

THE REUNIFICATION OF THE SPOUSE AMONG RECENT IMMIGRANTS IN SPAIN. LINKS WITH UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Introduction

In March 2007, one of the most widely read Spanish newspapers published the following heading: *'Family reunification opens the door to 245,000 new immigrants in only three years. Government says a second stage in the migratory process is starting'*. The Secretary of State of Immigration stated that this increase in the number of foreigners who had been granted a residence permit on the basis of family reunification must be seen as a good sign because '[...] family reunification is a factor that promotes settlement' and '[...] favours integration into the host society and reduces the immigrants' risk of social isolation'. In the same vein, some researchers on immigration said that this trend will continue in the near future since 'family reunification is practiced by people who have consolidated their migration project after achieving economic stability and social integration' (El País, 15th March 2007).

These statements indirectly suggest that labour immigration to Spain is progressively declining as many migrants, who initially came as temporary workers, extend their stay and start to bring their families over for the purpose of settlement. Accordingly, family reunification is described as a secondary flow that is initiated once first-movers have lived in the immigration country long enough to make the necessary arrangements to send for their relatives. As a result of this view, family-linked immigration is often equated to legal family reunification and 'de facto' family reunification is completely neglected, which in turn reinforces the view of family-linked migration as a secondary flow. In countries where undocumented immigration has become a chronic and structural feature, as in the case of Spain, this view might be particularly misleading in describing and understanding the household dimension of international migration and integration.

To shed some light on these issues, I have utilised both official aggregate statistics and survey data to examine the size and pace of the family reunification process in Spain, as well as to analyse whether different family migration patterns are associated with differences in the behaviour of foreign immigrants in the host labour market. The obtained results strongly challenge the image provided by the Spanish government with regard to family reunification. On the one hand, my analyses indicate that family reunification –at least, the reunification of spouses- has been substantial and quite rapid in recent years. Moreover, the data suggest that spousal reunification on the fringes of the law has actually been much more common in Spain than legal reunification, which could be related to the rigidity of the legal regime, the inefficiency of the immigration administration and the soft enforcement of internal controls. In addition, variations in the manner in which family migration is organised appear to affect the performance of immigrants in the Spanish labour market, although such effects vary greatly by gender.

Previous research about family-linked migration and integration outcomes

North American studies have systematically emphasised the centrality of family networks in migration decision making and behaviour (Massey 1990; Boyd 1989; Grasmuck & Pessar 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Palloni et al. 2001; Curran & Rivero 2003). Since the mid-1980s, some scholars have tried to quantify the multiplier effect derived from family-chain migration (Jasso & Rosenweizg 1986; Jasso & Rosenweizg 1989; Yu 2008) and the consequences that a growing number of admissions on the basis of family ties may have for the receiving labour market (Borjas & Bronars 1991). In contrast, European scholars have largely neglected family-linked migration, despite the fact that it has been the predominant mode of legal entry into most European receiving countries for the last thirty years (OECD 2004; Messina 2007). Family-linked migration has been mostly conceived as a secondary flow, which is unwanted but unavoidable, as temporary foreign workers recruited in the 1960s extended their stay in host countries and enhanced their legal status (Jopke 1998). Such a view helps explain why academic research has historically focused almost exclusively on legal family reunification and legal requirements, rather than on the more comprehensive category of family-linked migration, its determinants and consequences (Kofmann 1999).

The term *family reunification* is commonly utilised to refer to the process by which the primary migrant or first-mover brings in immediate relatives, following the legal procedure established to this end by the receiving state (generally spouses and children, although the reunification of parents is sometimes accepted under more restrictive conditions). In contrast, *family-linked migration* includes not only legal family reunification but also migration for the purpose of marriage (also called family-forming migration), the simultaneous migration of the entire family unit (or part of it), the migration of cohabitating partners and same-sex couples, etc (see Kofmann 2004 for a comprehensive typology). Moreover, family-linked migration is not only migration classified as such by the immigration authorities of the receiving country; actually, many migrants admitted as refugees already had close relatives living in the country when their applications were accepted and, therefore, participated in some sort of family-linked migration. This scenario applies to migrants admitted as workers and especially to undocumented migrants, who are particularly likely to rely on family networks in order to make their way to the destination country. In other words, the term family-linked migration refers to the actual family ties of the migrants and how these ties influence their reasons for migration and their migration strategy, regardless of how they fit into the admission categories established by the immigration law of the receiving states.

This distinction between category of admission and actual family links of the newcomers is crucial in order to evaluate whether the legal avenues available for the admission of the relatives of migrants reduce the incentives for illegal migration. In the US, for instance, Massey et al. (2003) demonstrated that the tightening of border control goes together with increasing undocumented migration, a stronger role of networks in facilitating entrance into the country, and longer stays of the undocumented in the US. More recently, Cornelius et al. (2008) have shown that, as a result of these longer stays and their associated longer family separations, the profile of undocumented Mexican migration has diversified to include fewer solo men and many more whole families, women, and children that try to join their relatives on the other side of the border. Thus, it can be said that in the Mexican-US migration experience a clear link has been empirically established between immigration restrictions, undocumented migration and family-linked entries.

In the European context, empirically grounded research on these issues is still virtually lacking. As has been stated by different authors, the immigration literature in Europe, in contrast to North America, yields little in the way of quantitative analysis that documents the effect of network ties in promoting and sustaining international movements

(Blotevogel et al. 1993; Arango et al. 1998). In spite of this fact, family-linked migration is commonly viewed with distrust, and the idea that foreigners often make their family decisions in a strategic way to circumvent the restrictions on economic migration is widely extended. Actually, one of the main underlying reasons for such a negative view of family-linked migration has to do with the long-standing assumption in the literature that family migration mostly consists of women and children that would not work in the destination country. In other words, family and economic motivations were conceived as mutually exclusive in shaping the migration decision and post-migration behaviour and, therefore, family-linked migration was expected to have a negative impact on the labour market and the welfare state of the receiving countries.

Following this rationale, some studies have compared the labour performance of immigrants admitted on the basis of their family ties and that of immigrants admitted as workers or refugees. In the US, the results for immigrants who arrived in the late 1970s and 80s indicated that initial lower earnings and occupational status of kinship-based immigrants disappeared over time, after 12 to 18 years in the country (Jasso & Rosenweizg 1995; Duleep & Regets 1996). In Europe, Constant and Zimmermann (2005) have concluded that there are long-lasting effects of the legal status at entry on the earnings potential of immigrants in Germany, especially for immigrants admitted on the basis of asylum but also for those entering for a family reunion. In Denmark, refugees also experienced an employment penalty compared to non-refugees, although it seemed to be a temporary effect that disappeared after 5 to 10 years in the country (Husted et al. 2000). However, the negative effect on earnings of both asylum and family-related entry remained (Constant & Zimmermann 2005).

This evidence has reinforced the image of family migration as a type of migration contrary to economic migration and a type that is potentially harmful for the host economy. However, all these studies measured the impact of the *admission category* on the labour market performance of immigrants. Therefore, their results are hardly surprising since receiving states commonly impose many more barriers to the economic activity of immigrants admitted on non-employment grounds. Bearing in mind the aforementioned difference between admission categories and the actual family ties of migrants and their role in the migration strategy, a totally different matter would be to analyse whether migration motivated by family reasons –or at least partially by family reasons- has any impact on the labour market integration of immigrants (see González-Ferrer 2006 for an empirical example of the implications of this distinction in the case of Germany). In addition, most of the studies cited above focused on men's experiences, while it is well-known that women largely outnumber men in family-related migration categories and that the factors influencing women's migration strategies and outcomes commonly differ from those affecting their male counterparts (Zlotnik 1995a; Zlotnik 1995b).

