the advance of the EU's borders towards the east, we venture the need for creating a new kind of theoretical framework that links borders with migration and is specific and adaptable to community policy.

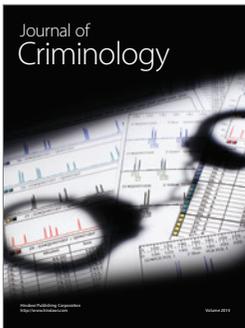
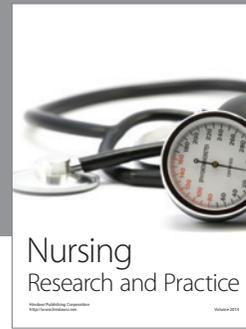
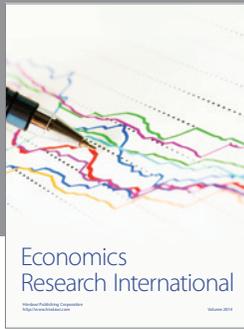
Authors such as [60–62] Ernste et al. [63] from various backgrounds, studied this linkage in their work while taking a step towards creating a new theory. The theory could come about upon undertaking an ethno survey in both the country of origin and the country of destination, which might be able to explain the circular migration and return within the framework of current mechanisms of mobility within the border space created by EU policy. It would create a mobile and European citizen [64–66] (who seeks labor strategies in any country of the community space with help from networks established over time). In this context, Spain and the Autonomous Community of Madrid would become the heart of European mobility, due to the intense provisional settlement of Romanians within the territory.

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