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ABSTRACT

Drawn to the decades-long economic expansion of the Spanish society, the country's need for blue-collar labor, and Europe's open borders, women of Romania are only the latest migratory group to come to the Iberian country in search of opportunity and prosperity. Yet, as they have grown in numbers, the usually tolerant Spanish ambient has shifted to a more sinister attitude toward these instrumental players of the global economy. For its part, this paper will examine the severe and far-reaching consequences of this migratory flow on its protagonists, the Romanian women. The discussion will include an analysis of the Spanish legal framework that directs the migration; the rampant economic challenges that come with being characterized as cheap and expendable labor in an upwardly-mobile European society; and lastly, the social impact of transnational living for a wife, mother, and daughter migrant. In its entirety, the paper will seek to prove the necessity of incorporating this foreign labor force into the Spanish society and the inadequacies with which Spain has met the task.

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Female Romanian Migratory Labor in Spain The Characteristics of 'Otherness'

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Introduction¹

As Spain has been able to successfully maintain its decades-long economic growth and prosperity, it has converted itself into a country of increasing desirability for developing-world migrants looking for opportunity on the Western European shores. As such, a country once known for its homogeneity and export of black-collar labor to its European neighbors, Spain has joined the ranks of the world's industrialized nations in their need for and struggle with the large-scale influx of foreign labor. Much like the other developed countries, Spain's labor needs are characterized by a low-skilled, mobile, and cheap labor force that occupies sectors of little desirability to the natives — agriculture, domestic service, and construction sectors, in particular.

While the ethnic and cultural make-up of Spain's immigrant community is largely influenced by the country's past colonial holdings in Latin America and its proximity to the African continent, social and political circumstances around the world have changed in such a way that Spain is an attractive destination country for migrants from some fifty countries across the globe.² A booming service sector and a welcoming attitude for a large and unskilled labor pool have been the trademark characteristics of Spain and Southern Europe, in general, as the region has attempted to sustain its meteoric economic growth of the last couple of decades.³ Migration patterns on the European continent itself, however, have been the most dramatic example of Spain's acquisition of an increasingly-diverse foreign labor force. The potent combination of the democratization process in the post-Soviet Union bloc of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the expansion of the European Union into those areas, has played an impressive role

¹ I would like to thank my advisor and senior Capstone professor, Dr. Janie Leatherman for seeing this project through its countless content changes and revisions. The staff at the DiMenna-Nyselius Library has been an indispensable ally to me in the entire writing process.

² *The Economist*, "Unwelcome to Iberia," February 8, 2001, <http://www.economist.com/node/498699> (accessed January 7, 2009).

³ Floya Anthias and Gabriella Lazaridis, "Introduction: Women on the Move in Southern Europe," in *Gender and migration in southern Europe: women on the move*, eds. Floya Anthias and Gabriella Lazaridis (New York: Berg, 2000), 3.

in the changing facet of Spain's migrant communities.⁴ And yet, as this paper will prove, the country has moved toward a surreptitious migration policy, which can be best described as, "managing and controlling immigration" in such a way that allows it to "reap the economic benefits of immigration while muting public unease" about its unprincipled nature.⁵

The Romanian community, in particular, has been one of the most dynamic players in the growth of the migrant labor force in Spain. The community's growing prominence in recent years has poised it to become the largest and most influential migrant group in Spain. Romania's geographic proximity to Spain, the open borders of the Schengen bloc and the country's linguistic and cultural semblance to Spain have made Spain a top destination for Romanians wishing to emigrate. The Spanish government, without appropriate or adequate legal and economic initiatives, has, unfortunately, made a poor effort at synchronizing the arrival of this migrant group with the necessity for its labor. Most evidently, the Spanish attempts to control migratory inflows have segmented migrant populations and increased the vulnerability of female Romanian workers, specifically. Inhabiting and participating in the most remote parts of the Spanish society and economy, these women are virtually invisible to the legal means of protection and empowerment. The Spanish need for a continuous supply of cheap and easily manipulated labor entrenches the Romanian women in a cyclical pattern of degradation and 'otherness' that gives no opportunity for advancement into the mainstream. The goal of this paper, therefore, will be to gather literature from various studies relating to gender issues and migration, and to come to a greater understanding of the perilous nature of migration and why it is imperative that the global community, but more specifically, the Spanish state, implement means of redress to preserve the social, economic, and political liberties of this very large and vulnerable population of human beings.

The Changing Face of Spain

Prior to its acceptance into the European Economic Community in 1985, Spain was, along with its Iberian neighbor to the east, Portugal, widely acknowledged to be lagging behind the rest of Western Europe in democratization and economic expansion. This was largely owing to the fact that in the first half of the 1980s, Spain was still recovering from a highly inhibiting

⁴ Ben Hall, "Immigration in the European Union: problem or solution?" *OECD Observer*, <http://www.oecdobserver.org/news/fullstory.php/aid/337/> (accessed January 7, 2009).

⁵ Norris Smith, *The European Union*, The reference shelf, v. 77, no. 1. (Bronx, NY: H.W. Wilson, 2005), 98.

forty-year dictatorship under General Francisco Franco. While its 1978 constitution established the democratic Spanish state as it currently exists, it was not until 1985 that Spain came onto the international stage as a champion of the liberal and democratic state by participating in the expansion of the European Community and its subsequent consolidation of power. The 1985 accession into the EC legitimized the democratization process of the Spanish government and thus directed the economic potential of the country toward a path of unprecedented growth. A series of development assistance programs that poured into Spain after its entrance into the EC addressed all facets of its economy: agricultural, industrial, and above all, its service sector. In the twenty-three years since, Spain has dramatically improved its infrastructure: the country is now well-connected by roads and highways and a high-speed train system that continues its expansion every few years. The Spanish economy has recorded average GDP growth of 3.5 percent from 1995-2005 and during that time the unemployment rate was the lowest that it has been in the last twenty seven years.⁶

Apart from the economic benefits that came with the accession into the European Community (after 1992, the European Union), Spain has also taken part in the border liberalization process. By signing the Schengen agreement in 1992 alongside fifteen other EU nations, Spain acquiesced to gradual abolition of border restrictions—making way for labor and goods to move freely within the Schengen bloc.⁷ Yet, taking part in that agreement has also come with a greater responsibility for Spain. Geographic reasons have attributed to Spain the role of EU's southern gatekeeper.⁸ The Spanish government, therefore, has been under increasing pressure from the European community to ensure that the flow of illegal immigration stemming from North and Sub-Saharan Africa is stopped, or at least, diminished.

