

# Chapter 2

## Native and Latino Employment During the Great Recession in the US and Spain

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### 2.1 Introduction

The Great Recession (GR) is still producing deeper and more extensive effects on employment than any other economic downturn since the Great Depression in 1930 (Hout et al. 2011). The US economy lost 8.5 million jobs between its peak of 138.1 million jobs in December 2007 and its nadir of 129 million jobs in February 2010, which represents a decline of 6.2 %. The unemployment rate more than doubled in 26 months, from 5.0 % to 10.4 %. Spain lost 18 % of available jobs between the third quarters of 2007 and 2013, and the unemployment rate went from 8 % to 26 % in the period. The state of the labor market in Spain can be described as “catastrophic.” This deep but unequal deterioration of the labor market in both countries has had notable effects on immigrants and more importantly on Latino immigrants. The United States has faced previous crises while hosting large foreign born populations, but this is the first large-scale recession Spain has experienced while hosting a large foreign born population (see Chap. 1).

The effects of the GR on employment have three common characteristics in both countries: this recession is the deepest after the Great Depression, the longest, and it has been followed by a slow, weak recovery. The GR has been more deep than previous recessions: during a typical post-World War II recession in the US, about 3 % of all jobs were lost, whereas job loss during the GR has occurred at twice that rate (Freeman 2013); Spain lost 14 % of employment during the long crisis in the 1970–1980s and 7 % in the short but deep recession in the 1990s; however, during

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the 6 years of the GR, 18 % of employment has been lost. The GR is on a path to becoming the longest recession in recorded history; Freeman (2013) has shown that in previous crises, job recovery has been faster than in the GR. In Spain, only until the third quarter of 2014 indicators suggest a weak and unstable recovery of the labor market. Moreover, the recovery period in the US is occurring with an employment growth that is “slow and anemic” (ibid: 9) and below GDP growth. For this reason, analysts characterized the conclusion of the GR in the US as a “jobless recovery” (Rampell 2012) and even argue that the “great US jobs machine failed to live up to expectations in the crisis” (Freeman 2013). This seems to be the path that Spain will follow when the recovery arrives: job growth that is weak and below GDP growth. Greenstone and Looney (2013) suggest that the calendar will read 2020 before the American and Spanish economies regain the number of jobs they had before the GR, and Danziger (2013: 23) points out that it is likely that a “lost decade of economic progress” may become “two lost decades.” This pace of improvement is too slow to restore security for American and Spanish, and immigrant workers anytime soon (Hout et al. 2011: 78). The worst legacy of the GR is the generation of a large and persistent job gap (OECD 2013).

The US and Spain are countries with labor markets structured into different logics and frameworks. Using Freeman’s (2008) characterization, we can say that the US labor market is a driven labor system, while the Spanish labor market is a European institution-driven labor system. European labor markets are more regulated than US labor markets, and widely covered by collective bargaining contracts. Two indicators show these differences. First, according to the Fraser Institute, the US scores 9 in economic freedom in “labor market regulation” and ranks second among 152 countries. Spain scores 5.4 and ranks 112th (Gwartney et al. 2013). Second, in the US, 14 % of workers are covered by collective contracts (and ranks 24th among 25 countries); in Spain, more than 80 % of workers are covered by bargaining agreements (and ranks 6th) (OECD 2004). Other labor market regulations show these different organizational principles (OECD 2013). However, inspired by the types of welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990), it could be said that Spain (as other Southern European countries) has a “Mediterranean institution-driven labor system.” Three main features differentiate this system from other labor systems in Europe and partially explain observed trends during the GR. First, Southern-European countries have labor institutions that favor labor market dualism (strong protections for permanent jobs and great flexibility for temporal contracts) (OECD 2004). Second, the informal economy plays an important role on the labor demand (Andrews et al. 2011) and it weighs on specialized sectors such as tourism, construction and domestic services for private households. Third, a mismatch between labor demand and supply that results in high unemployment levels even in periods of economic growth. This labor mismatch attracted numerous migrants during the regional economic boom before the GR (Cachón 2009).

More flexible institutions allow market-driven economies to do better than institution-driven systems in periods of economic change (Freeman 2008: 24). But not only institutions matter, financial, monetary, and economic stimulus policies implemented in both countries as responses to the GR also explain their different outcomes. The US is undergoing a recovery period; although, there are

still concerns about a second round of recession, this time without supporting stimulus from policy actions (Elwell 2013: 9). By the end of 2013, after four quarters of continuous and smooth declines, the unemployment rates in the US were similar to those observed before the crisis. However, Spain was still at the end of 2013 witnessing continuous job losses.

The impact of the GR on immigrants is likely to vary across countries according to economic and political conditions (Papademetriou et al. 2010). Here, we show the different effects in the US and Spain, countries with different institutional frameworks, migration histories, and labor structures. Although all demographic groups have experienced job losses, some groups have been more adversely affected than others. Repeating the pattern of most previous downturns, the GR's impact has been worst for low educated and minority workers (Orrenius and Zavodny 2010: 316). One group in which the negative effects have been felt the strongest is Latino immigrants in the US and in Spain, in the next sections we describe their increased vulnerability during the period, and as well as their resilient behavior in the labor market.

## **2.2 Vulnerability and Resilience in the Labor Market During the Great Recession**

It is a well-documented fact that foreign workers appear to be relatively more vulnerable than natives during cyclical downturns (Chiswick et al. 1997; OEDC 2009; Orrenius and Zavodny 2009; Papademetriou and Terrazas 2009; Enchautegui 2012). The vulnerability of immigrants derives from their immigrant condition given the discriminatory institutional framework and their class condition as workers. The segmented assimilation that is produced in their process of integration to the recipient country is reflected in their occupations and positions in the segmented labor markets (Aysa-Lastra and Cachón 2013a, b). These barriers and conditions result in the creation of categorically unequal social subjects (see Chap. 1). Some key elements in the labor market, either from the supply or demand side, could explain this increased immigrant employment vulnerability during economic downturns.

