

## CHAPTER 3

### NEW RURAL RESIDENTS, TERRITORIES FOR VITAL PROJECTS AND THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS IN SPAIN

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**Abstract** This chapter looks at the impact of the financial and economic crisis experienced in Spain during the last decade upon the reconfiguration of rural areas. With this aim, the chapter focuses on the impact on the relationship between new rural residents and the reshaping of rural territories. The chapter emphasises this impact through the analysis of three different, but closely related, dimensions. First, the way the crisis determined the arrival of newcomers. Second, the impact of this recession upon the local socio-economic dynamism of rural areas. Third, the unexpected elements that many new rural residents faced due to the context of the crisis, and which conditioned their experience of the new destination. Additionally, the chapter remarks on the necessity of understanding these migrations to the rural, by taking into consideration the life course and the phase of the family cycle of the migrants when the migration takes place. The discussion expounded in this chapter is based on the analysis of a series of qualitative interviews conducted with diverse sociological profiles of new rural residents. The interviews were undertaken in the context of two research projects which looked at different aspects of the relationship between new rural residents and their destination.

**Keywords:** new rural residents, economic crisis, rural livelihoods, Spain

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration to rural areas has become one of the most significant rural changes in post-industrial societies. It encompasses a variety of vital strategies that since the second half of the last century have been progressively identified by rural studies. Furthermore, the study of migration to the rural has become a major line of research within the international agenda of rural sociology, particularly in the Global North. As empirical evidence has demonstrated, the sociological profiles of those involved in this migration trend, as well as the destinations and motivations of such a migration, are increasingly diversified. Accordingly, the theoretical and methodological approaches focused on the study of counterurbanisation have also broadened the scope of the research; this is in order to be able to deal with particular types of migrations to rural areas, such as transnational retirement migration, new age travellers, lateral migration, amenity migration, national and international labour migration, and so on.

However, most of this literature refers to a period of economic expansion. In fact, studies relating migration to rural areas during economic crisis in the Global North are still comparatively scarce, and they seem to indicate the relevance of the context in understanding the different processes and the need for more empirical work. For example, perspectives focused on family strategies have shown how counterurbanisation decreases in times of recession among qualified groups in

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Denmark (Hansen & Aner, 2017). This finding contrasts with the case for Greece, where the crisis has led to counterurbanisation strategies for other sociological profiles (Gkartzios, 2013; Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2013; Gkartzios & Scott, 2017). In this light, it is necessary to more closely examine these migrations as being differentiated social and cultural patterns (Gkartzios, 2013), and from the point of view of family strategies (Scott & Murphy, 2014). For example, in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean, it is frequently observed that those who return to rural areas seeking support of local and family networks do so in order to countenance times of recession.

In the case of Spain, the phenomenon of the migration to rural areas has also been extensively analysed from different perspectives (Camarero, 1993; Hoggart and Mendoza, 1999; Rivera, 2007b; 2013; Suarez-Navaz, 2007; Morén-Alegret, 2008; Oliva, 2010; Bayona-i-Carrasco & Gil-Alonso, 2013; Collantes et al., 2014; [Sampedro & Camarero, 2018](#)). Here too, little research has been carried out with regard to exploring this phenomenon within a prolonged period of economic crisis like the current one. The objective of such research is to better understand the impact of the last financial and economic crisis on people's lives, on issues of social justice, on livelihoods and on the economic backwardness of the rural areas.

This chapter explores how the recession initiated two decades ago has affected these processes of migration to rural areas in Spain, by focusing on three different aspects; i.e., the arrival of newcomers, the local economic dynamism and the possibilities and expectations after the recession. The reflection offered is based on the analysis of a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with new rural residents in five different Spanish regions. These interviews were part of two research projects that looked at the residential sociobiographies of the interviewees, the adjustments and decisions made throughout the family life cycle, labour and mobility strategies, and how their changing imaginary about the rural is connected to the migrations to the rural (see methodological section below)<sup>3</sup>. The case studies are illustrative of remote, peri-urban and hyperproductive rural regions. The information gathered allows us to explore the impact that the financial recession has had on the viability of the projects of the new rural residents.

The chapter is structured as follows. In section 2, we develop a theoretical approach. On the one hand, we consider the state of migration to rural areas and the relevance of this debate in understanding contemporary rural restructuring. On the other hand, we show the possibilities offered by the life-project approaches, in order to understand migrations to rural areas, and we revisit these processes in the light of the context of the recession. In section 3, we expound the methodological aspects of the projects. Then, in section 4, the interviews are analysed in accordance with the aforementioned parameters of analysis. Next, the discussion is expounded in section 5. Finally, the chapter ends by summarizing the findings and their implications for the research of the migration to rural in a postglobal society.