In the post-Franco years, Spain has also transitioned from a country of emigration, characterized by the mass diasporas of the 1960s and 1970s toward other Western European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland in search of low-paying, black-collar jobs, to a country of labor shortage, and consequently, of immigration. In fact, the country has, in recent years, suffered a population decline, owing to the fact that the average Spanish

⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development *International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI-2007 Edition* (Paris: OECD, 2007), 283; See also Victoria Burnett, "Migrants Help Tolerant Spain Boom." *Financial Times*, February 20, 2007, 5.

⁷ Pascal Fontaine, *Europe in 12 lessons* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006), 45.

⁸ *The Economist*, "Unwelcome to Iberia," 45-46.

woman has one child — a figure that is projected to decrease the current Spanish population of 40 million to that of 31 million by 2050.⁹ Furthermore, given its current rate of decrease, the population would need to be maintained by an annual entrance of 30,000 immigrants to sustain the working force.¹⁰ Judging, therefore, solely by the tremendous economic expansion that its entrance into the European Union has caused, as well as the social factors resulting in population decline, the call for immigration has become more urgent in recent years.

Romanians have been one of the most enthusiastic new responders to the call for more labor in Spain. Since 2001, they have surpassed the Moroccans, who have been migrating to the Iberian country in large numbers since the late 1980s. For example, in the annual inflows of labor: in 2005, 94,000 Romanians entered Spain compared to 69,300 Moroccans.¹¹ This is in stark contrast to the records for 1998, when 500 Romanians and 10,600 Moroccans came.¹² Clearly, the dynamics within the immigrant populations of Spain have changed greatly — bringing a new set of social, political and economic repercussions with them. Of the 192,100 Romanians that were present in Spain in 2005, 84,400 were women — a 40 percent increase from the year before, when 34,300 Romanian women were accounted for.¹³ This has resulted in a growing prominence of the Romanian women in the informal economies traditionally dominated by undocumented immigrants, namely domestic service and agriculture. Of course, the statistics given above represent only the migrant populations that are officially registered with the Spanish government, and as such, have entered the country through legal means. Information gathered through official channels is the only consistently reliable statistical source for gauging the scale of migratory patterns, despite the fact that it might exclude significant migratory groups from representation — groups whose lack of a paper trail has made them invisible to governmental oversight. In her study of informal Romanian labor in Spain, Ana Bleahu, a coordinator of a study on Romanian rural migration to Spain, charted the progression of transnational migration from Romania to Spain [see Figure 1, below].

Bleahu clearly indicates in this graphic that while Spain is one of the main destination countries for Romanian workers, it is the last in a series of countries

⁹ David Corkill, "Economic Migrants and the Labour Market in Spain and Portugal," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 5 (2008): 829.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 830.

¹¹ OECD, *International migration outlook*, 313.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 353.

to which the would-be migrants go to in their quest for work. Furthermore, she indicates several means by which Romanians enter Spain — the most predominant of which are illegal crossings and brief stays in countries such as France or Germany, for which they may have secured a temporary-stay visa on the black market.

Figure 1. Emigration from Romania to Spain



Source: Ana Bleahu, *Romanian migration to Spain: Motivation, networks and strategies*, p. 27.

Apart from those social and economic drivers that make Spain an attractive immigration destination for Romanian women — delineated as ‘pull factors’ by scholars specializing in international migration — there also exists a set of ‘push factors’ from within Romania which further increases the likelihood of emigration. Bleahu states that:

Romania is a “peasant country” — more than 47% [of the] people live in countryside. The rural Romania is characterized by a high rate of un- and under-employment, survival agriculture, low level of education and health services, informal activities, return

migration from urban to rural, less livelihood diversification and poverty.¹⁴

In the wake of the Communist downfall of the early 1990's, therefore, there has emerged a majority segment of the Romanian population that is disillusioned with the opportunities within the country and as such, has found channels through which to look for opportunity elsewhere. While Romanian men have dominated the emigration trends over the years, the statistics indicate that women are increasingly making the choice to move to Spain — whether on their own or for the purposes of reunification with family members.

As their mutual need for each other is evident, it is not immediately apparent that there would exist a tense and strained relationship between the Spanish society and the Romanian migrants that come to fill its labor gaps. And yet, as seen in other instances around the world — most particularly, the relationship between Mexican labor and the receiving United States society — integration of two distinct peoples, especially when one is in a position of considerably greater power, always proves difficult. Even in the case of the Spanish culture, which is argued to be one of the most open-minded and liberal in Europe, discriminatory practices and spontaneous outbreaks of violence have stagnated the discussion on immigration and its future. Miguel Fonda Stefanescu, the head of the Federation of Romanian Associations in Spain, assented to the stereotype of the Spanish, saying that, “If there was ever a permissive, pragmatic citizen, it is the Spaniard’.”¹⁵ Furthermore, Dan Bilefsky argues in his *International Herald Tribune* article that Spain’s initial “liberal attitude reflects openness after the insularity of the Franco years, when the country was a nation of emigration,” and as such, one who has had to deal with the immigrant stigma very personally.¹⁶ And yet the reality of the present-day situation proves that the receiving Spanish society is not the exception to the rule when it comes to the question of immigration; that hostility toward large groups of job-seeking foreigners is a fact of life in the globalized twenty-first century. In the Spanish case, the liberal attitude of the previous decades has been overrun by an incrementing fear of the ‘others’ who have come flocking to the country in the search of a better life.

¹⁴ Ana Bleahu, “Romanian migration to Spain: Motivation, networks and strategies” (Bucharest: Romanian Academy, Institute for Quality of Life, 2003), 21; http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003393/01/romanian_migration_to_spain.pdf (accessed January 14, 2009).

¹⁵ Burnett, 5.

¹⁶ Dan Bilefsky, “Spain Cooling on immigrants,” *The International Herald Tribune*, February 16, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/16/world/europe/16iht-spain.4622136.html> (accessed December 28, 2008).

Feminization and Migrant Labor in Spain

As it is a fairly recent and dynamic field of study, much current literature discusses the trends and consequences of transnational migration. In nearly all instances, it has been examined from an economic perspective due to the extensive ramifications of a global and mobile labor force in an interconnected world economy. In fact, the study of the rise of the Spanish informal sector has received quite a bit of scholarly analysis. This is primarily due to its relatively rapid economic ascension to the forefront of economic leadership as a result of EU expansion. Spain has been used as a case in point for the effect that the expansion has, and will have in the future, on global markets and the ability of developing world populations to penetrate 'fortress Europe' in the search of economic opportunity. Romania, too, is a fitting example in this context. Its recent incorporation in the EU, but more importantly, its ability to impact the migration dynamics of Spain and other destination countries in such a short span of time is indicative of the (hierarchical) order in which developing nations are able to penetrate the 'fortress Europe' with their migrant labor. How Spain responds to the needs of Romanian labor will be telling of the direction its immigration policy will take as a whole.