A key structural factor, particularly important during the GR, is the overrepresentation of immigrants in sectors sensitive to economic cycles, including construction and related industries and parts of the manufacturing and service sectors (OEDC 2009). This overrepresentation is associated to worsening labor conditions in these sectors. As a consequence, these are among the least desirable sectors among native workers (Cachón 1997). During the GR in countries where construction had been the engine of growth in recent years such as Spain and the US, migrant workers employed in the sector have paid the highest price in terms of loss of employment (Awad 2009: 55).

There are other factors in the labor market that might produce a significant and differential negative effect on immigrant employment relative to native

employment. One, the overrepresentation of immigrants in nonstandard employments—it is well known that temporary employment falls rapidly in the early stages of economic crises (Holmlund and Storrie 2002; European Commission 2011). Two, the overrepresentation of immigrants among workers who have spent less time in their current job. The last-hired, first-fired phenomenon is unfavorable to immigrants. The OECD (2009: 25) recalls how “countries with the highest share of recent immigrants [. . .] are therefore more likely to witness a strong deterioration of immigrant labor market outcomes”; the OECD expressly included Spain among these countries. Three, the overrepresentation of immigrants in the population of workers that experience selective layoffs and discriminatory acts. Evidence of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin is supported by numerous studies. The OECD (2008: 184) synthesizes the effects of discrimination stating that “available evidence suggests that gender and racial discrimination in the labor market is still significant in a number of OECD countries.” In the case of the US, the racial and ethnic classification system has consequences for Latino immigrants. Those with darker skin tones face greater discrimination in the labor market, and their annual revenue is, on average, lower than those with lighter skin (Frank et al. 2010). In addition, numerous studies point to the increasing criminalization and victimization of immigrants (Fussell 2011; Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014). These factors explain the additional decline of employment and job deterioration for Latino immigrants during the GR.

Another important question in the labor market is the overrepresentation of immigrants and Latino immigrants in the informal economy (OECD 2009). Reyneri (1998) argues that as in the case of Italy—an argument that is applicable to countries like Spain and the US—“the informal economy has important and strong national roots to the point that it exerts a pull factor on immigrants from less developed countries, when the local labor pool does not accept work in marginal occupations.” The informal economy attracts a large number of unauthorized immigrants (Tapinos 1999). In Spain a 10 % points increase in the share of immigrants at the regional level generated between 3 % and 8 % points increase in unregistered employment between 2000 and 2009 (Bosh and Farre 2013). In the US, Cebula and Feige (2011) argue that as unemployment increases the underground economy increases (proxy by tax evasion). Moreover, the GR coincides with increasing border and internal controls for immigrant employment (e-Verify and raids), which are also associated with increases in the informal economy among unauthorized immigrants. The impossibility to participate in the formal economy due to the lack of legal status, and a growing informal sector during the GR might have attracted a large number of unauthorized immigrants into the informal economy (see Chap. 6). As Castles and Miller point out (2009: 232–342), irregular migration and employment are the result of the emergence of a ‘new economy’ in which workers are treated differently because of their ethnicity, race, origins, and legal status.

From a labor market supply perspective, immigrants are overrepresented in groups with certain sociodemographic characteristics that increase their vulnerability in the job market. Especially important is the predominance of low

educational attainment among un-skilled immigrant workers, because education determines access to good jobs or bad jobs, workers with relatively low skills and education—such as non-whites, the foreign-born, and older workers—are more vulnerable than others to structural changes (Kalleberg 2011: 57). Nonetheless, it is also relevant that immigrants are overrepresented in groups such as women, youth, and those less likely to speak a country's predominant language. Immigrants in these groups are likely to lose their jobs during economic downturns (Orrenius and Zavodny 2010; Papademetriou et al. 2010; European Commission 2011). Immigrants' increased vulnerability resulting from the deterioration of the labor market has provoked a larger erosion of employment for them relative to native employment during the crisis (Aysa-Lastra and Cachón 2012). Additionally, there are other vulnerability factors such as the lower participation in unions among immigrants in the US (Rosenfeld and Kleykamp 2009) and Spain.

Other institutional factors are significant sources of vulnerability in the labor market. The additional institutional requirements that migrant workers face (visas, work permits, certifications, etc.) motivate disparities in the job search strategies between immigrants and natives. For example, the higher institutional pressure on immigrants is associated to continuous employment among authorized immigrants (Cachón 2009). Another factor is remittances: immigrants often send part of their income to family members still living in the country of origin who depend on these resources to lead a decent life and to raise their children. In addition, immigrants often pay for the trip related debts and migration expenses of other family members. Lower relational social capital among immigrants compared to natives, also decreases their possibilities in the job market because it is a vital resource when searching for employment (Granovetter 1974). Moreover, their limited relational social capital can become a barrier, inhibiting their opportunities (Portes 1998; Aysa-Lastra and Cachón 2013b). Immigrants also have less access to social protections (unemployment insurance, health care, conditions for claiming labor rights when employers need to reduce their workforce, etc.) (TUC 2008) or health insurance in US (Krogstad and Lopez 2014).