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<sup>3</sup> The Project conducted by María Jesús Rivera under the title *Comparative study of the impact of new settlers on different scenarios of rurality: Actors, practices and discourses* (CSO2011-27981), analyses several of these strategies involved in the migration to an essentially postproductive remote rurality (Sierra de Francia in Salamanca on the Spanish-Portuguese border), a peri-urban interstitial rurality (the Pamplona Basin in Navarre) and a hyperproductive rurality (the strawberry region of Huelva). The research conducted by Jesús Oliva under the title of *Mobility, social diversity and sustainability. The challenges of the European agenda for rural development* (CSO2012-37540) gathered sociological profiles of migrants to rural areas in Navarrese Pyrenean mountain (valleys of Aezkoa, Roncal and Salazar, on the French-Spanish border), the peri-urban rural region of Gran Vega in Seville and the Aveiro region in Portugal (only the first two cases are considered here).

## **2. From counterurbanisation to postglobal mobilities: the changing migration to rural areas**

### **2.1. The increasing diversification of the study of migration to rural areas**

Several decades of research on migration to rural areas have given rise to a suggestive debate and an accumulation of knowledge about its local impact, motivations and the social groups involved. The first studies sought to highlight an unexpected and contradictory phenomenon after the long rural exodus that involved urbanisation and industrial modernization. Counterurbanisation and the 'rural turnaround' were characterised then as an analytical system that aimed to visualize these emerging processes within national contexts (Berry, 1976; Clout, 1972; Champion, 1989; Kayser, 1990; Camarero, 1993; Castle, 1995; Cloke et al., 1995; Urry, 1995; Boyle et al., 1998). These studies described the generalisation of this residential trend and allowed it to be considered within the institutional policies (Milbourne, 2007; Smith, 2007).

Other approaches, through case studies, delved into the rural meanings implicit in these strategies (Smith & Phillips, 2001; Phillips, 2002; Halfacree, 1994, 2012). In addition, many other sociological profiles and motivations have proliferated since then, such as return migrations, back-to-the-land migrants, amenity migration, international labour migration, pre-retired migration and so forth. Thus, this phenomenon subsequently appears to be much more complex, changeable and diverse than initially expected (Buller & Hoggart, 1994; Mitchel, 2004, 2008; Milbourne, 2007; Rivera, 2007a, 2007b; Halfacree, 2012; Halfacree & Rivera, 2013; Stockdale & Catney, 2014; Moss & Glorioso, 2014; Stockdale, 2015).

The understanding and theorization of this plurality of migrations to rural areas inevitably requires enlarging the focus of attention to address the phenomenon in a comprehensive manner, in order to include new experiences of migration to the rural (Halfacree 2001; 2012). Hence, many of the first counterurbanisation studies analysed this phenomenon mostly within the industrialised countries (Champion, 2004, 2007; Milbourne, 2007; Halfacree, 2008; Champion & Graeme, 2014), whereas new explanatory frameworks, such as those provided by the mobility paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2010), have helped in understanding the emergence of some globalised and translocal connections which underlie the processes of migration to the rural areas involving migration between different countries (King, Warnes & William, 2000; O'Reilly 2000; 2007; Casado, Kaiser & Warnes, 2004; Haug, Dann & Mehmetoglu, 2007; Gustafson, 2008; Bell & Osti, 2010; Oliva, 2010; Hedberg & Carmo, 2010; Camarero et al., 2010; Scott et al, 2017).

The paradoxes revealed by empirical findings have stimulated the debate on analytical and methodological assumptions when studying migration to rural areas. For example, Gkartziou and Scott (2009) pointed out how the attention paid to counterurbanisation had made other migrations invisible, such as those between the rural areas themselves (*lateral migration*). For instance, transnational migrations have increasingly diversified in terms of groups and places. As Woods concludes (2016), in addition to the old retirement strategies of certain global elites

in the form of “*international counterurbanisation*”, labour migrations that involve different kinds of workers have been added. For example, immigrants from Latin America, the Maghreb and Eastern Europe move to the rural regions of the countries in the South of Europe to their markets for harvesting, hospitality and personal care work (Camarero et al., 2012; Kasimis 2008; Kasimis et al., 2003, 2010; Papadopoulos, 2012). Traditional concepts of migration fail to capture the diversity and dynamics of the new international migrations to the rural world. As Wood also points to, “*patterns and processes of contemporary migration are more fluid and dynamic than often imagined, and are situated within a matrix of stretched translocal social relations.*” (2016: 572). For example, global amenity migrations (Moss & Glorioso, 2014) and pre-retired migrations might be converted by certain groups into a definitive retirement destination (Lorna & MacLeod, 2016). Consequently, in many cases, different types of counterurbanisation, migrants, and mobilities to the rural coexist in the same destination place, giving rise to conflicting views of local realities (Kraack & Kenway, 2002; Rivera & Mormont, 2007).

## **2.2. The relevance of life course and family cycle to understand migration to rural areas**

Within the increasing broadening of the studies that cover a greater number of experiences of migration to the rural, some papers have placed emphasis on the relevance of the life paths and family cycle to understand more fully how the different drivers of migration can at a given moment be determinant enough to lead to such a migration (Halfacree, 2001; Gustafson, 2006; Milbourne, 2007; Rivera, 2007a, 2007b, 2013; Geist & McManus, 2008; Bailey, 2011; Stockdale et al. 2013; Stockdale & Catney, 2014; Stockdale, 2014, 2016; Gkartzios et al. 2017), and that family networks play an important role in the decision to migrate; furthermore, other issues, such as the characteristics of housing can be determining factors (Scott et al, 2017). As Stockdale and Catney (2014) suggest, age and life course “*may display geographical variations influenced by local cultures and contexts and the state of the national and local employment and housing markets.*” (2014: 85).