The transformation of women's role in society, along with the increasing feminisation of immigration flows, have favoured a more nuanced view of the relation between gender, family and work in migration contexts. Scholars have moved from the 'immigrant women only' approach, which emphasises sex differences in migration systems to one that examines how gender as a social system contextualises migration processes for both women and men (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999). A growing number of studies have demonstrated that variations in the process of family formation and reunification of migrants, independently of their mode of entry, affect their ulterior settlement strategies and integration outcomes, in both the US and Europe (see Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994 for undocumented Mexicans in the US, and González-Ferrer 2006 for migrants from the recruitment countries in Germany). Although most Mexican wives that followed their husbands northward do not participate in the US labour market, the labour behaviour of wives that migrated jointly with their husbands and of daughters resemble the men's behaviour much more (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Cerruti &

Massey 2001). In addition, the role of family networks has been shown to be distinct and, to some extent, more important for women than for men in both shaping their migration decision and their post-migration behaviour (Curran & Rivero 2003; Heering et al. 2004). Although, immigration regulation and labour market policies, as a joint influence, can alter the functioning of networks and the way migrant families adjust to the resulting set of incentives (Raghuram 2004; Kogan 2008).

All these issues are crucial for an accurate understanding of current immigration dynamics in countries like Spain; where flows are highly feminised, a strong demand for cheap labour in women's occupations exists and immigration policies have not effectively discouraged undocumented residence and activity in the black economy.

Immigration admitted to Spain on the basis of family reunification provisions

In Spain, the Foreigners Law did not include a reference to the right of family reunification until its first overall reform in 2000. Since then, foreigners who intend to bring their spouse, their minor children (under 18) or their dependent parents to live with them in Spain must prove that: 1) they have legally resided in Spain for one year and that they are allowed to stay at least one year more, and 2) that they have adequate housing and sufficient income to sustain the family; the income requirement is generally met if the applicant can demonstrate continuous wage employment during the last three to six months, depending on the province, and about 300 € a month per relative. These conditions appear relatively easy to meet, especially in comparison to the requirements imposed by other EU countries like Denmark, where the applicant needs to have held a permanent Danish residence permit for the past three years or more, or the Netherlands, where the income requirement for the reunification of the spouse is € 1,260.28 per month as of January of 2008 - the highest in the European Union¹.

However, despite relatively soft legal requirements for family reunification, the administrative procedure to sponsor the legal immigration of immediate family members to Spain has been messy and extremely time-consuming until very recently; decisions generally took more than two or three years to be made due to the enormous backlog in the Immigration Offices. Figures gathered in Table 1 clearly illustrate this point. As can be observed, from 2000 to 2001 there were more than 17,000 applications for residence permits on the grounds of family reunification but only 59 were granted, which caused cumulative delays in the years after and explain why the number of permits granted was sometimes larger than the number of applications presented that same year.

Table 1. Residence permits for the purpose of family reunification, 2000-2007².

	Applications of residence permits on the grounds of family reunification	Applications granted	Family reunification permits over total initial residence permits (%)	% yearly growth of total initial residence permits	% yearly growth of family reunification permits
2000	7,197	7	Not available	Not available	Not available
2001	10,028	52	Not available	Not available	Not available

¹ Note that EU citizens enjoy a privileged legal regime with regard to family reunification according to which there is no requirement of previous residence for the applicant or visa for the relatives (Royal Decree 178/2003, recently derogated by Royal Decree 240/2007 from 16th February, about the entry, free movement and residence in Spain of EU citizens, in force since 2nd April 2007).

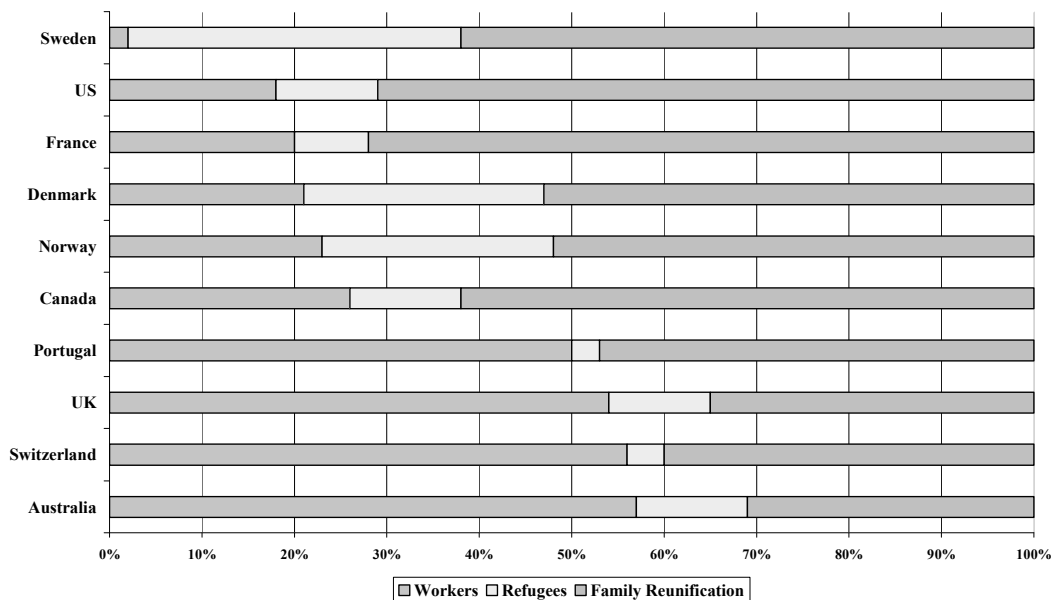
² The Spanish legislation does not differentiate between family reunification and family formation, and official statistics do not either.

2002	18,541	14,063	5.1	Not available	Not available
2003	32,561	33,814	16.7	-33.48	140.2
2004	Not available	71,532	27.7	6.47	111.6
2005	74,852	74,919	9.7	271.46	4.7
2006	113,146	97,759	38.0	-76.97	30.5
2007	144,584	128,161	39.4	23.14	31.1
Total		420,307	20.1	38.12	63.7

Source: El País (07/03/2005, 09/01/2006, 15/03/2007), Spanish Socio-Economic Council Annual Report (2007). Immigration Yearbook (several years).

This situation improved after the reform of the Immigration Regulations in 2004, which shortened the time the Spanish administration could take to make a decision and allowed foreigners to submit an application for family reunification immediately after applying for the renewal of their first year residence permit (even if they have not yet been granted the renewed one). However, even if the application for family reunification is accepted in Spain, it will still take a long time until reunification effectively takes place because the sponsored relatives need to obtain a visa in their country of origin, which is the most uncertain and complicated step of the entire process³. Taking into account the aforementioned difficulties, it is not surprising that legal entries on the grounds of family reunification to Spain did not represent, on average, more than 20 percent of total annual legal entries since 2002 (see table 1). In contrast, this percentage is substantially higher in other EU countries, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Percentage of annual entries by category of admission, selected OECD countries, 2001.