Immigrants' resilience, from their position as vulnerable subjects, emerges as a form of resistance within the field of possibilities in which they are placed. It is expected that different forms of resilience surface because migration is a selective process. It is important to remember that one of the standard propositions in the international economic migration literature is self-selection. Economic migrants are described as more able, ambitious, aggressive, and entrepreneurial than similar individuals who opt to remain in their countries of origin (Chiswick 1999; Borjas 1995). This is key to explaining their economic success, even in a segmented process of economic integration (Aysa-Lastra and Cachón 2013a). Sisk and Donato (2013) argue that one possible explanation for the relatively strong outcomes among low-skill Mexican immigrant workers is that they possess more resilience—and the ability to recover from adverse life events—than low-skill US-born whites. After facing a difficult and long multidimensional process, such as uprooting oneself from the home/country of origin to migrate to the US or Spain, it is expected that immigrants show strong resilience in the labor market. Their need

to reduce their level of “acceptability” linked to their increased vulnerability forces them to accept precarious jobs that natives reject. Their vulnerability pushes them, when unemployed, to accept the first (frequently bad) job they find, exchanging unemployment for underemployment (underemployment exists when a worker work less hours, earn less income or use their occupational skills incompletely). As Papademetriou and Terrazas argue (2009: iii), immigrants “may be able to adjust more quickly than native-born workers to changing labor market conditions because they are more amenable to changing jobs and their place of residence for work-related reasons.”

Another element to consider regarding immigrant resilience relates to their more vulnerable bargaining position—relative to natives—in the labor market. Some employers might prefer to hire vulnerable immigrants because they are more flexible, docile, and less likely to complain about the working conditions, (or, in the employers’ terms—more motivated and productive) and for this reason, they are subject to jobs of inferior quality with lower salaries (Waldinger 1997; Donato and Bankston 2008).

Some of these resilience strategies improve immigrants’ condition in the labor market, as observed in their higher geographical and occupational mobility relative to natives. Return migration to their country of origin or migration to a new destination are also resilience strategies that improve their employment possibilities; these strategies also increase the chances that other immigrants will find jobs, as the number of similar workers competing for jobs diminishes.

## 2.3 Methods

Our work focuses on a comparative analysis of the US and Spain, the two countries with the largest Latino immigrant communities. Although comparative studies have a long tradition in international migration studies, there are few comparative analyses of the GR on immigrant employment in destination countries. The exceptions are the articles published by Papademetriou and colleagues (Papademetriou and Terrazas, 2009; Papademetriou et al. 2010), Awad (2009), and Tilly (2011) and the book edited by Higley et al. (2011) comparing the US and Australia.

To compare Latino immigrants in the US and Spain, we used data from two national labor force surveys: the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the US and the Economically Active Population Survey (*Encuesta de Población Activa*, EPA) for Spain. Both surveys collect demographic information characterizing the citizenship status and country of birth of different population groups residing in the respective countries. Therefore, this information allows us to know the employment status of different populations at different points in time. The CPS in the US collects information every month on a representative sample of about 60,000 households. The CPS questionnaire includes sociodemographic variables (e.g., education, race and ethnicity, age, etc.), a long battery of questions on employment characteristics including wages and earnings, union affiliation, length of stay for the foreign born,

and citizenship status (BLS 2006). The EPA collects information on sociodemographic characteristics and labor market conditions (except wages, affiliation to social security, or unions) on a national representative sample of about 65,000 households every 3 months (INE 2008). We selected the samples corresponding to the CPS March supplement and to the second trimester (April-June) from EPA for the period 2007 to 2013.

This article focuses on labor market outcomes; therefore, our universe is the adult civilian population—those who are 16 and older at the time of the survey. The term “immigrant” is used differently in Europe and in the US. In order to create comparable groups for our analysis, we divided the population into three categories: natives,<sup>1</sup> naturalized citizens born in Latin America, and non-naturalized immigrants born in Latin America, we will refer to this last group as immigrants throughout the chapter. Immigrants and naturalized citizens not born in Latin America are not considered in the analysis. Natives for the Spanish case are defined as those who have Spanish citizenship only, regardless of their place of birth. In the US, natives are those born in the US or born abroad of American parents. It is important to remember that people born in Spain to nationals of other countries are not Spanish citizens. Naturalized Spanish citizens of Latin American origin are those who hold Spanish citizenship at the time of the survey, most of them also hold citizenship from a Latin American country. Moreover Latin American immigrants in Spain can request citizenship by naturalization after 2 years of legal residence in Spain. Immigrants from other regions must hold legal residency for at least 10 years before they can request citizenship. The naturalization process in the US on average takes longer than in Spain: 3 years after becoming a permanent resident under family reunification criteria and 5 years under employment criteria.<sup>2</sup> Our third group is immigrants from Latin America. In Spain these are foreigners who hold citizenship from a Latin American country. In the US, Latino immigrants were defined as those who are not US citizens at the time of the survey and were born in Latin America.

We must be aware that there are potential sources of bias in analyzing data on immigrants at destination, such as changes in the composition of the immigrant flow over time (Borjas 1985, 1995), return or transit migration to a third country (Constant and Massey 2003), or fluctuations in the characteristics of immigrants entering the labor force (Aslund and Rooth 2007). As in other studies (Reyneri and Fullin 2011), we assume that the unobserved characteristics of migrants do not change significantly over time.

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<sup>1</sup> This group includes native citizens of all races. Although racial disadvantages are observed for non-whites in both countries, we kept all natives in one group to keep our analytical focus on immigration and ease the comparison among natives, naturalized citizens, and immigrants.

<sup>2</sup> Van Hook and Bachmeier (2013) found that citizenship status is inaccurately reported on U.S. Surveys among long-term foreign born residents from Mexico.

## 2.4 Latino Immigrant Labor Force in United States and Spain

In 2013, there were about 14 million people of Latin American origin among the workforce population in the US. Five million of them were naturalized citizens and more than nine million were immigrants, which respectively accounted for 3.2 % and 6 % of the total workforce. In Spain, there were about 400,000 Spanish citizens who were born in Latin America and more than one million Latin American immigrants, which accounted for 1.6 % and 5.2 % of the total workforce, respectively. Overall, workers from Latin American countries accounted for 9.2 % of the workforce in the US and 6.8 % in Spain.