Another essential issue that acts as an introduction to the analysis developed by Bailey (2011) is the synchronization of multiple lives and the timing in the motivations to migrate to the rural. Coordination is required for motivations, family needs and changing cycles in different homes (Boyle & Halfacree, 1993; Rivera, 2007b, 2013) and for the extended family. In a similar vein, Camarero and Oliva (2016) analyse how the context of family relationships affects residential elections and the changing nature of intergenerational relationships, and how they may affect the provision of care and income security. The arrangements for living with any member of the extended family have become a way of resilience under the conditions of neoliberalism. In these strategies, different life-courses and family nuclei are synchronized into migrations. Stockdale et al (2013) suggest attending not only to the biographical moment of the decision, but also to the vital trajectories. In order to appreciate these intrinsic links, we need to understand the changes in rural territories. Along these lines Bailey (2011) underlines the importance of connecting the town with vital projects and exploring the place as an active element.

These works suggest that in the decisions to emigrate to rural areas the imaginary of the rural is elaborated through political and ideological constructions of the meanings of the place (Halfacree 1994). The analysis of life-courses and socio-biographies have shown how migrations mean different things to different groups and their different biographical moments; for example, access to affordable housing, the family as a provider of assistance, parenting in the village and exclusive residential complexes (Rivera 2007b). As Halfacree (2012) summarizes in his critique of the concept of migration as permanent, “*because any migration is likely to be ‘temporary’ in terms of the duration of a person’s life, the very idea of ‘permanent’ migration*

*increasingly seems a product of an implicit assumption of normative sedentarist settlement.”* (2012: 213).

### **3- Notes on research methods and study areas**

Probably, one of the main features of Spanish rural areas is its intrinsic heterogeneity. The vast rural Spanish territory was at the beginning of the century an amalgam of rural areas with very differentiated characteristics representing differing livelihoods, productive activities, economic dynamism, landscape, and so forth. This heterogeneity also implies the coexistence of the rural territories that are losing population with those rural territories experiencing an increase in population. On the one hand, many Spanish municipalities are at risk of depopulation due to ageing, youth exodus and/or poor accessibility to resources and opportunities (Consejo Económico y Social de España, 2018; Ministerio de Política Territorial y Función Pública, 2019). This risk represents an aggravated phenomenon in remote and mountainous areas, inland regions and even some provincial capitals after the crisis. The prolonged economic recession started in 2007, and has led to the cuts in infrastructure and investments, expenditure control and containment imposed by the central administrations upon the regional ones and then on the municipalities; this has brought about an abandonment of public and private services in many regions.

On the other hand, some rural areas are still the milieu for a significant population and are a clear destination for migration. According to the 2011 census data, more than 9.7 million people live in municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants, 21% of this population resided in another place ten years prior to the census being conducted. Of this group, 5.6% lived abroad and 10.4% in Spanish municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants. The nature of this migration has become much more complex and oriented towards certain regions and localities, due to their location, labour markets and/or amenities. At the same time, some regions receive very different profiles of new settlers, such as transnational retirement migrations, international labour migrations, returnees, etc. This gives rise to what could be termed as new rural ‘melting-pots’ (Oliva, 2010).

As already advanced, this chapter is based on the findings of two research projects funded by the Spanish National Research Plan and conducted by the authors in different Spanish rural regions between 2012 and 2016, when the recession was hitting the country hard (see footnote 3). Amongst other questions, both projects looked at different aspects of the transformation of rural territories, new residential strategies and the role played by new residents in the everyday life of the rural community. The sum of both projects covered five areas of study, and their main characteristics may be summarised as follows:

- a) The region of the Aezkoa, Salazar and Roncal valleys, in Pyrenean mountains, is an area located near the Spanish-French border. It consists of 25 small, dispersed municipalities that cover 925 km<sup>2</sup> and in which 3,983 people live. Density does not exceed 6 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, and the population dropped 30% from 2001 to 2017.
- b) The region of Batuecas-Sierra de Francia in Salamanca covers a mountainous area of 464,03 km<sup>2</sup> close to the border with Portugal. It comprises 15 municipalities with a total

of 405 inhabitants in 2019. They are small villages with an aged and continuously decreasing population. The agricultural sector is losing relevance as the main economic activity in favour of post-productive services such as rural tourism, traditional products, and so forth.