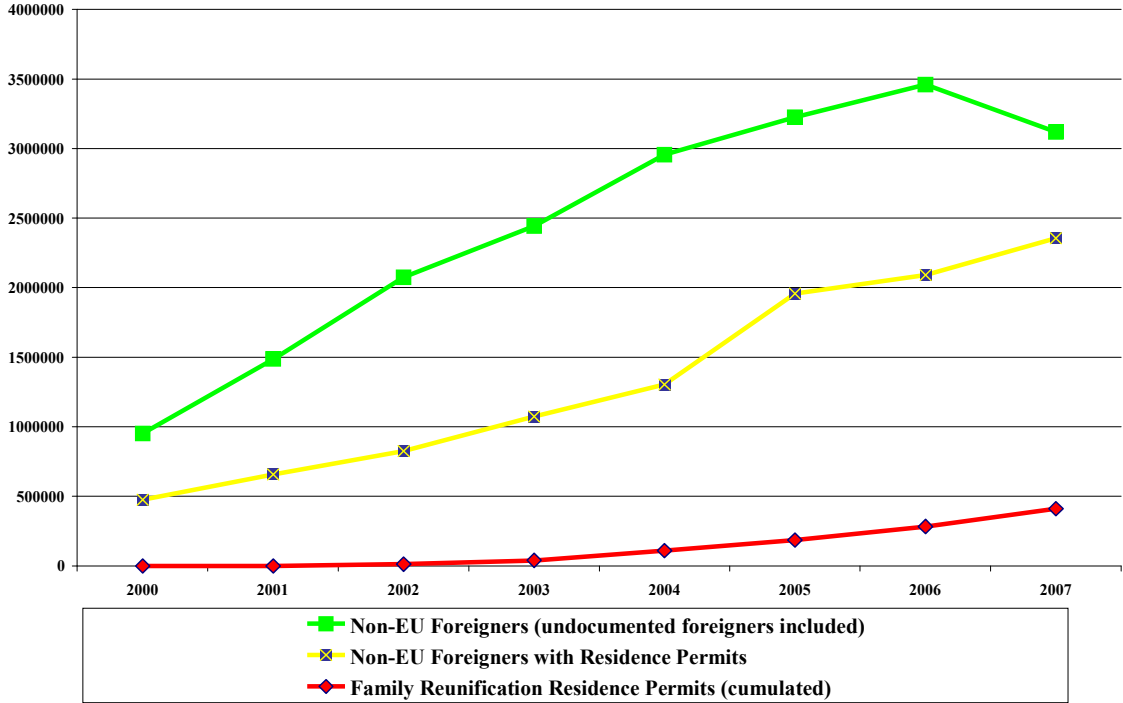
Source: SOPEMI, 2003.

The lack of a reasonably timely family reunification option within the legal system has probably contributed to the breakdown of the integrity of the Spanish immigration system, which was fragile to begin with (see Hatch 2006 for a similar argument in the US).

³ Newspapers and NGOs have periodically reported cases of unjustified delays and rejections of visa's applications for family reunification in Spain by the Consulates abroad (El País, 9.02.2008).

As can be seen in figure 2, the number of non-EU foreigners living in Spain increased from about 1 million in 2000 to 3.5 million in 2006, while the number of residence permits granted for the purpose of family reunification over the entire period amounted only to 420,000. Most of these newcomers entered the country legally as tourists but became undocumented immigrants when their visas expired and they overstayed (see the difference between the line with squares and the line with crosses in figure 2). In 2002, for instance, the proportion of undocumented foreigners living in Spain was estimated to be approximately 70 percent of the total foreign population; this percentage decreased to 40 percent in 2005 and 24 percent in 2007 (see Cebolla and González-Ferrer 2007). Bearing these figures in mind, it can be easily argued that statistics of permits granted for the purpose of family reunification clearly underestimate the actual size of family-linked migration to Spain, since a large proportion of the hundreds of thousands *bogus tourists* that entered the country over the last decade were likely practicing *de facto* family reunification.

Figure 2. Non-EU foreigners living in Spain, by legal status 2000-2007 (31st December)



Source: Municipal Population Register, several years. Residence Permit Statistics, several years. See Table 1.

Actually, foreign spouses who are willing to come to Spain have strong incentives to enter the country on tourist visas and overstay illegally. First of all, this route into Spain would allow them to join their spouses much sooner than the legal procedure of family reunification. Secondly, the labour status of spouses that overstay their tourist visas and of legally sponsored spouses is not very different upon arrival since the latter cannot apply for a work permit until having resided in Spain for one year⁴. Thirdly, and maybe the most important, the risks associated with an undocumented status in Spain have been substantially

⁴ This situation has slightly changed as of March 2008. Now legally sponsored relatives (not only spouses) who have lived in Spain for less than one year are allowed to register as unemployed in the Employment Public Offices. However, this does not imply immediate open access to the labour market but only the possibility of finding an employer who may want to hire them and, accordingly, support his/her application for a work permit.

lower than those of other receiving countries in the EU. On the one hand, the enforcement of internal immigration controls –following Brochmann’s definition- has been traditionally soft in Spain (1999). The number of expulsions due to undocumented residence amounted to 9,467 in 2007 (Ministerio del Interior 2008), which barely represents 1.5 percent of the estimated number of undocumented foreigners residing in the country that year (around 700,000). In addition, the implementation of regularisation programs has been a common policy instrument during the last decade –since 2000 more than 1,300,000 foreigners have obtained residence permits through this type of process- which have definitely enhanced the incentives to overstay (De Bruycker 2000; Cebolla & González-Ferrer 2008). On the other hand, undocumented migrants in Spain are entitled to public health care and some other social services that may help mitigate their –certainly- disadvantaged situation.

For all these reasons, it is very likely that a substantial proportion of the tremendous growth in the non-EU foreign population that has recently taken place in Spain has been related to family reunification processes that occurred at the fringes of the legal reunification procedure. This prediction is the focus of the next empirical analyses.

Data and the sample of first generation foreign married couples

Surveys that include samples of immigrant-origin people with information not only about the individual migrant but also about the family are uncommon. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) constitutes a fortunate exception in this regard since it contains information on the composition and characteristics of both migrant and non-migrant households, and since the sample’s size is large enough to allow separate statistical analyses of immigrants. However, some drawbacks still remain. First of all, naturalised immigrants are not asked about their date of arrival to Spain in the LFS, which often forces researchers studying immigration issues with the LFS data to exclude them from their analyses. Secondly, and most important for this study, it does not collect information on the individuals’ date of marriage. This means it is impossible to distinguish between couples that married before (at least) one of the spouses migrated to Spain, and couples consisting of two foreigners who met and married after their arrival in Spain. As such, the utilisation of the LFS data might lead to misleading conclusions about the size and pace of the family reunification process in Spain if the proportion of foreign couples that met and married in Spain was large and, because of the lack of information on the date of marriage, they were incorrectly classified as reunified couples. However, this is not likely to be the case. According to the recently released National Survey of Immigrants (2007)⁵, out of the total number of foreigners living in Spain, who were older than 15 at arrival and were married to another foreigner –i.e., my target population-- only 11 percent were in couples in which marriage took place after their arrival in Spain. Therefore, we can be reasonably confident about the reliability of the obtained results using the LFS data, despite the aforementioned limitation.

In 2006, the LFS (2nd quarterly) included 2,666 married foreigners who had arrived in Spain at age 16 or older and who were classified as ‘person of reference’ or ‘spouse of the person of reference’ in the survey. Approximately 20 per cent were married to a Spanish citizen and, therefore, were eliminated from my working sample. Out of the 2,133 individuals remaining, 1,188 are first-movers and 945 are spouses of these first-movers who lived in the

⁵ This survey has been conducted by the National Statistical Institute between November of 2006 and February of 2007. The sample was randomly selected from the Population Register and included 15,500 individuals born in a foreign country who were 16 years old or more, regardless of their legal status and nationality. Additional information is available at <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft20%2Fp319&file=inebase&L=>

same households⁶. Therefore, the final sample utilised for analysing the process of spousal reunification consists of 1,188 foreigners married to non-Spanish spouses. Their main socio-economic characteristics are summarised in table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of the immigrant population aged 16 or more at arrival (LFS 2006, 2nd Qt.)