The GR had a different impact among the Latino population in both countries. In the US, there was a notable decrease (of about 600,000 workers) in the first 2 years of the recession (2008 and 2009), and even further declines between 2011 and 2013. However, the trend in the relative size of the Latino workforce has slightly increased. According to Toossi (2002), in 2002 Hispanic origin workers may reach 16 % of the workforce in 2020 and their presence will continue to grow. In Spain, the effect of the GR among Latino immigrant workers is different for three main reasons that mark dissimilarities with the US experience. First, immigration to Spain is a relatively recent phenomenon; second, the institutional immigration framework; and, third, Spain's lower capacity for economic and labor recovery (see Chap. 1). In the first years of the GR, the immigrant Latino workforce continued to grow at a rate similar to that found in the years before the crisis (about 350,000 more workers in 2008 and 2009); in 2010, Latinos accounted for 8.2 % of the workforce in Spain. Nonetheless, since then there has been a rapid and accelerated decline in which 440,000 have left the labor force and their presence is reduced to 6.8 % of the workforce in Spain in 2013 (see Table 2.1). We anticipate that this decline will continue in the coming years, then stabilize at around 6 % in 2020, but with a higher number of naturalized citizens, and a lower proportion of immigrants born in Latin America (Cachón 2014).

An important feature of the working Latino immigrant population in the US and Spain is their gender composition. Males are predominant in the US, but women are predominant in Spain (see Chap. 4). In 2013, 60 % and 67 % of the Latino workforce is concentrated among young adults (ages 25–44) respectively in the US and Spain. During the crisis, this group has lost some relative size in favor of those aged 45 and older. The educational level of the immigrant Latino native population has slightly improved since 2007, but in 2013 it is still substantially lower than the educational level among natives. There is a significant proportion of Latino immigrants with elementary education or less: 21 % in the US and 17 % in Spain. The proportion of Latino immigrants with college education is lower than that found among natives (see Table 2.1). It seems that there is a convergence in the age structure of Latino and native workforce, but there remains a significant difference by educational level.



**Table 2.1** Latin American workforce and economic activity rates in the United States and Spain (2007, 2010, and 2013)

	USA			Spain				
	Total	Natives	Citizens LA <sup>a</sup>	Immigr. LA <sup>a</sup>	Total	Natives	Citizens LA <sup>a</sup>	Immigr. LA <sup>a</sup>
<b>Workforce</b>								
N (thousands) (2013)	155,468	130,145	4,969	9,292	22,761	19,089	365	1,173
2007	100.0	84.4	2.6	6.4	100.0	84.9	0.7	6.7
2010	100.0	84.4	3.0	6.0	100.0	82.8	1.2	7.0
2013	100.0	83.7	3.2	6.0	100.0	83.9	1.6	5.2
Distribution by gender (2013)								
Males	53.2	52.3	51.7	64.6	54.0	54.6	42.8	43.4
Females	46.8	47.7	48.3	35.4	46.0	45.4	57.2	56.6
Distribution by age (2013)								
16–25	13.3	14.5	4.0	11.0	7.3	6.9	10.7	9.5
25–44	43.0	41.4	40.0	59.7	54.7	52.8	55.4	67.3
45–64	38.4	38.6	50.3	27.8	37.3	39.6	32.8	22.6
65+	5.3	5.5	5.7	1.5	0.7	0.7	1.1	0.5
Distribution by educational level (2013)								
Elementary and less	1.8	0.2	7.4	21.4	11.5	9.8	13.6	17.4
Middle school	7.9	6.6	14.1	26.6	29.6	30.5	22.7	26.8
High school	27.1	27.5	28.2	29.6	23.2	21.5	38.1	36.5
College and higher	63.2	65.7	50.2	22.5	35.7	38.2	25.6	19.3
<b>Economic activity rates</b>								
2007	66.0	65.6	69.1	72.1	58.9	56.6	79.7	82.8
2010	64.9	64.3	68.7	71.0	60.1	57.5	81.5	84.0
2013	63.2	62.7	66.0	69.6	59.5	57.4	80.4	80.0

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

	USA				Spain			
	Total	Natives	Citizens LA <sup>a</sup>	Immigr. LA <sup>a</sup>	Total	Natives	Citizens LA <sup>a</sup>	Immigr. LA <sup>a</sup>
Gender (2013)								
Males	69.4	67.8	75.6	85.1	66.1	64.2	82.2	81.5
Females	57.4	57.9	58.2	52.2	53.3	50.9	79.1	78.9
Age groups (2013)								
16–25	53.2	53.5	50.3	57.8	40.9	39.6	49.1	44.0
25–44	81.8	82.7	81.7	76.3	88.6	89.2	92.4	90.1
45–64	72.9	72.5	77.2	71.5	70.4	69.4	87.9	89.3
65+	19.0	18.9	19.3	20.1	1.9	1.8	20.2	15.2
Educational level (2013)								
Elementary and less	46.8	18.7	43.8	65.2	24.8	19.9	70.3	69.7
Middle school	38.0	32.8	58.3	65.1	66.7	65.9	74.3	76.1
High school	60.0	59.1	65.3	73.3	69.0	66.7	84.9	86.4
College and higher	71.5	71.5	74.9	75.7	81.5	81.9	86.7	85.5

Source: United States: BLS, CPS (March); Spain: INE, EPA (second quarter); own estimations

<sup>a</sup>Latin America

Economic activity rates (the ratio of the labor force to the working age population, expressed in percentages) are key indicators of the different generations participating in the labor market. In the US, the activity rate at the beginning of the GR was 66 %, a high level among OECD countries; however it declined to 63.2 % in 2013. In Spain, in 2008 the activity rate was 58.9 % and it continued to grow, reaching 60 % in 2010, then slightly declining over the last 3 years.