- c) The case of Gran Vega region in Seville includes urban sprawl and commuting areas, Mediterranean agrotowns and isolated villages classified as highly vulnerable rural areas by the regional administration. The region consists of 13 municipalities and covers 1,354 km<sup>2</sup>. More than 159,000 inhabitants live in this area close to the urban agglomeration of 1.5 million.
- d) The metropolitan area of Pamplona includes a total of 12 municipalities spread over an area of 354,27 km<sup>2</sup>. These municipalities, in turn, comprise a plurality of 104 small entities with a total population in 2019 of 87481 inhabitants. The area includes municipalities with a consistent population growth and municipalities with decreasing population.
- e) The hyperproductive strawberry region of Huelva, in Andalusia, constitutes 6 municipalities covering an extension of 1554,85 km<sup>2</sup> and reported a population of 141.479 inhabitants in 2019. The region has a strong and internationally integrated agro-industry that attracts many foreign workers, both legal and illegal, from different countries within Europe (i.e. Bulgaria and Romania), Africa and Latin America. Although they are mostly seasonal workers, in many cases, labour migrants become residents on a permanent basis after obtaining better jobs in the agro-industry or in a different sector.

The number of interviews conducted by the two projects came to 72 and considered key informants as well as different sociological profiles of migrants to rural areas. The analysis of this chapter is based on a selected corpus of 24 interviews based on the obvious appearance of recession-related elements within the narratives (see Annex). To clarify the discussion, we have adopted the following typology. We will consider all the population that moved to the rural area of the case studies as new rural residents. Within these new rural residents, we have included different types of migration to rural areas (see figure 1); certainly, this typology does not include all the possible types of migration to rural areas that you might expect. It includes the main types we found in our pieces of research in relation to the impact of the recession.<sup>4</sup>

### **Figure 1. Main types of migration within new rural residents**

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<sup>4</sup> We are aware that in some occasions, some of these labels may overlap each other. That is, some people may, at the same time, reflect more than one label. For instance, retired migration could at the same time be a return migration experience or an exurban one. In order to clarify the analysis of the interviews, we have considered the type of migration that seemed to explain a bigger part of migrant's experience.

<b>Exurban migration</b>	Exurban professional middle-classes Young population with limited economic resources
<b>Retired migration</b>	Migration occurred after retirement
<b>Return migration</b>	Population with previous links to the locality
<b>Lateral migration</b>	Population moving from other rural areas in Spain
<b>Foreign labour migration</b>	Labour migrants

#### **4. The crisis as the trigger for a new relationship between rural territories and new residents**

The global financial crisis and its transformation into a long lasting *Great Depression* has been especially hard in the Southern and Mediterranean countries that had to deal with the spending control regulations and budget cuts. As a consequence, the vulnerability of many rural regions increased (European Commission, 2011; OECD, 2016; Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 2017; Charalambos et al. 2010; Gkartzios, 2013; Sánchez-Zamora et al, 2014; Sampedro & Camarero, 2018; Silva & Cardoso, 2017; Holl, 2018). Furthermore, certain rural areas in Spain might also deal with a significative increase in poverty. Against this background, some people who were looking for a better future in the cities became unemployed and were pushed back into the rural economies and to family support. Additionally, many other vital ventures not linked to the crisis saw their rural projects overturned. For example, one of the latest reports by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-ES, 2018), which in Spain tracks the AROPE indicator used by the European Union, highlights that a greater proportion of this poorer population lives in rural and semi-urban areas.

In relation to the impact of the crisis upon the relationship between rural territories and new residents, the narratives expressed in the interviews allow us to underline two interrelated effects; i.e., the impact on new residents' experiences and expectations, and the relevance of place, life course and the family cycle in understanding new residents' decisions.

##### **4.1. The impact of the crisis on new residents' experiences and expectations**

The recession at the beginning of the century has had a different impact on rural territories and new residents' everyday life. Thus, the interviewees' narratives showed a series of aspects in which new residents are affected by the recession in relation to their personal/family life-project, their personal circumstances and the economic strength of the given territory. However, beyond this diversity of impacts, the interviews seemed to suggest, at least, three recurrent *spheres* of impact; i.e., the arrival of new residents, the local economic dynamics, and the possibilities and expectations after the recession. Even though these spheres are closely intertwined, we explore them separately here in order to gain further clarity.

Firstly, and for a better understanding of the role played by the crisis in the arrival of new residents to rural areas, it is important to note the traditional function of the family as the main support in facing difficult circumstances when there is little state aid; also the close relationships kept between those who previously left the village and those relatives who remained are important. These are the reasons why many people trapped by the recession in the cities considered the family village as a resource that might help them to overcome the period of crisis. In these cases, rural territories act as a buffer for the impact of the experience of the recession. As many interviewees related, the idea of moving to the rural locality was a decision forced on

them by the complicated situation they were experiencing in city. Therefore, when unemployment hit the family, the rural territory became an opportunity or the only alternative for their “no future” urban lives. *“Well, the typical youths that have gone to [the regional capital city], that live in a rented apartment, or in a flat that they have bought and cannot pay for and return to the village because in the village you have a family house (...). And there are also those who might work in factories who return to the village because the factory dispensed with them, the conditions are bad and they look for whatever there is in the village.”* (PNE06, female, aged 38, returned).