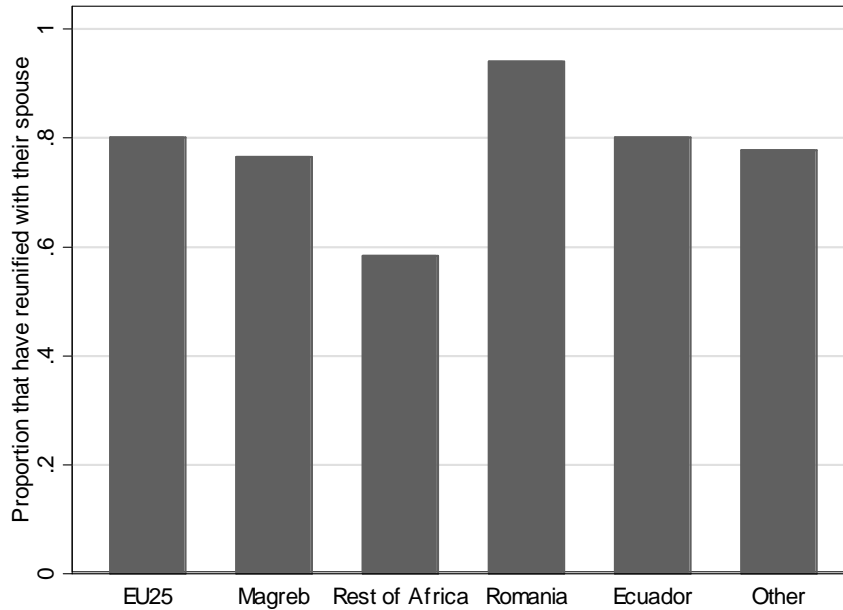
	Married foreigners who arrived in Spain at age 16 or older	Foreigners who arrived in Spain at age 16 or older, married to a non-Spanish spouse who preceded his/her migration
Men	49%	66%
Mean age (St.Dev.)	39 (11)	40 (11)
Years since migration (St.Dev.)	7 (6)	7 (5)
Education		
Less than primary	10	11
Primary	17	19
Lower Secondary	17	17
Upper Secondary	34	36
Other secondary (vocational)	5	5
Tertiary	17	13
Origin		
EU25 & other developed	19%	16%
Maghreb	18%	20%
Non-Maghreb Africa	5%	6%
Romania	14%	16%
Ecuador	11%	13%
Other countries	33%	29%
In mixed marriage	20%	100%
N	2,666	1188

Source: LFS 2006, 2nd Qt. Own elaboration.

By the time of the survey, approximately 80% of the foreigners who migrated after having married someone in their homeland had already reunified with their spouses in Spain. According to this percentage –and bearing in mind that only 11 percent of them are expected to be migrants who were single at migration and met and married their spouse in Spain- it seems justified to affirm that the foreign population currently living in Spain has largely completed the process of couple reunification, despite the fact that their immigration to Spain is quite recent.

Figure 3. Proportion of foreign married couples that live together in Spain, by origin.

⁶ The survey collects information only on those individuals who live in the dwelling, which implies that spouses that remained in their homelands are not included in the sample and that information on them is missing.



Source: LFS 2nd Qt. 2006.

In order to get a better understanding of this phenomenon, I will examine in more detail some of the factors explaining why some foreigners bring their spouses sooner than others, by means of multivariate regression analyses. Table 3 summarises the results of a logistic regression in which the dependent variable is having one's spouse living in the household (versus not). As can be seen, neither gender nor age at migration of the pioneer spouse (i.e., the spouse that migrated first) makes a significant difference in the probability of the spouses' reunification. In contrast, both education and time since migration appear as relevant factors in explaining the probability of having reunified with one's spouse in Spain. The least educated foreigners (those who have not completed primary school) are also the least likely to have their spouses living with them in Spain, compared to those with tertiary education (reference category). However, the differences between foreigners with tertiary education and foreigners with at least primary education are not significant (see education coefficients in Model 2 to Model 5).

The probability of having reunified with one's spouse increases with the length of residence in Spain, although the effect is not completely linear: foreigners who had been in Spain only 1 or 2 years appear to be as likely to live with their spouses as those who had spent 10 or more years in the country (reference category). In other words, foreigners who arrived in Spain between March 2004 and March 2005 have been particularly successful in reunifying with their partners almost immediately after entering the country for some reason (see the coefficient for '1 or 2 years' in Model 3, which is not statistically significant). What changed for immigrants who arrived in those years that made the reunification with their spouses much easier than that of their predecessors? One possibility is that most immigrants arriving in that period had come from countries for which family reunification or, in general, immigration to Spain was easier than those from other countries. As mentioned, EU citizens enjoy a privileged legal regime with regard to family reunification that allows them to bring over their spouses and minor children at any moment. In fact, as can be seen in Figure 3, married immigrants from other EU countries, along with Romanians, live with their spouses in the highest proportion, whereas immigrants from African countries live separated from their spouses most frequently.

In order to check whether recent changes in the national origin-mix of immigration flows to Spain might have been responsible for the unexpectedly high probability of having reunified with one's partner among immigrants who arrived between 2004 and 2005, I added a set of dummy variables that control for place of origin in Model 4. Results in table 3 confirm that couples from Romania are the most likely to have been reunified in Spain, even more than EU citizens (reference category) despite the fact that the privileged legal regime for EU citizens was not applicable to Romanians at the time of the survey⁷. Therefore, it seems that the safe perspective of becoming EU citizens favoured *de facto* reunification among Romanian nationals living in Spain. In contrast, no significant differences in the probability of spouses' reunification emerge between immigrants from the Maghreb, from Ecuador and from the EU25 (reference category), which is unexpected.

Table 3. Logit model predicting the probability of having one's spouse living in Spain at the time of the survey, versus not (coefficients and standard error).

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
(ref. man)					
Woman	-0.13 0.15	-0.22 0.16	-0.18 0.16	-0.25 0.16	-0.34 0.18
(ref. 17-25)					
Age 26-35	0.24 0.24	0.20 0.25	0.30 0.25	0.32 0.27	0.05 0.29
Age 36-45	0.25 0.25	0.25 0.25	0.27 0.25	0.35 0.27	-0.26 0.29
Age 45-60	-0.12 0.26	-0.05 0.27	-0.06 0.27	-0.04 0.28	-0.72 0.30
(ref. tertiary)					
Less than primary school		-0.99 0.28	-1.11 0.29	-0.85 0.31	-0.92 0.33
Less than lower secondary		<i>-0.47</i> <i>0.27</i>	<i>-0.51</i> <i>0.27</i>	<i>-0.51</i> <i>0.28</i>	<i>-0.66</i> <i>0.30</i>
Less than upper secondary		-0.12 0.28	-0.17 0.28	-0.24 0.29	-0.26 0.31
Less than tertiary		0.04 0.25	0.07 0.25	-0.09 0.26	-0.17 0.28
Other secondary		-0.14 0.41	-0.08 0.42	-0.28 0.43	-0.32 0.46
(ref. 10 years or more)					
Less than one year			-1.52 0.43	-1.93 0.45	-2.03 0.49
1 or 2 years			-0.40 0.30	<i>-0.62</i> <i>0.32</i>	-0.68 0.34
Betw. 3 and 5 years			-0.52 0.23	-0.75 0.24	-0.83 0.26
Betw. 6 and 9 years			-0.27 0.23	-0.34 0.24	-0.50 0.25
(ref. EU25)					
Maghreb				-0.27 0.28	-0.34 0.30
Non- Maghreb Africa				-1.15 0.34	-1.16 0.37

⁷ Since 1st January 2007, Romanian nationals can enter and reside in other EU countries, although they still have to obtain a work permit if they wish to work legally in host countries.