To understand the motivations of migration of female Romanian labor into Spain and the mode in which they have been received there, it is imperative to understand the various 'push' and 'pull' factors generally evident in source and destination societies. Boswell and Crisp, for instance, argue for the complex mix of social, economic, and political circumstances that drive migration and consequently, blur the line between the willingness and coercion with which people participate.¹⁷ They highlight the importance of remittances, indicating that their intended consequences are not necessarily all positive and might indirectly stunt the development of receiving countries.¹⁸ Also, they echo the view of several scholars, including Nicola Piper, in that remittance levels are highly dependent upon economic and legal standing of the senders, as well as the strength of their social ties to the origin country and potential receptors.¹⁹ The overlapping theme of migration networks and their importance in the expansion and prosperity of migrant groups, discussed by both Boswell and Crisp and

¹⁷ Christina Boswell and Jeff Crisp, *Poverty, international migration and asylum*, Policy Brief No. 8 (Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2004), 3-4; http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/policy-briefs/en_GB/pb8/_files/78807311699476579/default/pb8.pdf (accessed January 4, 2009).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹ Nicola Piper, "Gender and migration: A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration," Global Commission on International Migration, September 2005, 9-13; <https://gender.gcim.org/mm/File/TP10.pdf> (accessed January 8, 2009).

Piper, is further expounded upon by Ana Bleahu, who has empirical evidence of their importance among migrant communities.²⁰ Bleahu, Boswell and Crisp and Piper underline the importance of migrant networks in the provision of emotional and economic support for the newly arrived migrants. Their help in the transition and faster adjustment to the receiving society, argue the scholars, is instrumental to the well-being of the individuals and the collective migrant group.

The literature also indicates that Spain has received its greatest influx of migrants because its recent economic success has exposed a gap between the need for low-skilled labor and the Spanish unwillingness to participate in it.²¹ These two authors discuss the large demand for cheap and expendable labor, the competition that arises from the various migrant groups operating in same industries, and the blind eye which the Spanish government has turned to the problems arising from unscrupulous business practices in the employment of migrant labor. The powerhouse industry that is the Spanish strawberry industry, for example, serves as a case in point for such widespread abuses of the law and a labor force which has no legal claim to complaint.²² Thus, as it is apparent, any future reform action must adequately address the gaps in law through which employers can easily take advantage of job-hungry migrants and force them into inhumane working conditions.

Another body of literature that has made great headway in exposing the negative consequences of large-scale migration to Spain has taken as its point in case the Spanish immigration law. As Julie Chadbourne for Human Rights Watch has amply proven, the immigration laws which Spain enforces are not only insufficient to deal with the mass of immigrants that have come into its territory, but they are unevenly implemented.²³ This not only advertises the divisiveness of the nation on the question of immigration, but also prolongs unnecessary duress for migrants who attempt illegal entry into the country. Chadbourne's most startling discovery on this issue is the difference in the implementation of the most recent and substantive Spanish immigration law, the Organic Law on the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain, or LOE as it is commonly known

²⁰ See Bleahu; Boswell and Crisp; and Piper.

²¹ See Corkill; See also Tod Hartman, "States, Markets, and Other Unexceptional Communities: Informal Romanian Labour in a Spanish Agricultural Sone," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 3 (2008): 496-514.

²² Nicholas Bell, "Migrant laborforce in the strawberry industries," This Tuesday, October 5, 2004, <http://thistuesday.org/node/83> (accessed January 18, 2009).

²³ Julie Chadbourne, *Discretion without bounds: the arbitrary application of Spanish immigration law*, Human Rights Watch, July 5, 2002, D1406, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3d2eeb695.html> (accessed January 9, 2009).

in Spain. Chadbourne argues that implementation of the law is drastically different according to port of entry, and that there is no central interpretation passed down from the government in Madrid, but that rather, each immigration official of a particular autonomous community and province is at the discretion to personally interpret it.²⁴ Chadbourne is joined in this exposé of Spanish immigration law by Kitty Calavita, who not only argues the inconsistencies and inadequacies of LOE, but also the various processes of legalization that Spain has undertaken since 1985. Calavita argues that the ‘*regularizaciones*’ have left migrants in a perpetual legal limbo, where the “labor contract, the work permit, and the residence permit are in effect mutually dependent on each other” ensuring that the paperless migrants remain hopelessly trapped.²⁵

There exists a more broad-encompassing line of literature surrounding the subject of migrant groups in Spain and the extensive social consequences that their presence has had on their situation, in terms of social adaptation, use of resources available in Spain, and the drawbacks of social stigmas that come with being characterized as cheap and expendable labor. The domestic service sector, for instance, has received an extensive amount of analysis, given its unique nature that blurs the line between paid work and gender role. It has been argued that the domestic workers in Spain make the lives of Spanish women easier by assuming the position of caretaker that they no longer can/ are willing to fulfill.²⁶ However, this only further emphasizes their otherness and incapacitates their ability to integrate into the mainstream society. Furthermore, it highlights the power role between woman employer and her employee — indicating that there exists a power inequality between women of different countries, just as there is one between men and women.²⁷ All, evidence, therefore, proves that the legal ‘otherness’ of female migrants is perpetuated in all other aspects of their life abroad: from use of living accommodations available to them, to their willingness to use public resources such as healthcare.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kitty Calavita, “Immigration, Law, and Marginalization in a Global Economy: Notes From Spain,” *Law & Society Review* 32, no. 3 (1998): 552.

²⁶ See Sonia Parella, “Explanatory Factors of Discourses and Strategies in Order to Conciliate Work and Family of Non-Communitary Migrant Women in Spain,” *Revista de sociología*, No. 85 (2007): 157-174; Elin Peterson, “The Invisible Carers: Framing Domestic Work(ers) in Gender Equality Policies in Spain,” *The European Journal of Women’s Studies* 14, no. 3 (2007): 265-280; and Janet Momsen Henshall, *Gender, migration and domestic service* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

²⁷ See Henshall.

²⁸ See Liliana Suarez-Navaz, “Immigration and the politics of space allocation in rural Spain: The case of Andalusia,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 34, no. 2 (2007): 207-239; and A.M. Torres-Cantero, “Health Care Provision for Illegal Migrants: May Health Policy Make a Difference?” *European Journal of Public Health* 17, no. 5 (2007): 483-485.