In these cases, returnees might have different options. Sometimes they can work in small businesses previously run by other family members, such as small shops or local bars, and sometimes they will find the economic refuge in the local industry thanks to their family contacts. As a young interviewee expressed, *“But now with the recession many our age have returned to the ham industry. Their parents have found them a job [in the local ham industry] when they are left without work in Madrid and they are returning. Grumpy because they don’t want to be in the village, but they return.”* (SAE14 (a), female, aged 43, exurban, husband return migrant).

The impact of the recession did not just cause the return of the urban population with previous links with the locality, but it also caused an increase in lateral migration from rural localities with a weaker productive fabric to rural localities with a stronger economic activity in the farming sector, agroindustry, services (tourism) and small industries. One of the interviewees in a village whose economy is based on the agro-industry relates how the migration patterns between rural areas changed with time and the economic perspectives. *“Now a lot of people are coming from [different cities and regional capitals] (...). They stopped coming, the people from here say that it’s that they saw the boom, when the construction boom came, and they decided to leave, go. Then the village had to fall back on the foreigners and that’s why there are so many foreigners. So, now the boom has gone the recession comes again. The people are coming again.”* (HUE13, female, aged 39, exurban)

The crisis gave rise to visible social tension in some villages, and this was reflected in the controversy regarding the growing precarity and deregulation of labour practices and wages in these activities, this in turn was because of the occupation by foreign workers. The vision of foreign people as hire and fire workers was explained by a 26-year-old Eastern European interviewee who had been residing with his wife and three children in the region for more than seven years, *“What I don’t understand is how they can say we are to blame for recession because we also have paid taxes. When there is a lack of workers, they want us, when there isn’t go away to Romania because there isn’t enough work for everyone. It is like rag that you use and throw away.”* (GV11, male, aged 26, labour migrant).

A second major sphere of impact of the crisis has been on the local economic dynamism. Coherently, the crisis resulted in the reconfiguration of economic activities also in rural areas. Amongst the impacts of the recession upon the villages studied we reported the decrease in tourism, and the consequent difficulties of keeping rural tourist hospitality services afloat. This is particularly important in the case of rural areas with little economic activity, as occurred in some of the remote mountainous areas. Thus, some of small hospitality businesses opened by new residents were at risk. This was the case of one interviewee who was the owner of a rural hotel, *“But in four years here it has gone down, gone down, gone down. We have noticed the recession. It came here late but it has been noticed.”* (SAE09, male, aged 44, exurban).

This effect of the recession was specially noted in areas in which the seasonal nature of rural labour markets entails more fragile and limited opportunities. *“This year there are going to be*

*cuts in the [skiing] season and cuts in the workers, and from then on you notice it and before there were always people for work. However, now a waiter can't find work in the valley, it's more difficult. Then the recession has arrived, nothing in building and construction, they have dropped sharply."* (PNE06, female, aged 38, returned).

Furthermore, where possible, public policy and private investment drove the restoration of local heritage (buildings) that were sometimes used as places for hospitality services, restaurants, etc. In some cases, the recession also affected these plans, leaving some of the rural areas without one of their possible assets. For instance, as one interviewee explained, although the historic building of the locality was renovated, the recession left the area without further activity. *"(...) And the nicest bit is that opposite is the restored Palace of [the village] and ... and ... But of course the recession arrived and after the restoration work, they then closed it, that is to say there is no activity there."* (NAE06, male, aged 38, exurban).

In the case of villages with intensive agricultural activities and which are well connected to metropolitan areas, unskilled workers from other countries arrived with dual objectives. The first being to find a job in the agricultural activities relegated by the local population whilst residing in a place with easy access to a lower cost of living in the rural and, at the same time, access to metropolitan jobs (services, cleaning, factories, care, etc.). Some of these groups of foreign workers, who do not have the help of family networks and whose vital project was a definitive commitment to prosper, often felt trapped and unable to return. As one interviewee highlighted, *"Loads have left. What happens is that it takes a lot to leave everything and go back to live in Romania again. (...) for example, my girlfriend is twenty-seven and has been here since she was fourteen. That is thirteen years, it's almost half a lifetime."* (GV11, male, aged 26, farm labourer). Even in the context of recession, the city it is not an alternative for them, and rural locations work as a refuge for them as a place where they struggle but within an acceptable precariousness.

Finally, according to the interviewees, the third dimension clearly hit by the crisis is the range of possibilities and expectations that new residents may have of rural life. In this sense, the new, and often unexpected, scenario that has emerged from the impact of the recession upon rural areas has for some of the new rural residents become a very different everyday life scenario from the one they expected and desired. In some cases, they may well consider the possibility of taking a backward step in their residential strategy. However, the crisis will not always make this return possible.

Many of their vital projects have been significantly eroded due to the prolonged economic recession, and they perceive all these years as downtime. As a twenty-five-year-old interviewee, from Eastern Europe and resident in the area with her husband and two children explained, *"Now it is very difficult to bring children here. You are better off in Romania than here. Because you have your parents.... and I don't know what, your social security the thing if they give it but here at this time you can't do anything."* (GV01, female, aged 25, labour migrant).