Romania				1.44	1.27
				0.38	0.40
Ecuador				-0.10	-0.36
				0.30	0.32
Other origin				-0.14	-0.45
				0.25	0.27
(ref. no pre-migration children)					
Pre-migration children					1.88
					0.18
Constant	1.26	1.53	1.87	2.10	2.03
	0.22	0.30	0.35	0.37	0.39
N	1188	1188	1188	1188	1188
Log-likel.	-599	-587	-580	-557	-493

Source: LFS 2nd Qt. 2006. Cells in **bold**: significant at 95%. Cells in *cursive*: significant at 90%

On the other hand, as expected, after controlling for origin, immigrants who had lived only 1 or 2 years in Spain appear to be slightly less likely to have reunified with their spouses in Spain than those who resided in Spain for 10 years or more (the coefficient for the ‘1 or 2 years’ variable becomes significant at 90%). Other factors that may help explain these results are related to the change in the immigration administration after the Socialists came to power in 2004, along with the increasing expectations that a regularisation program will take place soon, which is likely to have created additional incentives for immigrants to bring their spouses sooner than they had before. Unfortunately, longitudinal data or at least pooled cross-sections would be necessary in order to disentangle the ultimate cause of these results (see more below).

Finally, in Model 5, I added a variable that distinguishes between first-movers who already had children before migrating to Spain, and immigrants who had not. The intention here was to explore whether migrants with a heavier economic burden because of family size are more or less likely to bring their spouses to Spain. However, the LFS only collects information about the people who usually live in the dwelling where the individual is being interviewed and does not collect information either on the household composition at the time of migration or about members of the household who have never lived in Spain. As a result, we only know if the migrant had children before migrating to Spain if the migrant had already brought them to Spain (in other words, there are migrants in the sample who also had children before migrating but we do not know whether they did if these children have never lived in Spain). This implies that the large, positive and significant coefficient for ‘pre-migration children’ in Model 5 (see $B = 2.01$) might be just indicating that migrants who have brought at least one of their children to live with them in Spain are also more likely to bring their spouses, compared to those who have not brought any children yet.

How long did their spouses take to join them in Spain?

The conventional assumption is that immigrants do not bring their family over until they have integrated into the host society or, at least, stabilised their situation by obtaining a good and safe job. However, this hypothesis has been rarely empirically tested. Bearing in mind the high percentage of foreign married couples that have already reunified in Spain (approximately 80 percent), I decided to complete the analysis by examining how long it took married first-movers to bring their spouses to the host country.

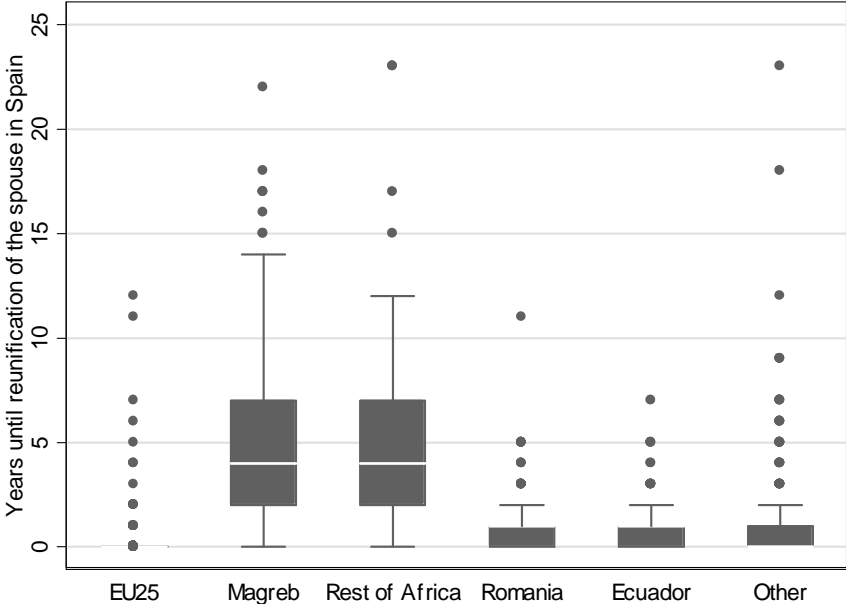
According to the data, foreign couples in the sample took on average only 2 years to reunify in Spain. Moreover, only 10 per cent of the couples in our sample have taken more

than 5 years to reunify in Spain. It seems important to highlight that these results are not biased by the inclusion of EU citizens, who enjoy a privileged legal regime with regard to family reunification as I mentioned before (see footnote 1). In fact, after restricting the sample to couples consisting of two non-EU citizens, the separation period before the spouses lived together in Spain is only 2.3 years.

These figures clearly support my expectation that a large proportion of married foreigners currently living in Spain have managed to reunify with their spouses on the fringes of the legal system. The Spanish Foreigners' Law requires one year of legal residence (plus having a renewed residence permit that allows to stay for, at least, one more year) to qualify for legal family reunification. However, the amount of time required to complete all the steps in the procedure until the relative is legally admitted to Spain is hardly ever less than another year. If one also takes into account that very few recent immigrants entered the country with a document that allowed them to legally stay for one year right away (since most of them entered with tourist visas), it seems virtually impossible that the 62 percent of couples that took less than two years to reunify with their spouses in Spain managed to comply with the law.

On the other hand, these numbers strongly challenge the idea that immigrants who bring their relatives – in this case, their spouses- to Spain are people who have already achieved some sort of economic stability and social integration and, consequently, decided to settle here permanently. Rather, it seems that spousal reunification in Spain was largely planned as part of the family migration strategy from its very beginning, because the couple's reunification might increase the migrants' saving capacity if both spouses work in the destination country.

Figure 4. Years that elapsed between spouses' immigration to Spain, by place of birth.



Source: LFS 2006, 2nd Qt. Own elaboration

In figure 4 I have summarised the distribution of the variable of interest -difference between both spouses' date of arrival in Spain- by place of birth. The line inside the box corresponds to the median time that elapsed until the arrival of the spouse for each origin group. In the case of couples from the Maghreb, for instance, fifty per cent took four years or

less to be reunified with their spouses in Spain, whereas the remaining fifty per cent took more than four years. The upper and lower limits of the box correspond to the first and the third quartiles of the whole distribution, which implies that in the case of married couples from the Maghreb, for instance, the central fifty per cent of group took between two and seven years to live together in Spain. Finally, dots correspond to the outlier values within each origin group⁸. The main goal of this graph is to show, firstly, the observed variation in the pace of spousal reunification across the origin regions and, secondly, the dispersion around the median for each origin group.