Much has been said in regards to the Spanish immigration dilemma through news media, in particular. Spanish and internationally-oriented newspaper articles have taken the temperature of the Spanish public sentiment on the question of immigration since the phenomenon occurred on a large scale. The evidence of international interest in this very national issue is amply seen in the literature gathered within this paper: the celebrated *Economist*, *The International Herald Tribune*, and even *The Human Rights Watch*, have all published literature on the Spanish struggle with the migration question. The international attention stems, largely, from the Spanish geographic role and the effect that uncontrolled migration on its own territory might have on the entire European continent. Despite the fact that the national coverage overwhelmingly attributes the Spanish economic boom to the contribution of migrants, articles depicting the turning tide of migration in Spain — the public ‘liberal’ sentiment toward migration taking on a more sinister attitude-- have received more attention.²⁹ The presence of a large-number of foreigners has brought a degree of fear of the unknown and, as a result, violent retaliation such as the one that occurred in El Ejido — a small rural town in southern Spain — have been immortalized as evidence that migrants are no longer welcome in this Iberian country.³⁰

And yet, for the sheer volume of literature that exists on the subjects of international migration and the ‘feminization’³¹ of labor that has overcome many informal economy sectors across Europe, very little has been said about any particular group of women. In fact, most scholarly material tends to group the motivations, struggles, and circumstances which enable women across the globe to transplant themselves into a foreign environment for the sake of constructing a better life for themselves and their families. However, as it is apparently the case of Romanian women, not all social, ethnic, or racial groups of women choose migration for the same reasons. For example, the socio-economic and cultural reasons of Romanian women are distinct from Somali women migrants. While the two groups of women share some fundamental motivations, such as their willingness to make a more proactive role for themselves in the family’s income-generating capability, the Romanian and Somali women are distinguished by

²⁹ Burnett, 5.

³⁰ See Bilefsky; See also *The Economist*, “Spain -The message of El Ejido, February 17, 2000, <http://www.economist.com/node/329675> (accessed January 7, 2009); and Razvan Amariei, “Romania: No Castles in Spain,” *Columbia International Affairs Online* http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei-2/tol-1/tol_2005/mar15-mar21/mar15-mar21g.html (accessed September 29, 2008).

³¹ Labor ‘feminization’ is often a term given to migratory trend in which a destination country will seek to control its labor inflows by selecting migrants—in this case, women—to fulfill its needs in sectors of the economy traditionally employing women, such as the domestic service industry (Peterson, 273).

social and cultural factors native to their country of origin, and further diversified by the countries they choose to migrate to.

In that context, therefore, it is vital to segment Romanian female migration and distinguish the reasons for which this group of women fits into the global scheme of gendered migration, but is, nonetheless, driven and subjected to different struggles upon migration. Romanian women, for example, are a distinct case of mass migration because of their cultural, religious, and most obvious, racial likeness to the majority populations of the countries in which they settle. They have become labeled as 'other' in the informal labor markets of Spain and this has translated into greater vulnerability in a society where immigration laws are inadequate to address the concerns of a labor force deemed 'invisible'. Furthermore, as they have become characterized as a large supply of cheap labor that supplements the needs of the Spanish economy, they have also succumbed to the mercurial nature of both the Spanish legal structure, which may judge them unnecessary at any point in time, and unscrupulous business practices, which without the oversight of a strong national immigration policy, has been allowed to flourish without inhibitions.

The Romanian Migrant Women: Demographics and Migration Patterns

The Romanian migrant women embody many of the characteristics common to women who choose to seek a better life for themselves and their families in countries other than their native one. They face the similar challenges of obtaining entrance papers into Spain, much like many other migrant groups. Also, they tend to occupy the "lowest ranks of the employment hierarchy," whether they have legal residency papers or not, as "maids, nurses, entertainers [prostitutes], and cleaners."³² Furthermore, the Spanish law inadequately protects gendered migrant groups equally, ensuring that they all participate in the Spanish society and economy with a degree of marginalization and otherness. Yet, research indicates that the similarities between the female Romanian and other gendered migrant groups vary significantly, depending on their socio-economic standing in the country of origin. It appears that, as Anthias and Lazaridis have argued that, "The migrant 'other' is gendered as well as racialized and classed."³³ In that context, the experience of Romanian women in Spain will

³² Anthias and Lazaridis, 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, 24.

be somewhat different than a Pilipino or Moroccan women of comparable socio-economic standing.

Romanian women, even during the time of Communist rule, held a more equitable social position to men in society than women from other parts of the developing world. They were more accustomed to a higher labor force participation and, therefore, a more substantial role in the family's economic well-being.³⁴ In fact, the loss of job opportunities that came with the fall of the Soviet bloc became one of the motivating forces for migration for Romanian, and other Eastern European women.³⁵ The present-day Romanian society, which is characterized by a high rate of unemployment, informal activity, and political corruption, has become a breeding ground for a new generation of migrants seeking entry into parts of Western Europe, and in this case, Spain.³⁶ In fact, the degradation of the Romanian economic and political structure has been so severe that the migrant groups are no longer simply characterized by the low-skilled, poorly educated Romanians seeking a better life. Dan Bilefsky quoted a 32 year-old Cristina Stamate, who traded her job as a public relations executive in Bucharest for the strawberry fields of Huelva-- Spain's southern province and leader in strawberry harvest-- saying that, she "feel[s] lucky because [she has] lived the American dream in Spain" and that her day's wages of 34 Euros were twice more than what she normally earned at home in Romania.³⁷ This economic desperation is the driving force behind the continued migration of Romanian women into Spain.

Apart from the obvious economic reasons for which they individually migrate to Spain and other countries of Western Europe, Romanian women also participate heavily in the family reunification process, where they may follow a partner or a close family member to the destination country and, consequently, settle there. Ana Bleahu discusses this trend in-depth, providing empirical evidence which shows a "pioneer" migrant settling in Spain in 1994 and by 2002, having facilitated legal or illegal means of entry for 38 other individuals—close family, kin, and friends alike.³⁸ In more typical situations, Romanian women follow their partners abroad, in the hopes of reestablishing strained family connections, bringing alongside them their children, or simply leaving the latter in the care of

³⁴ Nicola Piper, 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Bleahu, 21.

³⁷ Bilefsky.

³⁸ Bleahu, 28.

grandparents, so that the reunited couple may double their income and in turn, speed up the process of permanent family unification (See Hartman, 2007).