Nevertheless, the impact of the recession has also been evident in some of the profiles involved in the urban middle class residential sprawl to the exclusive peri-urban housing estates. This is a process supported by easy access to credit and the construction boom. Since the financial and construction crash developments in several areas have been frozen, and sometimes they present unsustainable situations. For example, one such resident interviewed where she lives with her husband and son described that, *"there are many people where things have gone very badly, and they are experiencing real needs. There have been others who have left their houses and handed them over to the bank."* (GV10, female, aged 44, exurban migration).

The recession also borne out by a fall in housing prices, and many people who had bought a new home in a rural area lost a significant part of their capital. Furthermore, the trade in houses decreased rapidly and profoundly. Thus, those willing to go back to the city had to remain in the rural area as they could not sell their houses. This problem is clearly explained by one interviewee in the peri-urban area of Pamplona, *“the people want to go and live in the city because they have had children and it’s inconvenient driving all day, to and from, to take them to school or to after extracurricular activities or wherever they may have to go, and then again for their own interests, they decide or have decided to leave. What happens? As we are in a financial recession they can’t sell the apartment, the house, for the price they might want, then they don’t go, but as soon as they sell the house, they will go.”* (NAE01, male, aged 47, exurban).

#### **4.2. Place, Life Course and Family Cycle**

As the analysis of the interviews evidenced, the characteristics of the rural places play a critical role in their inward migrations. Family networks and friendships, labour markets and accessibilities, identities, natural amenities, and so forth, differentially configure the territories for the arrival of potential immigrant sociological profiles. These issues could be understood as the functionalities of the territory that underlie the relationship between the migrant and the place. Nevertheless, this relationship may evolve and change over time, according to biographical moments and family cycles. For example, in the case of remote rural areas in mountainous regions with a dispersed habitat and an aged population, as is the case of the Navarrese Pyrenees and Sierra de Francia regions, the characteristics of the territory may present difficulties that do not enable the settlement of certain types of potential new residents. These may include limited labour markets, difficulties in finding a house to rent, poor accessibility to services, and so on. These conditions establish a filter for the initiatives that can successfully be carried out in the mountains. As one of our interviewees remembered, *“When you come here you don’t come with great expectations because clearly you know and understand what a valley can offer; it’s the hotel trade, timber if anything is happening, cattle, schools. That is what’s on offer. In one of these or you have an initiative and you set it up or not; it is what it is.”* (PNE08, female, aged 38, returned).

Nevertheless, despite the restrictions a rural place may have to attract different profiles of migrants, it is important that the possibilities offered by the place fulfil migrant’s needs, whether they are linked to symbolic or material aspects; and these needs are inextricably linked to the life course or the family cycle of the migrant. For instance, those remote rural areas can be a possibility for those in need of a job, even if it is temporary and precarious, in order to make a great change in her/his life. In fact, those employed in the care services do not usually consider their stay as a long-term project in the area. Rather it is a temporary episode, which is frequently linked to the initial contracts that, will allow them to legalize their stay in the country or provide stability while finding other destinations. For example, one interviewee who arrived from Latin America expressed, *“I arrived here in this country without relatives, (...) I arrived to whatever, because the possibilities then were to travel to Italy, Canada, or Spain. I chose Spain because of the language and because I was coming alone (...), and the fear was that I was illegal after three months. So, the friend I had in this village said to me (...) wouldn’t you like to come here as there is a gentleman to look after and it’s weekends included?”*. (PNE20, female, aged 31, labour migration)

However, the mutual understanding between the possibilities of the place and migrant’s life course or family cycle goes beyond providing a temporary job to begin a new life in the country. As explained, the family still represents a tie for mutual aid between generations. As a result, the family village becomes a possibility, not just for those evicted from the city due to the crisis,

but it also represents a resource for critical stages in migrants' life like parenting or at critical junctures such as separations. Similarly, this migration may also be driven by the need to take care of elders. For instance, in the fieldwork carried out in the Navarrese Pyrenees and in the Gran Vega of Seville, the profiles of women employed in public services (teachers, nurses) who return choosing destinations in the town are repeated. Often, they come for reasons related to family responsibilities, such as the decision to have children or the need to care for parents; but it is also due to links with the hometown, such as the presence of family and friends, property maintenance, etc. In this sense, the fieldwork reveals synchronized strategies of family returns that have involved different life courses, homes and family cycles. For example, this is illustrated by the case of an interviewee, who lived outside the town from aged 14 to 35. *"I lived in the [regional capital], I had my job (...) and because of the children... Well, families and so, I have come to live in the town, (...) and my brother [who worked outside] has also returned and my father retired, was out, and now also he's back."* (PNO6, female, aged 38 aged, returned). These combinations of family cycles and vital projects are frequent among families with resources in the territory (identities, family, friends, houses, real estate). Residence outside, in the city or in other areas, constitutes an episodic moment in the face of intermittent rural stays. Nonetheless, an economic, family or work situation can finally motivate the return to the home village, *"I don't like the village, I came here because things were happening here (...) we leased a farm [in another village in the valley] and we were living [there] ten years and then, when it finished [the leasing contract], it coincided with my brother leaving to go to Pamplona (...) and so we ended up here."* (PNE12, female, aged 47, returned).