As can be seen, foreigners from the Maghreb and from non- Maghreb Africa are the ones that take the longest time to reunify with their spouses in Spain, whereas couples consisting of EU citizens took the shortest (75 percent of them took less than a year). Thus, contrary to my expectations, the older immigrant groups in Spain such as the Moroccans are not the ones reunifying quicker, but rather the opposite. This fact may relate to the different legal regimes applicable to immigrants from different national origins, differences in their family structure and gender roles, differences in their migration project and differences in their labour performance in Spain. In order to know a little more about the factors underlying differences in the pace of spousal reunification in Spain, I estimated a set of linear regression models in which the dependent variable is the number of years elapsed until the foreign couple reunified in Spain. Results from these estimations are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Linear regression models predicting the number of years elapsed until the immigrant couple reunified in Spain (coefficients and standard errors).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
						Less than 6 years of stay	More than 5 years of stay
(ref. man)							
Woman	-1.80	-1.63	-1.19	-1.17	-0.94	-0.53	-1.14
	0.22	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.18	0.11	0.33
(ref. age at mig<21)							
Age at mig. 21-25	<i>-0.83</i>	<i>-0.67</i>	<i>-0.45</i>	<i>-0.47</i>	<i>-0.22</i>	0.01	<i>-0.11</i>
	<i>0.49</i>	<i>0.47</i>	<i>0.44</i>	<i>0.44</i>	<i>0.40</i>	0.29	0.64
Age at mig. 26-30	-1.54	-1.30	-0.88	-0.92	-0.44	0.20	-0.66
	0.48	0.46	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.28	0.63
Age at mig. 31-35	-1.98	-1.78	-1.26	-1.34	<i>-0.77</i>	0.24	<i>-1.11</i>
	0.49	0.47	0.44	0.44	<i>0.40</i>	0.28	<i>0.67</i>
Age at mig. 35 or more	-2.67	-2.44	-1.61	-1.66	-1.02	0.14	-1.50
	0.47	0.45	0.42	0.43	0.39	0.28	0.64
(ref. tertiary)							
Less than primary school		3.35	1.03	0.97	0.42	-0.09	0.45
		0.42	0.42	0.43	0.39	0.33	0.62
Less than lower secondary		0.87	0.10	0.06	0.01	0.13	-0.07
		0.35	0.33	0.34	0.31	0.20	0.54
Less than upper secondary		0.04	-0.15	-0.18	-0.23	-0.04	-0.19
		0.35	0.33	0.33	0.30	0.18	0.54
Less than tertiary		0.06	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.05	-0.03
		0.31	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.16	0.49
Other secondary		-0.67	-0.71	-0.74	<i>-0.76</i>	-0.08	-1.40
		0.51	0.47	0.47	<i>0.43</i>	0.24	0.88
(ref. EU25)							

⁸ Outliers are defined as values of the variable of interest that are larger than 1.5 times the difference between the 1st and 3rd quartile of the distribution.

Maghreb	3.53	3.45	3.54	1.53	4.53		
	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.25	0.52		
Non- Maghreb	3.54	3.45	3.57	1.32	4.42		
Africa	0.50	0.51	0.47	0.52	0.69		
Romanía	0.10	0.05	1.24	0.45	1.87		
	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.18	0.62		
Ecuador	0.07	-0.03	1.05	0.19	1.84		
	0.35	0.36	0.34	0.23	0.58		
Other origin	0.52	0.44	1.39	0.24	2.43		
	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.16	0.51		
(ref. no premig. children)							
Premig. Children		0.15	0.00	0.00	0.00		
		0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Number of persons in dwelling		0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00		
		0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00		
			(ref. 10 years or more)	(ref. 1 or 2 years)	(ref. 10 years or more)		
Less than one year			-3.40	-0.09			
			0.64	0.29			
1 or 2 years			-3.84				
			0.35				
Betw. 3 and 5 years			-3.43	0.48			
			0.27	0.13			
Betw. 6 and 9 years			-3.08				-3.16
			0.26				0.35
Constant	4.39	3.68	2.36	2.15	3.93	0.36	3.54
	0.45	0.50	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.34	0.83
N	945	945	945	945	945	437	508
Log-likelihood	-2422	-2373	-2291	-2290	-2200	-645	-1300

Source: LFS 2nd Qt. 2006. Cells in **bold**: significant at 95%. Cells in *cursive*: significant at 90%

Results obtained in the specifications that do not take into account the length of time the first-mover has lived in Spain (see Models 1 to 4) indicate that women tend to bring their spouses over sooner than men, and that first-movers with less than lower secondary education have taken longer in bringing their spouses to Spain than those with tertiary education (reference category). However, after controlling for place of birth, the only group in which education makes a significant difference with regard to the time that elapsed until spousal reunification in Spain is among immigrants with less than primary school education (see Model 3). By region of origin, first-mover immigrants coming from Africa -both from the Maghreb area and the rest of Africa- have taken significantly longer than EU citizens to reunify with their spouses in Spain. On the contrary, no significant differences emerge between Romanians, Ecuadorians and EU citizens (see Model 4). Two main explanations may account for such a difference in the speed of couples' reunification across regions of origin: first, the greater difficulties that African migrants find in circumventing the obligation to obtain a visa compared to Latin-Americans and Romanians⁹; secondly, the lower propensity of most African women to work in destination countries compared to Eastern-Europeans and Latin-Americans, which makes the strategy of couple's reunification less profitable.

⁹ A visa is compulsory for Moroccan nationals entering Spain since 1991. In contrast, nationals from most Latin-American countries are not required to have a visa. The visa obligation has been imposed only recently on nationals from Colombia (2001), Ecuador (August 2003) and Bolivia (April 2007).

However, estimations in Models 1 to 4 did not include an important control variable: length of time in destination country by the first-mover. If we are interested in analysing how the varying conditions in the reception context (including issues such as legislation regulating legal family reunification or legal immigration, in general) influence the pace of spousal reunification among the immigrant population, then a key issue is whether immigrants who arrived a long time ago -when the right to family reunification was not even recognised by the Spanish Immigration Law, for instance- brought their spouses sooner or later than more recent cohorts -for whom both the legal procedure for family reunification and undocumented migration has generally been less costly. The main problem in trying to investigate this inter-temporal aspect of the process of family reunification is the cross-sectional structure of our data, which might result in serious bias of the results due to right censoring; since the analysis is done only for couples that have reunified already, the group of immigrants who have lived in Spain only for 1 or 2 years is expected to be much less representative of the whole immigrant population, who arrived in Spain in the last two years, than the group of immigrants who lived in Spain for 10 or more years. In fact, the importance of this potential bias can be fully appreciated by comparing the results obtained in Model 5 (which includes control variables for length of stay for the whole sample of first-mover immigrants who have already reunified with their spouses in Spain), Model 6 (which includes only reunified first-movers who have lived in Spain for 5 years or less) and Model 7 (which includes only reunified first-movers who have lived in Spain for more than 5 years). As can be seen, in the model restricted only to immigrants who have resided in Spain for more than five years, immigrants from all regions of origin took longer to reunify with their spouses than EU25 citizens, which is as expected according to the substantial differences in the legal regime applicable to EU citizens and third-country nationals. However, in Model 6, which is restricted to reunified couples in which the first-mover has lived in Spain for less than six years, no significant differences appear with regard to the speed in the process of reunification between EU citizens and Ecuadorians and other (mostly) Latin-Americans.

Finally, neither having children before migration nor the number of persons who live in the dwelling (taken as an approximation of household size in Spain) appears significantly related to the speed of the process of spousal reunification (see Model 4).