Still another avenue for economic betterment has emerged in Romania in recent years: contracted labor. The growing importance of the Spanish agricultural sector and the lack of desirability to participate in it among natives has been the leading catalyst for this new migration method. Romania is one of the targeted countries for such an import of temporary labor. The Spanish strawberry industry in the Huelva region is the second largest in the world, after that of the United States.³⁹ Some 55,000 workers are required to collect the annual harvest, and the majority of them come from Eastern Europe and North Africa.⁴⁰ Representatives of the growers set up recruitment offices in a local consulate or embassy. The selection process is grueling and economically challenging for the interviewees, which are by a wide margin, women. In fact, Spanish growers heavily prefer women as they are more careful in dealing with the fruit and above that, Eastern European women, as they are “far more docile and do not protest when obliged to work above the prescribed number of hours.”⁴¹ Furthermore, the representatives specifically choose women who have considerable economic difficulties and familial obligations in their native country, ensuring that they will return home after the work contract expires.⁴² Yet, as can be easily deduced, problems quickly arise from this arrangement, the least of which is not the fact that not all women may go back to their native country. In fact, some of them overstay their contract and thus find themselves pulled into the shadow world of the Spanish society, where illicit activities are key and abuses are rampant.

Consequences of Presence: The Question of Legality

One of the most far-reaching consequences of the conundrum that Spain currently faces as far as its immigrant population is the inadequate oversight and protection that the Spanish legal system provides this very vulnerable population of people. Romanian women are at a particular risk because of their gender, migrant status, and uncertain labor conditions. They

³⁹ Bell.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. See also Daniela Gerson, “Moroccan Immigrants, Spanish Strawberries and Europe’s Future,” *Spiegel Online International*, May 11, 2007 <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,482468,00.html> (accessed January 7, 2009).

are, as Piper has termed it, “triply disadvantaged”⁴³ and in the Spanish case, no particular area of law is sufficient to protect them under the legal framework.⁴⁴ This stems from Spain’s relatively recent large-scale contact with foreign labor on its own soil. The legislation has simply lagged behind the rapidly evolving migratory patterns. The longest standing law on the rights of foreigners in Spain, the LOE, stipulates seven provisions⁴⁵, which were intended to broadly address the mobility of people within its territory. Yet, the fact remains that the LOE provisions left “not just the details but vast terrains of uncharted policy to be worked out through administrative regularization.”⁴⁶ And while the overarching ambition of the Spanish lawmakers might have been the establishment of Spain as an inclusive and liberal state for all peoples, it has been argued that there is a “marked contrast between the integrationist rhetoric accompanying [immigration] laws... and their actual content, which systematically marginalizes immigrants and circumscribes their rights.”⁴⁷

Another (supposedly) unintended consequence of the Spanish government’s enactment of the LOE in 1985 was that in defining ‘legal’ immigrants, they also created an ‘illegal immigrant’ group consisting of those people who could not legalize their status according to stipulated residency requirements and must, instead, secure a legitimate work contract in order to receive residency papers.⁴⁸ This further disenfranchised the latter group, making them more susceptible to abuses and violations of the work contract, and subsequently, created a “reserve labour force” that would be willing to take up any positions made available to it.⁴⁹ The law mandated the existence of labor contracts in all employer-employee relations as a precondition to the issuance of legal residency papers in order to discourage the continuation of illegal migration and to ensure that all

⁴³ On being “triply disadvantaged,” Piper argues that, “gender inequalities frequently combine with those of race/ethnicity, and of being a non-national, to make many migrant women ‘triply disadvantaged’ and most likely to be over-represented in marginal unregulated, and poorly paid jobs”(2).

⁴⁴ Piper, 2; See also Parella, 162.

⁴⁵ The seven provisions of the LOE include: Distinguishing between different types of foreigners and their corresponding rights (EC members were granted the rights of free circulation, residence, and work in Spain); requiring that most non-EC entrants must have visas; and that those who intended to stay in Spain for more than 90 days must have residence and work permits; stipulating that legal residence would have “certain rights of assembly, public education, and unionization”, so long as they did not conflict with ‘national interest, security, public order, health, morality, or rights and liberties of Spaniards’ (LOE arts. 7-10, LOE, in *Boletín Oficial del Estado* 1985: 20825); outlining differences between legal and illegal immigrants and excluded the latter from the rights given to the former; permitting foreigners to obtain legal status through a ‘regularization’ program within a brief window of time; and establishing grounds for deportation (Calavita, 543-4).

⁴⁶ Calavita, 544-5

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 530.

⁴⁸ Carlota Sole, Natalia Ribas, Valeria Bergalli, and Sonia Parella, “Irregular employment amongst migrants in Spanish cities,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24, no. 2 (1998): 337.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 337-38.

workers were legitimately employed and contributing to the society.⁵⁰ Yet, by making the two legal documents mutually dependent on each other, the Spanish government further tipped the power balance in favor of the employers, who could now afford even greater discretion in the hiring process. Migrants without a formal work contract are forced to accept whatever work conditions are given to them.

The women are most especially affected by this provision of the legislature because it heightens their vulnerability in sectors of the Spanish economy where they traditionally find employment, such as the domestic service sector and agriculture. The former is a particularly good example as it is outside the umbrella of protection from the Spanish state. That is to say that the Special Regime of Domestic Workers, which regulates employment in domestic service, “does not include unemployment benefits, written contracts are only required when the job exceeds 80 hours a month, professional illnesses and accidents are not recognized, working hours are ‘flexible’, etc.,” and under the Regime, workers are oftentimes not even aware of their own rights.⁵¹ Thus, the effort by the Spanish government to tighten its labor restrictions by making it more difficult for employers to hire illegal migrants actually had the opposite effect on the very vulnerable population that they sought (in a fairly convoluted way) to protect. The provision left the migrant women without any social benefits and it further increased job competition in the very labor sectors they find employment.⁵² Such a blatant legal disregard for the well-being of the migrant populations is a clear indicator of what must be done in future legislative initiatives if the Spanish (or any industrialized) state is to stem the legal problems that come with hosting a large and foreign labor force.

Since 1985, Spain has undergone several *regularización* periods, meaning periods of time when new law standards were applied to the immigrant population. These were, undoubtedly, an effort by the Spanish government to further redress and control the growth of its foreign population. While some such laws gave a better opportunity for those who moved about Spain with a degree of invisibility to better their situation and move them into the mainstream, the results were not all positive. By providing standards to be complied with in order to obtain residency papers, the Spanish government oftentimes set up virtually impossible criteria for the migrants to meet. Criteria such as a consistent 6-year period of residency in Spain and uninterrupted renewal of temporary permits for the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 338.

⁵¹ Peterson, 270.