In the case of naturalized Latino citizens and Latino immigrants, the activity rates reflect diverse institutional aspects of their migration histories. Before and after the GR, in the US, the economic activity rates of Latin American origin citizens were around 3 % points higher than those of natives; the activity rates of Latino immigrants were 7 points higher. Before the crisis and until 2010, the activity rates for Spanish citizens born in Latin American countries were 23 % points above the rate for natives and 26 points in the case of Latino immigrants. Since 2010, this difference has decreased by 3 points. The large differential between the activity rates of Latino immigrants and natives in Spain is partially explained by the implementation of immigration policies classified as “labor oriented” (Cachón 2009) in contrast to “family reunification” policies (Kalleberg 2011) in the US. Another indicator of the effects of immigration policies is reflected in the activity rates for Latino immigrant women, their rates are 5 points above rates for native women in the US; and 28 points above in Spain, reaching an activity rate of 79 %, which is similar to the rate for Latino immigrant men. The trends of the activity rates in Spain are common among Southern European countries due to the labor market orientation of their policies and the age structure of the labor force concentrated among the most active groups (ages 25–64) and because Latino immigrants, among all immigrants, are incorporated more frequently into the labor market.

The analysis on educational level reveals significant differentials between natives and Latino immigrants. At the lowest educational level, in both countries, natives with elementary education or less have very low activity rates, particularly among women. However, the activity rates for Latino naturalized citizens and Latino immigrants are high, 50 % points above the rates for natives (see Table 2.1).

## 2.5 Latin American Immigrant Employment During the Great Recession

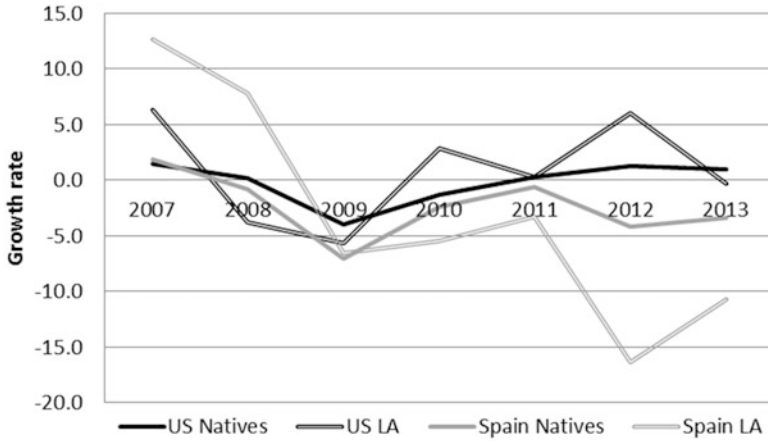
The third quarter of 2008 marks the starting point for the decline in employment in the United States and Spain. In the fourth quarter of 2010, five quarters after GDP began its recovery, employment grew again in the US, although this growth was “slow and anemic” (Freeman 2013: 9). In March 2013, the number of employed workers in the US was still 2 % lower than that of March 2008. In Spain, the decline in employment lasted 25 quarters because in the third quarter of 2014, employment stopped its continuous decline. In the second quarter of 2013, employment was

18 % lower than that of 2008. If we compare both labor markets, we must reserve the term “catastrophic,” which has been used to describe the US case (Rothstein 2012), for the Spanish case.

The last decade can be divided into two distinct periods: expansion until 2007 and crisis starting in 2008 (not to mention the brief crisis of 2002). In the expansion period, between 2000 and 2008, the US employed population grew at an average annual rate of 0.8 % (or 1.1 million people each year); in Spain, it grew at an annual average of 4.4 % (or 0.7 million people each year). Employment among Latino immigrants, in particular, in the US grew on average 3.9 % annually (a high figure for a country with an initial high level of immigration). In Spain, the volume of Latino immigrants employed grew at an average annual rate of 145 %. The case of Spain is exceptional among developed countries in recent decades. Its increase in immigration responds to an expansive phase of the economic cycle as this increase is closely linked to important growth in the construction sector and other sectors such as domestic service and tourism. There was a mismatch in the Spanish labor market: the native labor force had higher educational levels and skills but the labor market demanded unskilled workers (Cachón 2002). Moreover, this period coincides with political and economic crisis in some migrant origin countries (e.g., Colombia and Ecuador).

The GR followed different patterns in both countries in terms of its duration and in the negative effects on employment, but in both countries, Latino immigrant employment was sensitive to changes in the economic cycle. In 2007, before the crisis, Latino employment grew more than native employment in the US and Spain. These patterns changed in 2008 in the US as Latino immigrant employment shows a significant setback vs. the still positive growth of employment among natives. In Spain, native employment started to decline in 2008, while employment of Latino immigrants increased by 8 %. In 2009, the conditions of the labor market for Latino immigrants in Spain changed dramatically; the decline of employment is generalized and began to have negative effects for all, but particularly for Latinos. In 2010, employment trends in the US and in Spain branched away: the US started a slow employment recovery; but in Spain, employment continued its significant decline. The employment trends of Latinos in both countries differ. In the US, Latino employment recovers at a faster pace than native employment but in an uneven fashion because there is a notable increase in underemployment and great sensitivity to further declines in economic growth. In Spain, the Latino immigrants’ job losses are “catastrophic” as they amount to 25 % over the last 2 years (see Fig. 2.1 and Table 2.2). Job losses resulted in the substantial return migration of Latino immigrants from Spain to their countries of origin, or to third countries (see Chap. 13).