According to the results obtained so far, enough reasons exist to question the idea that family reunification (in this case, spousal reunification) is practiced exclusively by immigrants that have reached a certain economic stability and social integration in the country of destination, unless we consider immigrants who arrived only two years ago as fully integrated into Spanish society. Similarly, the belief that the increasing number of applications for family reunification is signalling the beginning of a new phase in the immigration process in Spain appears somewhat naïve; rather, it seems that a large share of immigrants coming to Spain during the last decade have actually conceived of their trip to Spain as part of a wider family strategy in which (at least) the two spouses participated almost from the very beginning. Doubtless, the very particular conditions in which immigration to Spain has taken place over the last decade (i.e., high growth rates accompanied by generous and repeated regularisation programs) are partially responsible for the extension of such a family migration strategy among our recent newcomers. An interesting question in this regard is to what extent this particular set of incentives has altered the labour behaviour of different types of migrants. People who migrate to another country following their spouses have been traditionally assumed to migrate for family reasons and, therefore, to not participate in the labour market (especially women). Is that also the case in Spain?

Links between the family dimension of migration and the integration process

The labour market behaviour of foreigners according to their family migration status

Beyond the implications that family-linked migration may have for the border-control side of immigration policy, one of the main public concerns surrounding family migration and, more specifically, family reunification, has to do with its potential impact on the host labour market and the overall economy. If immigrants admitted on the basis of family reunification provisions wish and are allowed to work in the country of destination, a potential manpower surplus, especially in those sectors in which immigrant workers are concentrated, might end up generating undesirable tension. On the other hand, if immigrants admitted through family reunification do not want to work or are not allowed to, an increase in the dependency ratio among the immigrant population is expected and, potentially, an increased burden on the social assistance programs as well.

As can be seen in table 5, labour performance of immigrants greatly varies by sex¹⁰. As expected, immigrant women systematically display lower activity and employment rates, and a higher percentage of the unemployed. On average, the activity rate is 26 percentage points higher among foreign men than women, whereas unemployment is five points higher for women than men (see Column 1).

Table 5. Percentage of non-active, employed and unemployed married foreigners, by sex and family migration status

	Total		First-mover who has not reunified with spouse yet		First-mover who has already reunified with spouse		Reunified spouse		Couple migration		Mixed couple	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Active	94	68	92	85	97	85	90	57	92	76	94	64
Employed	81	51	79	74	85	78	73	41	81	58	80	41
Unemployed	7	13	6	11	8	6	11	13	5	11	10	17
N	2,346		220		482		482		698		464	

Source: LFS 2006, 2nd Qt. Own elaboration

However, labour performance also varies by family migration status¹¹. As can be observed in table 5, reunified spouses are the group with the lowest activity and employment rates for both men and women. Note, however, that the activity rate of reunified wives is virtually the same as the average activity rate for Spanish women between 16 and 64 (LFS, 2006). In contrast, first-movers who have already joined their spouses in Spain are the ones with the highest activity and employment percentages in both sexes. In any case, differences across family-migration status groups are larger among women than among men, a fact that confirms the gendered nature of the migration process. On the other hand, some of the most striking figures in table 5 are those for mixed couples; in spite of being traditionally portrayed

¹⁰ Note that in this table and the following analyses that the sample is enlarged compared to the previous sections. Now, both spouses of the first-movers and immigrants married to Spanish partners are included as well.

¹¹ Married couples in which both spouses arrived in Spain the same year are classified as ‘couple migration’, in order to investigate whether “arriving together” has a distinct labour pattern or not. These couples were classified as couples that took less than one year to reunify in the analysis of the previous section.

as the most integrated individuals, foreigners married to Spanish spouses present the highest unemployment percentage among women and the second highest among men. Given the numerical importance of mixed marriages in Spain and their potential meaning for the whole integration process, the characteristics of spouses in these mixed couples should be analysed more in detail to determine the reasons behind these unexpected results.

In order to investigate whether the differences in Table 5 do effectively reflect actual differences in the labour behaviour of migrants that came to Spain following different family trajectories, I carried out multivariate analyses for men and women separately to study the probability of being active, employed and unemployed after controlling for differences in age, level of education, length of residence and region of origin. As can be seen in table 6 and table 7, the obtained results generally confirm that the type of family migration is associated with differences in the individuals' labour behaviour in the country of destination, especially for women. In fact, in the case of men (see table 6), the only category significantly different from the rest is the group of first-movers who have already been joined by their wives; they are the most likely to be active and employed compared to men who arrived in Spain after their wives (reference category).

Table 6. Logit model predicting the probability of being active, employed and unemployed by family migration status. Men (coefficients and standard errors).

	Active	Active	Employed	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployed
(ref. Age 17-25)						
26-35	0.27	<i>0.25</i>	<i>0.16</i>	<i>0.15</i>	-0.13	-0.13
	0.14	<i>0.14</i>	<i>0.09</i>	<i>0.09</i>	0.14	0.14
36-55	-0.00	-0.00	<i>-0.00</i>	<i>-0.00</i>	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	0.00	0.00
(ref. tertiary)						
Less than primary school	-0.45	-0.48	-0.27	-0.30	0.01	0.14
Less than lower secondary	0.50	0.52	0.32	0.33	0.44	0.46
Less than upper secondary	0.19	0.18	0.00	-0.01	-0.04	0.02
Less than tertiary	0.47	0.47	0.27	0.28	0.38	0.39
Other secondary	-0.18	-0.14	-0.09	-0.08	-0.33	-0.27
	0.45	0.46	0.28	0.28	0.43	0.43
	-0.08	-0.05	0.09	0.10	-0.39	-0.35
	0.40	0.40	0.24	0.25	0.36	0.36
	-0.08	-0.06	0.47	0.44	-0.94	-0.80
	0.62	0.63	0.45	0.46	0.78	0.78
(ref. less than 1 year of residence)						
1 to 2	-1.83	-1.40	<i>-0.80</i>	-0.54	0.47	0.46
	0.59	0.62	<i>0.44</i>	0.46	0.63	0.67
Betw, 3 to 5	<i>-0.86</i>	-0.51	-0.32	-0.14	-0.02	0.07
	<i>0.49</i>	0.51	0.31	0.32	0.44	0.47
Betw. 6 to 9	-0.42	-0.20	0.11	0.21	-0.37	-0.26
	0.40	0.42	0.24	0.26	0.35	0.37
10 or more	-0.35	-0.25	-0.02	0.00	-0.25	-0.17
	0.40	0.41	0.24	0.24	0.33	0.34
(ref. EU25)						
Maghreb	-0.12	-0.41	-0.41	<i>-0.54</i>	1.29	1.34
	0.41	0.43	0.28	<i>0.29</i>	0.50	0.52
Non- Maghreb Africa	0.80	0.61	-0.12	-0.24	1.30	1.42
	0.69	0.71	0.37	0.38	0.58	0.59
Romania	<i>0.88</i>	0.67	<i>0.66</i>	0.57	0.05	0.12
	<i>0.50</i>	0.51	<i>0.34</i>	0.35	0.64	0.66
Ecuador	0.71	0.61	0.24	0.21	0.05	0.10
	0.57	0.58	0.34	0.35	0.68	0.70

Others	0.55	0.42	-0.09	-0.14	1.28	1.29
	0.37	0.37	0.25	0.26	0.47	0.48
(ref. reunified spouse)						
First-mover pending reunification		0.22		0.49		-0.79
		0.53		0.35		0.53
First-mover who has already reunified		1.03		0.74		-0.36
		0.51		0.31		0.44
Couple migration		-0.08		0.27		-0.56
		0.45		0.30		0.45
Mixed couple		0.31		0.38		-0.02
		0.56		0.35		0.49
Constant	-1.41	-1.38	-1.20	-1.52	-0.70	-0.46
	2.68	2.78	1.78	1.84	2.69	2.82
N	1142	1142	1142	1142	1142	1142
Log-likelihood	-254	-249	-532	-528	-288	-286

Source: LFS 2nd Qt. 2006. Cells in **bold**: significant at 95%. Cells in *curly*: significant at 90%

In contrast, the obtained results for the sub-sample of women reveal a much variegated situation. Unlike their male counterparts, age, education and origin make significant differences in foreign women's likelihood of being active and employed (see Columns 1 and 3 in table 7). In addition, with regard to family migration status, foreign women who arrived in Spain several years after their husbands (reunified spouses) are the group least likely to be active and employed in the Spanish labour market, along with foreign women married to Spanish men (see the non-significant coefficients for the variable 'mixed couple' in Columns 2 and 4 in table 7), which are also the most likely to be unemployed (see the significant positive coefficient for 'mixed couple' in Column 6).