⁵² Sole, Ribas, Bergalli, and Parella, 337.

duration of that time, such as was proposed by the Spanish government in 1996⁵³, were very difficult standards for a vast majority of migrants to comply with. This was not only because they excluded a substantial portion of that population which had no legal paperwork at any point, but also because an uninterrupted 6-year residency period is a tremendous feat for this very mobile group of people—a group which not only leaves a miniscule paperwork trail behind it, but is in constant search of better opportunity across the European continent. In that sense, the *regularizaciones* play an integral role in contributing to “the uncertainty and ambiguity that plagues immigrants who are attempting to secure legal residence, work permits, and social services,” and thereby, to their marginalization.⁵⁴

Further efforts by the Spanish government to control the inflows of migrants into its territory, such as the imposition of the quota system in 1993, some have argued, “oscillate[s] between cracking down on immigrants and a more liberal approach.”⁵⁵ The quota system was intended to harmonize the Spanish need for labor in certain sectors of its economy, such as the agriculture and the domestic service industry, with a wish to decrease the illegal population within its territory. Thus, the quotas facilitated the fulfilling of labor gaps only in the targeted sectors of the Spanish economy—sectors in which migrants historically predominate. Table 1 [below] shows a break-down of the immigrants regularized by the quota system according to the sector of economy they work in. Clearly, the labor sector that the Spanish government has preferred at the outset of the new quota legislature was domestic service. The Spanish authorities recognized that native workers no longer aspired to work in the industry, especially considering the rising standard of life and the focus of the Spanish economy on advanced services. In 2005, however, the same legislature and affinity for segmented labor prevailed: 32 percent of the applications were in relation to the domestic service sector employment, and of those, 83 percent of the applications were women.⁵⁶ The consequences of this intentional stratification and segmentation of the foreign labor forces cannot be underestimated. The Spanish government has not only allowed a greater number of female workers to enter Spain under legal pretexts that may expire at any point in time (given the trend of uncertainty witnessed by the *regularizaciones* periods), but has also provided no additional means of protecting them from abuses that are rampant among

⁵³ Real Decreto 155/1996 applied to those migrants who at one point had legal residency and work permits but for unknown reasons, failed to renew them (See Calavita, 545-546).

⁵⁴ Calavita, 546.

⁵⁵ Corkill, 837.

⁵⁶ Peterson, 269.

migrant laborers, legal or not, and most especially in the domestic service sector, which is characterized as a 'different' type of labor on the basis of its intrapersonal nature between employers and employees.

Table 1. Economic Activities of Regularized Immigrants, by Sector (1993)

Sector	%
Domestic Service	21.2
Construction	15.2
Agriculture	14.3
Hotels and restaurants	12.2
Retail	7.9
Other	29.2

Source: Kitty Calavita, "Immigration, Law, and Marginalization in a Global Economy: Notes From Spain," *Law & Society Review* 32, no. 3: 541.

Social Consequences of Migration: Gender Roles, Cultural Identity, and Stigmas

Migration is a life-altering experience for all women migrants. The Romanian women are no different in that regard. Upon migrating to Spain, they not only face the social and psychological change that is a natural consequence of uprooting oneself from a familiar environment and into circumstances that are unfamiliar, uncertain, and potentially dangerous, but they also deal with a situation and a society that is unique to Spain. To further complicate the situation, the Romanian women come with socio-economic and cultural values that are a product of their own society of origin. Thus, they share many of the characteristics familiar to other female migrant groups in Spain and other industrialized nations, but also bring a uniquely Romanian perspective to the issue of social consequences in gendered migration.

In the case of Romanian women, migration is a means of economic betterment, but also a method of escaping a society stagnated by the lack of social and political opportunity for advancement in their own country. This is especially the case in rural Romania, as Bleahu indicated, where poverty and political corruption are rampant, and as such, social oppression prevails.⁵⁷ Women are most commonly the victim in this, as they are easily manipulated for the lack of job opportunity. Thus, they become subject to patriarchal gender views and an existence that can eventually serve as strong motivators for migration. In fact, Piper indicates that violent relationships, strained family relations, social stigmas, low economic empowerment, lack of inheritance rights, etc. are some of the most prominent ‘push’ factors for migration.⁵⁸

Upon arrival to Spain, Romanian women are forced to deal with a sense of ‘otherness’ that is characteristic of all migrant women to a certain degree. The fact is that, despite the rhetoric that prevails in formal political discussions, they are considered a “supply of inferior, but necessary, labour.”⁵⁹ They have a limited ability to alter their position and are, in fact, mostly forced to accept the types of conditions that come with being labeled as ‘other’, although these conditions depend on the individual situation of each woman, such as if she is alone or with a partner and if she has children or not. Those women that have replanted their families in Spain, which is the vast majority, face the most complex set of issues, as they must weigh their roles as a mother, wife, and migrant worker. Evidence suggests that migrant wives/mothers face the compounded difficulties of marriage and motherhood (such as income generation and caring for a young child) along with the necessity to accept low wages and discriminatory working conditions. As Spanish sociological research indicates:

Women of immigrant origin share with the rest of the working mothers, the sum of responsibilities, and the difficulty of accomplishing them in the context of a social and economic system centered on production and on a nation’s well being, that of Spain, and with scarce and insufficient development of services for families.⁶⁰

The argument, therefore, is that migrant women (in this context, Romanian women) endure conditions far beyond those considered normal for a mother,

⁵⁷ Bleahu, 24.

⁵⁸ Piper, 19.

⁵⁹ Sole, Ribas, Bergalli, and Parella, 338.

⁶⁰ Parella, 162. Author translation.

wife, and worker. And still more, they survive with virtually nonexistent help from a Spanish social infrastructure that is designed inadequately to help native citizens, but even less so, migrant women. Thus, the basic social services such as free education and emergency health care for children are converted into the most essential of services for migrant women, who scarce have the means to pay for these services on their own meager incomes.⁶¹ On this subject of social exclusion, however, more troubling is the research that indicates that the use of the public healthcare system is substantially lower for those migrants legal or not who have 12 years or less of schooling; have lived in Spain for less than 5 years; and have a temporary or no work contract.⁶² This suggests that a substantial part of Spain's migrant population, which has come through illegal channels and on a temporary basis, abstains from using the healthcare system even in times of illness for fear of being found out and deported; for the fear of losing their jobs as a result of medical absence; and above all, for the fear of the cost of the service. This practice is not only dangerous to the health of the workers, but it also reinforces their status in society as the 'other'-- as members of society who will not integrate but instead always operate in its shadow.

Immigrant activity in Spain's shadow economy will remain a fundamental truth of its migrant labor because it is the very purpose for which they come into the country. Because they are offered scant other opportunity to demonstrate their skills, "Immigrant women obtain jobs mainly in the 'secondary segment' of the labour market. This is generally regardless of their level of education, which means that the work they do is often not in line with their employment possibilities."⁶³ They are forced into the domestic service and agriculture sectors for the lack of other opportunities, and while they are there, they are forced to accept working conditions that reiterate their role as 'somebody else'-- as a "solution to women's double workday" whose working background and the conditions in which she enters the sector are ignored.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Parella, 170.

⁶² Torres-Cantero, 1.