Latino employment was more sensitive to the sudden change in the economic cycle in the US (maybe due to the weakening of the construction sector, which started in 2006) that led to a rapid process of return to their origin countries and to the observed declines in the workforce (Massey 2012). In Spain, Latino immigrants who lost their employment during the first year of the crisis looked for jobs with more intensity than natives because they had pressing needs and, due to their



**Fig. 2.1** Employment annual growth rates for natives and foreign born Latinos for the US and Spain (2007–2013) (Source: Own elaboration based on BLS, CPS for the United States; INE, EPA for Spain)

**Table 2.2** Latin American employed population in the US and Spain (2007, 2010, and 2013)

	USA				Spain			
	Natives	Citizens LA	Immigr. LA	Total	Natives	Citizens LA	Immigr. LA	Total
Employed population (thousands)								
2007	123,072	3,929	9,242	145,879	17,426	140	1,308	20,367
2010	117,129	4,165	8,125	138,690	15,680	201	1,179	18,477
2013	119,976	4,630	8,390	143,367	14,417	238	759	16,784
Absolute average annual change (thousands)								
2007–2010	-5,943	236	-1,117	-7,189	-1,746	61	-130	-1,890
2010–2013	2,847	465	265	4,677	-1,263	37	-418	-1,693
Average annual percentage change (%)								
2007–2010	-4.8	6.0	-12.1	-4.9	-10.0	43.3	-9.9	-9.3
2010–2013	2.4	11.2	3.3	3.4	-8.1	18.3	-35.6	-9.2

Source: United States, BLS, CPS (March); Spain: INE, EPA (second quarter); own estimations  
 Note: Totals for the US and Spain include immigrants and citizens not born in Latin America

willingness to accept part-time and lower quality jobs, they found jobs more easily—which is a feature of Latino immigrants’ resiliency. There are some factors that explain why immigrant employment was more resilient during the initial stage of the crisis. Vulnerable workers, like Latino immigrants in Spain, are often employed in labor-intensive work. Their lower “social bargaining power” (Cachón 2002) make it difficult for them to resist employers’ pressure to increase hours and

otherwise intensify work. For this reason, they are preferred in certain sectors. However, this ability to resist is correspondingly lower during periods of rising unemployment (Rogers 2009) as has been the case since 2009. Another factor that may explain this delayed response in Spain is the mismatch between qualifications and jobs held by immigrants. This mismatch facilitates their occupational mobility and the search of jobs different from the jobs they held before the crisis. A third factor is the increased willingness to migrate to other towns and cities, especially during the early years of immigration. Their flexibility and mobility enables them to search widely for employment opportunities in different sectors. Nonetheless, these search strategies have limits, such as the lack of employment opportunities during a long period of time, as in the case of Spain. The severity and length of the Spanish crisis resulted in a substantial return migration in 2012 and 2013.

The effects of the GR differ by gender because employment losses are more prevalent among traditionally male occupations than among female occupations, and this pattern is similar for natives and Latino immigrants in both countries (see Chap. 4). We can call the GR a “man-cession” (Hout et al. 2011) in terms of gender, but also a Latin-cession in terms of Latin American immigration.

The GR has produced a significant shift in the age patterns of workers. Six years after the start of the recession, employment decreased for those younger than 45 years of age and it increased for those 45 and older in the US and in Spain. We observe this trend among natives and Latino immigrants. However, among the latter, the proportion is much higher. This once again shows the higher sensitivity of Latino employment; those younger than 45 faced higher declines in employment than natives in the same age group. In both countries those older than 45 experienced increases in employment in larger proportions.

The impact of the GR by educational level is different among natives and Latinos. In the US, Latino immigrants without college education fared better than their native counterparts in the first phase of the GR (until 2010). In the second phase (until 2013), they also coped better, regardless of their level of education. Latino immigrants who did not graduate from high school lost fewer jobs than their native counterparts and Latino immigrants with high school or higher education experienced an increase in employment compared to natives in the same educational category. In Spain, the patterns are different: Latino immigrants with lower levels of education (not higher than high school) fared relatively better than their native counterparts; however, for those with higher education (higher than high school) the outcomes are worse. It seems that the recovery after the GR is allowing Latino immigrants with lower levels of education to improve their position relative to their native counterparts in the US, while in Spain, the long duration of the GR is further worsening their position in the labor market.

The negative and substantial impact of the GR on Latino employment in both countries is also reflected in the deterioration of their labor conditions and in increasing unemployment among immigrants (see Chap. 3).

## 2.6 Sectorial Changes

The evolution of employment by sector has been uneven in both countries during the first (2007–2010) and the second (2011–2013) phases of the GR. Employment declined during the first phase in all sectors but public administration in both countries, agriculture in the US, and transportation in Spain. During this phase, the most notable decline was in the construction sector, which lost 23 % of employment in the US and 37 % in Spain. Moreover, due to the multiplier effect in related sectors, the true impact of the housing bubble burst is larger than what is reflected by these figures. In addition to the employment losses in the construction sector, we must consider collapses in branches of industry and services related to the building industry, such as suppliers and vendors. In the second phase of the GR employment started its slow recovery in all sectors in the US, with the exception of construction, and, food and clothing. Meanwhile, in Spain the decline in employment worsened and declines in all sectors were occurring faster than in the first phase of the GR. Moreover, during the second phase the construction sector suffered an additional employment decline of 42 % (see Table 2.3). As it has been noted, “the construction industry and the manufacturing firms that support [the economy] were ground zero for this recession” (Hout et al. 2011: 69). The negative impact of its collapse on employment has been very strong both in the US and in Spain.

Latino employment, either for naturalized citizens or for immigrants, has followed these general patterns but changes for this group have been more pronounced: in the first phase of the GR, they lost employment in construction and related industries in both countries (by one-third in the US and almost 50 % in Spain). This is a fundamental change, because construction was the mainstay of job growth for Latino workers, especially those who are immigrants both in the US (Kochhar 2008) and Spain (Cachón 2009). Latino immigrant employment also decreased in manufacturing sectors in the US and even by a larger share in Spain. Latino immigrant employment in agriculture increased in the US, but in Spain, employment in this sector declined. In the second phase of the GR, the evolution of employment differs in both countries: in Spain there is a steep and generalized decline in Latino employment in all sectors, and most notably in construction where Latinos lost about 70 % of jobs between 2010 and 2013. This decline is less significant in agriculture. Meanwhile in the US, Latino employment recovers in many sectors, especially agriculture, commerce, and financial services (See Fig. 2.2).