In some cases, the arrival of migrants at a new stage in their lifecourse or family cycle results in a lateral migration within villages of the same area. This is especially so in those territories characterised by a dispersed habitat and strong depopulation that tend to concentrate the services in the county headers. For example, at certain moments of migrants' lives, a closer proximity to the services such as schools, health centres, and so forth becomes a reason to consider lateral migration.

## 5. Discussion

What kind of vital ventures mean moving to the rural? What was the impact of the crisis on them? Migrations to rural areas over the second half of the last century were understood as early signs of the erosion of cultural imaginary that supported the Fordist modernization ideology. The variety of new rural settlers have gradually been converging during the following decades, their plural life projects and diverse expectations could be understood as the most critical aspects of that development model; for example, back to the countryside, the search for a quality of life destroyed by the industrial city, the construction of social distinction far away from urban massification, looking for a reliable setting and community that is a way out of the "rat race" of urban life, etc.

In contrast, the cases analysed in the Spanish rural territories in a time of crisis show particularly relevant characteristics for understanding migrations to the rural in a postglobal society and the impact of the long-lasting recession on these areas. It does not seem to be similar in different countries and cultural contexts. We have provided a general overview to the diversity of situations that can be found in those who migrated to the Spanish rural areas. The findings and conclusions that came up from the analysis of the experiences of migrations to rural as described by the profiles interviewed point to three main issues. First, the moves to the countryside are processes that should be understood within the stage and needs of the family life in new rural residents, such as the labour and residential strategies. Second, the personal narratives show that the characteristics and functionalities of the territories play a key role in the decision to

migrate. Third, the socioeconomic context may be an important pre-condition of migration to the rural.

Each rural typology (remote and mountain areas, peri-urban regions, hyperproductive farming areas) welcome or relegate different groups of new rural residents. Its conditions and characteristics (housing and labour markets, accessibilities, amenities) enable or prevent the settlement of specific sociological profiles. If the recession had an impact on the arrival of new residents to rural areas, then it has also had an important effect in the reshaping of the local and regional economic dynamics. The new reconfiguration has changed the attractiveness of the place in order to appeal to new residents and, at the same time, to expel new and local residents.

In Spanish rural areas the home village and the family have traditionally been the place to return to when times are hard times and in recessions. Family networks and resources in the village (such as homes, real estate, farms, local business) and temporary work in local labour markets can support resilience. Failure to enter urban professional careers or to face up to long lasting unemployment situations in the city might mean a return to the rural. In this way, return migration linked to the crisis denotes the complementary role of rural labour in the urban labour markets, and the difficulties of staying and progressing in the cities in times of recession.

The Spanish cases analysed also reflect the failed aspects of migratory projects towards rural areas. Sometimes it is the best option but it is not easy for many. The dreams that do not materialize, the conditions that some groups face in the village turn into a small local hell, whereas other groups of new rural residents may enjoy the paradise. Besides, those forced to return from the city because of similar reasons could also be included. In this sense, the impact of the recession has lavished failures and mismatches in vital projects and migrations to the rural in both environments. For example, this impact was also evident in the case of those bigger villages with a stronger productive fabric based on an agroindustry orientated to global markets.

This return of nationals to rural areas has sometimes given rise to new conflicts between former labour migrants and new national residents looking for a job. Specifically, after the recession commenced, some of the unemployed nationals looked for their old jobs within the agro-industry, jobs which had been relegated to foreign labour migrants, mostly Eastern Europeans, Latin Americans and Moroccans.

The hardship experienced in urban areas caused by the impact of the recession upon labour markets, along with the imposed politics of austerity, led to some people considering moving to the countryside; this was due to their circumstances of unemployment, poor salaries, evictions, and so forth. Within this context, rural areas presented three possible advantages. Firstly, life in rural territories is expected to be cheaper than in urban territories; for example, the lower price of housing, fewer possibilities to expend money in recreational activities and so forth. Secondly, many urban residents were descendants of those involved in the rural exodus experienced in Spain during the last century. As such, many of them have a close relationship with the place where their grandparents and relatives might still live. And thirdly, the representation of the village according to bucolic and communitarian imagery also led us to be more confident regarding assertions of mutual aid between neighbours.

## **6- Conclusions: the future for migration to the rural**

The increase and diversification of migration to rural areas has led to a revision of the studies that finally highlight its relevance to understanding the postglobal society. The focus has evolved from the approaches centred on counterurbanisation to more complex, holistic and

comprehensive visions of migrations to the rural. Consequently, the intrinsic dynamism of these projects requires analysis from approaches that combine synchronic and diachronic perspectives, in order to understand the relevance of the move to the countryside.