⁶³ Andreu Lope, "Labour market situation of female immigrants examined," EIROOnline, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2004/09/feature/es0409209f.htm> (accessed September 16, 2008).

⁶⁴ Peterson, 272

Economics of Abuse in the Life of a Romanian Migrant Woman

Economic opportunity is surely the single strongest factor that influences migration from developing countries to those of the developed West. It is the hope of the migrants that they will be able to eke out a better living abroad than they would in their native country. Romanian women are no different in that regard. And while it is true that they do oftentimes obtain jobs that allow them more earning power than a similar job in Romania would (like the example of the public relations woman turned strawberry picker, Cristina Stamate). The expense at which this (comparably) greater income comes, however, is tremendous. Viewed as a source of cheap and expendable labor (as there is surplus, the employers can afford to hire and fire without much consideration), they endure discriminatory and illegal labor practices simply because they have few other options and because they must in order to survive in the Spanish society.

No better example of this unfair advantage that Spanish employers hold over their migrant workers comes than in the Spanish agricultural sector. Just as the Huelva province is a leader in strawberry harvest, the Almería province of southeastern Spain is Europe's formidable year-round producer of fruits and vegetables through an intensive use of greenhouses. To maintain the growth of this industry, many workers are needed (as in strawberry picking) and few natives choose to participate due to its low pay and harsh weather conditions. In fact, Almería has experienced such an influx of foreign labor that its foreign population increased from 773 officially registered in 2000 to 16,000 in 2006—a 1.8 percent to 14 percent increase of the entire population of the province.⁶⁵ Also comparable to the Huelva strawberry industry is the preference for hiring women, who are often hired as day laborers for 30 to 35 Euros per day by standing in the local plaza and waiting to be selected by employers who often drive by and take the selected workers directly to the farm.⁶⁶ In the cases that a contract is formed, like the case of labor arrangements being made directly by employer representatives in Romania for the strawberry industry, contract violations are rampant and have very serious repercussions for the migrants. Such violations may include: the fixing of wages and not hours to be worked; lodging not being provided beforehand without stipulating that it would not be provided; the contract, itself, being in Spanish and therefore, incomprehensible to the

⁶⁵ Hartman, 499.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 509-510.

Romanian workers; employers keeping the passports and the return tickets of the migrants until the end of the harvest season.⁶⁷

In the case of domestic work, workers are often lured into the promise of live-in work, which, on the surface solves many of the problems that illegal migrant women face. For instance, they are relieved of the problem of finding and paying for accommodations on limited means, as well as the risk of being picked up and deported by the police. However, this puts them in a position of higher vulnerability for emotional, and in some reported cases, even physical abuse by the employer and latches them even closer to the goodwill of the employer.⁶⁸ In that sense, contract stipulations are more likely to be broken. In fact, the domestic service sector is such that an average employee works 12 hours per day, 7 days a week for roughly 500 euros (\$650) per month.⁶⁹ In other situations, a worker may be coerced into working for a third of the salary that the contract establishes.⁷⁰ Yet, the supporters of this unfair labor practice argue that the conditions of work are fair and possibly even better than what these 'third world,' 'oppressed' women are used to enduring in their home countries.⁷¹ The justification for providing any, however meager, forms of income is that given employment is virtual charity and it should not be considered discriminatory because it is more than they are accustomed to.

Another economic aspect of Romanian women's lives abroad as workers are their ties to Romania in the sense that they feel obliged to financially support any family they may have left behind. Remittances are a fundamental characteristic of transnational migration because migrants tend to maintain strong ties to their country of origin and have migrated primarily so as to be able to economically better their lives and those of their family members. It is generally believed that the level of remittances sent is higher by women, but overall, levels of remittances will depend on a number of factors, including if migration is temporary or long-term, how secure the migrant's status is in the country of destination, how much he or she can earn, if he or she has moved alone or with a family, and how strong ties remain with his/her family or places of origin.⁷²

Remittances have been hailed as a positive way to herald development into the migration origin countries such as Romania because they provide a new source of

⁶⁷ Bell.

⁶⁸ Henshall, 125.

⁶⁹ Peterson, 275.

⁷⁰ Tito Drago, "Spain: Immigrants Threatened with Deportation," *IPS-Inter Press Service*, January 23.

⁷¹ Peterson, 274.

⁷² Piper, 12. See also Boswell and Crisp, 11.

currency into the lagging economy and enable reinvestment of those monies into the infrastructure of the country. Women's role in this is encouraging because they actively participate in the economic betterment of their own families as well as improve their own roles within the family by having such a responsibility and maintaining it successfully. Remittances, however, also result in price inflation and a higher demand for imported, rather than domestically produced goods in the receiving countries.⁷³ Furthermore, young people who stay behind tend to have a lesser willingness to work for smaller wages in societies remittance-dependent, which creates distortions in the local labor market.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the flow of remittances will slow or be diminished on the account of this, because in sending them, migrants are primarily concerned with the well-being of their own families and lastly with that of their country. If anything, the remittances create a greater will to migrate among the receiving family members because they illustrate a way for greater earning power and the lack of opportunity that is present in their current situation. In the case of Romanian women in Spain, remittances remain one of the highest priorities in continuing their stay in Spain because they usually have a significant number of family members in Romania depending on this continued flow of income. Furthermore, remittances remain the clearest indicator of a better life abroad for those family members remaining in Romania, and as such, serve as encouragement for continued migration toward Spain and other Western European countries.

Possible Means of Redress

For as long as migration has existed on a large and global scale, flaws in the immigration policies of the receiving countries have created victims of legal oversight. Yet, the fact is that economic development is the driving factor behind this unprecedented global labor mobility. For as long as nationals of developed countries shun menial labor and for as long as there exist countries struggling to develop, the workers from the latter will seek any means of entry into the former. The question, then, is whether the developed countries will remain complacent in this systematic marginalization and discrimination against an entire population of developing world citizens that come to their borders in search of job opportunities. It is the developed countries who have the responsibility to address the concerns of this vulnerable population because, while they are

⁷³ Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, "The economics of transnational living," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003) <http://hcd.ucdavis.edu/faculty/webpages/guarnizo/EconTransLiving.html> (accessed January 9, 2009).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

numerous, they are also a powerless and manipulated mass in the progress-driven societies that attract them.