Latino immigrant employment in agriculture in the US and Spain is a special case. Both the US and Spain are among the developed countries in which immigrants are overrepresented in this sector. Moreover, it is the only sector where employment contraction in the GR is different: in Spain, employment (and especially Latino immigrant employment) contracted in both periods of the GR, but in the second period the contraction is lower relative to other sectors; while in the US it slightly increases (especially for Latino immigrants). Agriculture has been an

**Table 2.3** Employment of immigrants and naturalized citizens born in Latin America by industry in the US and Spain, 2007–2013

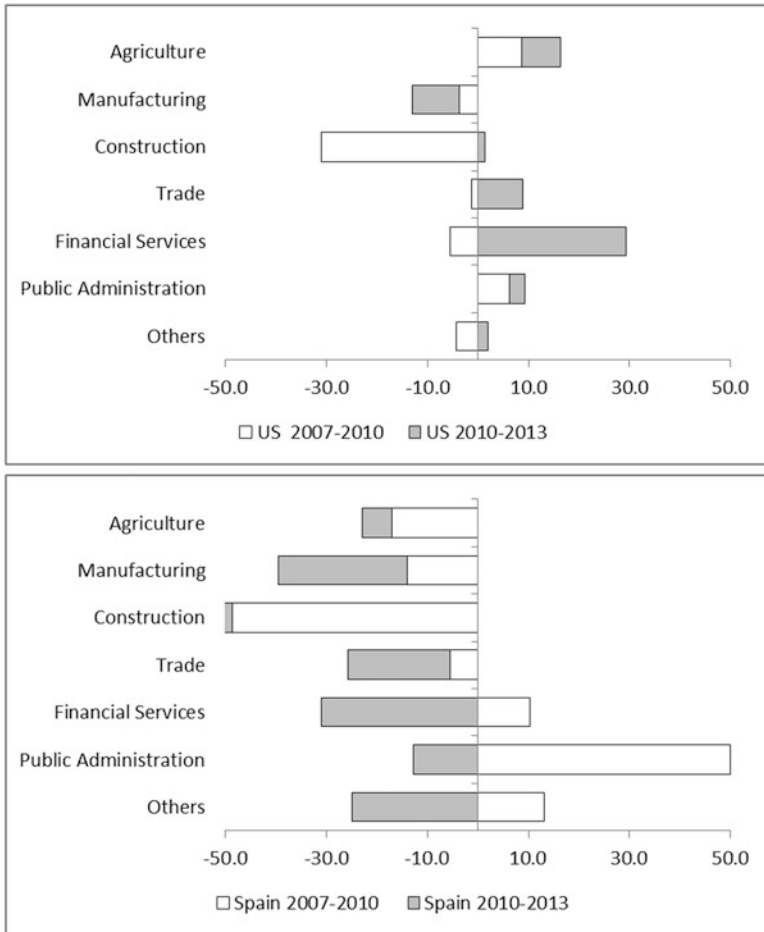
	United States				Spain				Participation of Latino immigrants <sup>b</sup>			
	Change in employment (%)		Relative distribution <sup>a</sup>		Participation of Latino immigrants <sup>b</sup>		Change in employment (%)		Distribution of Latino immigrants <sup>a</sup>			
	2007–2010	2010–2013	2007	2013	2007	2013	2007–2010	2010–2013	2007	2013		
<b>Total</b>	<b>-5.3</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>-9.3</b>	<b>-11.0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Agriculture	3.1	1.6	5.7	6.7	18.5	20.7	-17.6	-6.1	4.2	4.7	7.0	7.1
Food, clothing, etc.	-14.5	-1.8	7.6	6.7	13.0	13.5	-23.6	-10.5	3.5	3.2	4.8	4.5
Extractive industr.	-14.4	10.7	3.8	3.3	7.5	6.9	-15.4	-15.3	3.2	1.7	3.9	2.0
Machine construct.	-17.0	9.1	3.5	3.0	6.3	5.8	-20.9	-13.1	2.5	1.4	3.7	2.1
Construction	-22.8	-2.1	19.9	14.1	16.9	15.6	-37.4	-42.4	22.0	5.4	12.0	5.6
Trade	-2.2	3.6	26.8	29.1	9.8	10.4	-8.2	-6.3	26.1	28.6	8.3	7.3
Transportation	-5.7	0.3	4.5	4.9	8.4	9.6	17.5	-8.6	3.8	5.1	4.6	4.0
Financial services	-5.4	9.8	9.0	11.2	6.4	7.6	-9.1	-7.3	8.6	9.5	4.9	4.4
Public administrat.	3.5	0.5	13.3	14.7	4.8	5.0	10.5	-6.3	3.9	9.5	1.6	2.6
Others	-2.8	3.1	5.9	6.3	8.1	8.5	-4.7	-8.7	22.2	30.8	18.4	20.1

Source: United States: BLS, CPS (March); Spain: INE, EPA (second quarter); own estimations

<sup>a</sup>Relative distribution of workers who are Latin American immigrants or naturalized citizens by industry

<sup>b</sup>Relative weight of workers who are Latin American immigrants or naturalized citizens out of all workers in each specific industry





**Fig. 2.2** Employment growth rates for natives and Latino immigrants by industry in the US and Spain (2007–2010 and 2010–2013) (Source: United States: BLS, CPS (March); Spain: INE, EPA (second quarter); own estimations)

“entry sector” for Latino immigrants in both countries and during the GR it has been a “shelter sector” for a share of Latino immigrants who lost their employment in other sectors, and above all, for low educated and unskilled immigrants who worked in construction.