The chapter has evinced three important facts that should be highlighted. Firstly, the great impact of the financial and economic crisis on Spain has contributed to reshaping the relationship between the rural territories and the new rural residents. In fact, the analysis of the personal narratives expressed in the interviews has enabled us to see how the migrants' experience of the crisis played a key role in the aforementioned relationship. Specifically, the narratives of new rural residents show different dimensions in which the impact of the crisis may be observed. It has facilitated the arrival of an ex-urban population looking for a place to weather the effects of the crisis in the city. It has meant the reconfiguration of some economic activities and the deterioration of job opportunities for rural people. Finally, it has, congruently, eroded migrants' vital projects for the present and the future.

Secondly, although the literature has, to a great extent, explained diverse patterns of migration to rural areas driven by a positive assessment of 'the rural' (i.e. pursuit of a better quality of life, a safer place for raising children and so on), the recession has added a pattern based more on a negative drive. That is, the rural area as the best, or the only, chance to face the crisis. Within this context, it is important to note the dual role played by the traditional family in Mediterranean societies; in addition to representing the main buffer in confronting the crisis, it is also responsible for the close ties that those urban populations have kept with the family village, since their parents or grandparents were the protagonists of the previous rural exodus. Thus, the family and family place constitute essential assets and social capital that need to be considered, in order to understand the crisis-related urban to rural migrations, as has been the case in other studies on Mediterranean countries (Gartzaio 2003, see also Figueiredo et al. in this book). Nevertheless, more research into new patterns of migration to the rural in the milieu of a crisis is needed to better comprehend the impact of the recession over a long-term period, even in those cases in which the role of the family and family place become weaker.

Thirdly, and closely related to the previous idea, it is important to emphasize the uncertainty of the rural transformation caused by crisis-related migration to the rural. We cannot foresee yet if this migration will finally take root in the rural place or whether these migrants will move back to the city and resume previous life projects once the recession is over. In so doing, this type of migration probably represents just a temporal withdrawal of migrants' life project. This may also be the question regarding those who moved to the rural driven by positive assessments, and suddenly found themselves trapped by the consequences of the crisis. Although many respondents explained that they would go back to the city, it is too early to anticipate what decision they will finally take if the circumstances change; i.e., whether they will leave or feel entangled in the rural place in a process of post-migration rationalisation (Halfacree & Rivera, 2011).

To conclude, although the chapter has evinced some of the processes related to the migration to rural areas in a context of profound and long-lasting recession, it is still soon to assess whether they imply more permanent changes or they represent just a temporal stand-by situation within the previous rural development and migration patterns.

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**Annex. Selected interviewees**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>Sex &amp; age of the respondent</b>	<b>Relationship with the village</b>	<b>Family situation</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
<b>Gran Vega region (Seville): peri-urban rurality</b>				
<b>GV01</b>	Female, 25	New resident, born in Romania	Married with children	Unemployed
<b>GV04</b>	Female, 33	New resident in a village	Married with children	Teacher
<b>GV05</b>	Male, 78	Returned	Married with dependent person	Retired
<b>GV07</b>	Female, 32	Returned	Married without children	Teacher
<b>GV10</b>	Female, 44	Exurban new resident in private development	Married with children	Housewife
<b>GV11</b>	Male, 26	Born in Romania	Married with children	Occasional employee
<b>GV13</b>	Female, 35	Exurban new resident in private development	Married with children	Housewife
<b>Pyrenean Valleys (Navarre): mountainous, remote rurality</b>				
<b>PN03</b>	Male, 32	New resident	Single, without children	Owner of rural hostel
<b>PN06</b>	Female, 38	Returned	Married with children	Teacher
<b>PN08</b>	Female, 39	Returned	Married with children	Housewife
<b>PN10</b>	Female, 56	Returned	Married with children	Nurse
<b>PN12</b>	Female, 47	Returned	Married with children	Nurse
<b>PN20</b>	Female, 31	New resident, born in Bolivia	Unmarried	Employed in catering
<b>PN21</b>	Female, 49	Returned	Married with children	Owner of rural hostel
<b>PN22</b>	Female, 43	Returned	Unmarried	Care services entrepreneur
<b>Las Batuecas-Sierra de Francia (Salamanca): mountainous, remote rurality</b>				
<b>SAE09</b>	Male, 44	Exurban	Single without children	Hotel industry
<b>SAE14 (a)</b>	Female, 43	Exurban (Husband is returned)	Married without children	Restoration, craftwork

<b>Metropolitan Area of Pamplona (Navarre): peri-urban rurality</b>				
<b>NAE01</b>	Male, 47	Exurban	Married with 1 child	University professor
<b>NE06</b>	Male, 38	Exurban	Married with children	Qualified industrial position
<b>Strawberry region (Huelva): hyperproductive rurality (agro-industry)</b>				
<b>HUE08</b>	Male, 29	Labour migrant	Married with 1 child	Temporary worker in agro-industry
<b>HUE12</b>	Male, 44	Exurban	Married with children	Public administration
<b>HUE13</b>	Female, 39	Exurban	Married with 1 child	Pensioner (sick pension) Ex-seasonal farm labourer
<b>HUE20</b>	Male, in his fifties	Exurban	Living with his partner.	Occasional businesses
<b>HUE21</b>	Male, in his forties	Exurban	Single without children	Financial advisor