In the Spanish case, possible means of redress of its immigration policies and activities could include a virtual overhaul of the current system, which invites migrants but marginalizes them upon arrival. A mobility system such as the one suggested by Dayton-Johnson et. Al is a good example of the most prominent areas in which the Spanish immigration policy needs reform.⁷⁵ Such a mobility system requires a thorough set of immigration policies that clearly define the expectations that the Spanish state has of the migrants but also the rights that correspond to them. The immigration policies should also be able to adjust to the changing labor circumstances within the country, such as labor shortages. Furthermore, policy enactment should be standard across the country and immigration officers should be well aware and respectful of the legal and procedural rights that all migrants, regardless of their qualification to enter the country, possess.⁷⁶

In regard to the rights of the migrants in the economic sectors that they occupy, such as agriculture, construction, and the domestic sector, there should be a developed or amplified legal framework that explicitly states the conditions under which migrants are to be hired. The Spanish government should extend its oversight into the strawberry and domestic service industries to ensure that more regular inspections of the working conditions are being performed, and also, so that they may serve as an avenue to voice grievances for the workers who are left defenseless against the power leverage that employers have. Furthermore, the Spanish government should eliminate the provision that makes the work contract and residency papers mutually dependent. As has been demonstrated, this action has given employers substantial powers while putting the migrant workers in a position of greater insecurity and vulnerability.

Beyond its own shores, Spain should take a greater initiative in global development. Direct investment into developing countries would greatly alleviate the economic pressures to migrate that people of those countries face.

⁷⁵ See Jeff Dayton-Johnson, *Gaining from migration: towards a new mobility system*, (Paris: Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2007).

⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch has determined that the Spanish Law 8/2000, on the rights of Foreigner in Spain has been arbitrarily and unevenly applied across the country. The determination of rejection of one migrant group or another depends heavily upon the port of entry for that group. See Human Rights Watch, "Discretion Without Bounds: The Arbitrary Application of Spanish Immigration Law," July 5, 2002, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,COI,HRW,,ESP,3d2eeb695,0.html> (accessed January 6, 2009).

Such a measure would be greatly beneficial to Spain because the flow of illegal migrants that it currently witnesses would be diminished. Romania would be a particularly good receptor of such direct investment because of its relative proximity to Spain and because of its EU membership. Spain (alongside other industrialized countries) would contribute to the economic development much as it did when Poland and other Eastern European countries entered the Union several years ago. This, then, would be a relatively natural process that the expansion of the European Union creates and it would not necessarily be a forced initiative on part of Spain. In fact, Spain would contribute to the development of Romania while achieving the needs of many of its own businesses for cheaper and more accessible labor — Romanian labor in Romania.

And lastly, in the case that labor import is still necessary to Spain, it is imperative that the representatives of the agricultural businesses that offer contracted work to Romanians fully and completely disclose the expectations for that labor force, their rights, and provide them with legitimate and fair work contracts prior to their departure for Spain. The government should be instrumental in the oversight of this process. Even outside the pre-contracted labor situations, Spanish authorities should actively seek to inform Romanian (as well as those from other source countries) of the realistic political, social, and economic circumstances that await them if they do choose to migrate. Access to legitimate information regarding their destinations is something that would spare a lot of unnecessary hardship for the migrants because they would not only be better prepared, but might also change their minds altogether about going there. Dayton-Johnson et. al has also discussed the importance of transmitting such valuable information through migrant networks, which are already extensively used by migrants in their various stages of the migration process.⁷⁷ The networks would be an even better way to legitimize the information being shared because of the shared cultural identity that network members have, as well as their ability to target a significant group of people. In that sense, the Spanish government could play an educative role to the potential migrants who undergo tremendous risks to achieve entry and face even greater challenges upon arrival to the country.

⁷⁷ Dayton-Johnson, 23.

Conclusion

Romanian migrant women make up one of the most prominent groups of foreign labor in Spain. Their presence in Spain has been proven as indispensable to the continuing growth of the Spanish economy, particularly in labor sectors that native Spaniards no longer have any desire to participate in, such as the agriculture and the domestic service sectors. Yet, while the Spanish government has acknowledged their necessity and even provided them with the opportunities to enter Spain, it has also consistently marginalized them. The Spanish legislative initiatives are insufficiently elaborated to protect this large and vastly disenfranchised labor force. Opposite of its intended purpose, the legislation has further tipped the power scale in favor of the employers who prefer to hire migrant labor due to its lower cost and relative expendability. In these instances, the Romanian women, among other like groups of foreign labor in Spain, have found themselves easily manipulated and exploited to work for unfair wages, discriminatory working conditions, and most severely of all, potential physical and psychological abuse. Furthermore, the Spanish government has consistently provided inadequate support to this vulnerable population so that they may successfully integrate and prosper in their adopted society. In the case of Romanian women, they are left on the fringes of society not only because they may lack the proper documentation to be recognized by the government, but as a result of their social status as the 'other'. Equally grave is the discouragement they face in participating in the most basic services necessary for a prosperous life in Spain, namely healthcare and the political arena, where they may voice their grievances of unfair and discriminatory treatment.

Yet, the resiliency of this large and vulnerable pool of workers has been proven. Despite the difficult conditions that await them in Spain, they have shown that it is far better to take the slim chance of prosperity abroad than to wait for better days in Romania. They have accepted the conditions of 'otherness' in exchange for wages that they could not earn in Romania for a comparable type of work and for a chance that the next generation will have an even greater opportunity to make their lives better. Thus, they come to Spain in greater numbers every year and show no signs of slowing down. In this case, it is the responsibility of the Spanish government, as the temporary guardian of this labor force and as a democratic and liberal state of the West, to ensure that proper legal provisions are put into place that will not only protect, but also promote prosperity. This call for a shift to a participation model, rather than the systematic method of exclusion that the government has actively engaged in would ensure that the

power of the state complements the democratic principles it venerates.⁷⁸ As the Spanish government receives a great number of benefits from the migrant presence, it must set an example for its people in the way that migrants are to be treated in the workplace and the society. This, of course, will require an overhaul of the Spanish immigration legislation as it currently stands. Spanish authorities must not only present integrationist rhetoric, but also back this rhetoric up by actions of the same nature. Furthermore, it must actively engage in promoting economic development in developing countries such as Romania, and in that way, stem the main factors that drive migration in excess form. Along the way, it should be the responsibility of the Spanish government to also provide legitimate and substantive information regarding the conditions and the expectations that the Spanish government and society have of a migrant force. In that way, the migrants will have a better understanding of what awaits them in Spain and may be better prepared for a life there.

The great hope of the twenty-first century, therefore, will be that the Spanish government, among others of the industrialized West, will be able to reform its immigration policies so that its need for foreign labor is better conciliated with the fair and equal conditions that the migrants require in their quest for a better life abroad. The industrialized nations, especially those of the EU, should combine their efforts on a global scale to stem the reasons for which people migrate and in that way, ensure that the negative side effects of a large influx of foreign labor are minimized, while the well-being and prosperity of all is the primary goal.

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⁷⁸ Theodora Kostakopoulou, *Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 144-45.