The evolution of Latino employment relative to native employment in diverse branches of the service sector in the US and Spain has followed opposite patterns. In the US, Latinos have been more resilient than natives in the first phase of the GR in the service sector and have experienced an increase in the number of jobs in trade, transportation, financial services, and public administration faster than natives (this might be explained by their still relatively low presence in these sectors). On the other hand, in Spain, although Latino immigrants fared better than natives in the

first phase, Latinos have lost much more employment (in relative terms) than natives in the service sector during the second phase.

The evolution of employment during the GR has produced a significant reconfiguration of Latino employment among sectors following a similar pattern in both countries: industrial and construction sectors lost weight among occupied Latinos and to the contrary, there are gains in agriculture and among all branches, the service sector. The percentage of Latino employees in construction decreased by 5 % points between 2007 and 2013 in the US, and by 17 % points in Spain the same period. In 2013, in the US the trade sector employed the largest number of Latino workers (29 %), followed by public administration (15 %) and construction (14 %). In Spain, the largest concentration of Latino employees is in private households and the “other” category (31 %, which are mainly women), followed by trade (29 %), public administration (10 %), and financial services (10 %). Construction only represented 5 % of Latino employed workers in 2013, after the massive erosion of jobs in this sector (see Table 2.3). There is only one masculinized sector, agriculture, which gains weight among Latino immigrants after the GR. All other sectors that gain relative weight have a substantial presence of women.

The GR did not change the concentration of workers among the four sectors with a large Latino immigration presence, three of which are common to the US and Spain: agriculture, construction, and trade (which according to the relative number of Latino workers ranked first, second, and fourth in the US and third, fourth, and second in Spain, respectively). The third-ranked group of occupations for Latino immigrant employment in the US is manufacturing of food, clothing, and other goods. In Spain, the first-ranked occupation is services in private households, or domestic work. The trends indicate that the GR accentuated the sectorial segregation of Latino immigrants in sectors such as agriculture and trade in the US and in domestic work in Spain. In other sectors, such as construction, the GR reduced their presence.

## 2.7 Conclusions

The data reviewed in this article show that Latino employment became more vulnerable than native employment during the GR in the US and Spain. Despite the differences between both economies, their labor market structures and dynamics; the historical differences in immigration from Latin America to both countries; the diverse types of “proximity” between Latin America and the US and Spain; and, the marked differences in the demographic characteristics of Latino immigrants, the effects of the Great Recession on immigrant Latino employment have some similar features that indicate increasing employment vulnerability during the current economic downturn.

The increased immigrant vulnerability derives from their immigrant condition given the “discriminatory institutional framework” and their working class status.

The segmented assimilation that rises from their unequal integration into the host society is mirrored in their occupations and positions in the segmented labor markets, which ultimately results in immigrants being “categorically unequal.” This condition is produced by a diversity of factors. A key factor during the GR has been Latino immigrant overrepresentation in sectors most sensitive in the event of economic crisis, such as construction. But there are other factors that exacerbate their vulnerability such as their overrepresentation in temporary and non-tenure jobs; selective and discriminatory layoffs; participation in the informal economy; overrepresentation among the young population and among those with lower educational level; institutional factors, including the additional requirements from the “institutional discriminatory framework”; additional demands from their families in countries of origin; and some differences in access to social protection.

The GR has followed different patterns in both countries, not only in the severity of its impact on employment but also in the duration of its negative impact. In Spain, the severity of the effects has been catastrophic and the effects still continue without any signs of recovery at the end of 2013. The lack of flexibility of the “Mediterranean institution-driven labor market” produced substantial negative outcomes for the labor market in Spain.

The Latino workforce has a substantial role in the labor markets of both countries. As a result of the GR, there is an increase in the relative importance of Latinos in the US workforce, but it has started to decrease in Spain, as a consequence of the number of returnees who have traveled to their countries of origin in the last 3 years. The flow of returnees increased from 2011 to 2013 and as of this writing (last quarter 2014) it is still positive. The Latino immigrant population in both countries has higher activity rates than natives and this difference is more pronounced in Spain, and even more notable among women. This is partially the result of institutional factors such as labor market oriented policies, the younger structure of the Latino population, and the higher propensity among Latinos to participate in the labor market relative to other groups.

In both countries, Latino employment has shown a greater sensitivity to changes in the economic cycle in comparison to natives. It increases more during economic expansions and declines substantially more during economic declines. Before the crisis, Latino employment grew at a faster pace than native employment. During the crisis, this tendency reverses and Latino immigrants’ situation in the labor market worsened relative to natives. In the US, this trend is observed from the start of the GR and the Latino employment disadvantage lasts while employment declines. As the “slow and anemic” employment recovery starts, Latino employment recovers more rapidly than native employment. In Spain, the decline in Latino immigrant employment is delayed until the second year of the GR, but in 2009, the catastrophic decline in employment begins and is stronger for Latino immigrants than for natives.

The effects of the GR on Latino immigrants have two main features in both countries. They have affected more immigrant men than immigrant women, and for this reason we can talk about a “Latino man-cession”, and have particularly affected youth and young adults (younger than age 45). On the contrary, the effects of the

GR have been different by education level in both countries. In Spain, it has more negatively affected those with lower education, but this has not been the case in the US.

The collapse of the construction sector has been a key factor in explaining the acute impact of the GR on Latino immigrant employment. Relative loss of jobs in this sector is four times higher than the relative loss of jobs in the labor market. Conversely, agriculture serves as a “shelter sector” for Latino immigrants countries in the initial phase of the crisis.

After analyzing the evolution of employment during the Great Recession for Latino immigrants in relation to natives in the US and Spain, we conclude that the GR indeed has large, negative impacts on employment for this population. In general, we can say that the effects varied by education level, gender, and sector, and that Latino immigrant employment as of this writing has experienced a reconfiguration in the US, but is declining without sign of recovery as return migration is underway in the case of Spain.

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