Table 7. Logit model predicting the probability of being active, employed and unemployed by family migration status. Women (coefficients and standard errors).

	Active	Active	Employed	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployed
(ref. Age 17-25)						
26-35	0.24	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.00	0.03
	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.09
36-55	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
(ref. tertiary)						
Less than primary school	-1.12	-1.19	-0.60	-0.77	-0.65	-0.54
	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.32	0.40	0.41
Less than lower secondary	-0.34	-0.36	0.09	0.01	-0.15	-0.06
	0.26	0.26	0.23	0.24	0.31	0.32
Less than upper secondary	-0.50	-0.57	-0.06	-0.16	-0.33	-0.26
	0.24	0.24	0.21	0.21	0.30	0.30
Less than tertiary	-0.42	-0.51	-0.02	-0.16	-0.25	-0.13
	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.19	0.26	0.26
Other secondary	-0.25	-0.18	-0.54	-0.48	0.59	0.63
	0.37	0.37	0.33	0.34	0.40	0.40
(ref. less than 1 year of residence)						
1 to 2	-0.91	-0.94	-1.05	-1.19	0.47	0.69
	0.34	0.36	0.35	0.37	0.45	0.47
Betw, 3 to 5	-0.23	-0.20	-0.30	-0.38	0.40	0.62
	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.27	0.35	0.37
Betw. 6 to 9	-0.04	-0.04	-0.11	-0.18	0.05	0.22
	0.23	0.24	0.22	0.23	0.33	0.34
10 or more	0.11	-0.04	-0.18	-0.39	0.26	0.42
	0.24	0.25	0.23	0.24	0.34	0.35

(ref. EU25)						
Maghreb	-0.53	-0.54	-1.03	-1.23	0.75	0.92
	0.25	0.26	0.26	0.28	0.38	0.39
Non- Maghreb Africa	0.51	0.59	-0.31	-0.38	1.54	1.73
	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.39	0.46	0.48
Romania	1.43	1.41	0.93	0.83	<i>0.69</i>	0.90
	0.28	0.28	0.24	0.25	<i>0.37</i>	0.38
Ecuador	1.24	1.19	0.84	0.68	0.43	0.61
	0.29	0.30	0.26	0.27	0.41	0.42
Others	0.94	0.92	0.53	0.47	0.63	0.64
	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.32	0.32
(ref. reunified spouse)						
First-mover pending reunification		1.41		1.36		-0.04
		0.36		0.30		0.40
First-mover who has already reunified		1.37		1.62		-0.69
		0.36		0.33		0.50
Couple migration		0.43		0.27		-0.01
		0.19		0.17		0.24
Mixed couple		0.02		-0.30		0.63
		0.20		0.19		0.25
Constant	-3.64	-3.66	-4.06	-3.69	-2.77	-3.77
	1.22	1.28	1.20	1.26	1.57	1.63
Log-likelihood	1204	1204	1204	1204	1204	1204
N	-657.60	-639.23	-745.83	-713.56	-456.78	-450.41

Source: LFS 2nd Qt. 2006. Cells in **bold**: significant at 95%. Cells in *cursive*: significant at 90%

These results may appear slightly unusual to the reader since having a native spouse is commonly associated with having more resources such as language fluency, networks and income, which increase people's employability. However, more available resources may imply also a higher reservation wage, which would explain why foreign wives of Spanish men have low activity and employment rates along with high unemployment percentages, and could be interpreted as a sign of higher assimilation (i.e., convergence with native women's labour behaviour). In fact, these results for mixed couples are consistent with those found by Cortina et al. (forthcoming).

Conclusions

The obtained results demonstrate that family-linked migration, in particular the reunification of spouses, has been substantial among the foreign population living in Spain, contrary to what is suggested by official statistics and the Spanish government. In fact, the data from the Labour Force Survey (2006) indicate that more than 80 per cent of married foreigners already live together with their spouses in Spain and, in addition, that it took very little time for them to reunify. Some of the main factors explaining these findings have to do with soft enforcement of immigration internal controls and the realisation of successive regularisation programs since 2000, which have created a pervasive structure of incentives to practice family reunification on the fringes of the law. In addition, the recent accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU might also underlie the unexpected large size and quick pace of spousal reunification among foreign couples in Spain. However, the cross-sectional structure of our data recommends some caution in interpreting the obtained results, which should be confirmed by further analyses using synthetic-cohorts and longitudinal data.

The relevance of these results derives not only from their implications for immigration control policy but also from their potential effects on the host labour market and the overall integration process of immigrants in Spain. To the extent that differences in the

way in which immigrants organise their families' process of migration appear to be associated with significant differences in their labour performance, especially for women, rules allocating visas and work permits to foreigners should start taking this into account.

References

- Arango, J., G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, D. Massey, A. Pellegrino & J. E. Taylor (1998), *Worlds in Motion. Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Blotevogel, H., H. Muller-ter, U. Jung & G. Wood (1993), 'From Itinerant Worker to Immigrant? The Geography of Guest Workers in Germany', in Russell King (ed.), *Mass Migration in Europe: The Legacy and the Future*, 88-100. London: Belhaven Press.
- Borjas, G. & S. G. Bronars (1991), 'Immigration and the Family', *Journal of Labour Economics* 9: 123-148
- Boyd, M. (1989), 'Family and Personal Networks in International Migration. Recent Developments and New Agendas', *International Migration Review* 23: 638-670.
- Brochmann, G. & T. Hammar (eds.) (1999), *Mechanisms of Immigration Control. Comparative Analysis of European Regulation Policies*. Oxford: Berg.
- Constant, A. & K.F. Zimmermann (2005), 'Immigrant Performance and Selective Immigration Policy: A European Perspective', IZA Discussion Paper No. 1715.
- Cebolla-Boado, H. & A. González-Ferrer (2007), *La inmigración en España (2000-2007). De la gestión de flujos a la integración de los inmigrantes*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales.
- Cerruti, M. & D. Massey (2001), 'On the Auspices of Female Migration from Mexico to the United States', *Demography* 38: 187-200.
- Cornelius, W. S. Borger & A. Sawyer (2008). Controlling unauthorized immigration from Mexico. The Failure of 'Prevention through Deterrence' and the Needed for Comprehensive Reform. Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego.
- Cortina, C., A. Esteve & A. Domingo (2008), 'Marriage patterns of foreign born population in a new country of immigration: the case of Spain'. *International Migration Review*, 42 (4): 877-902.
- Cortina, C., T. García & A. Esteve (forthcoming) 'Gender relations in intermarriage: lessons learned from the Spanish case', *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*
- Curran, S. & E. Rivero (2003), 'Engendering Migrant Networks: The Case of Mexican Migration', *Demography* 40: 289-307.
- De Bruycker, P. (ed.) (2000), *Regularisations of Illegal Immigrants in the European Union*, Brussels: Bruylant.

Duleep, H.O. & M.R. Regets (1996), 'Admission Criteria and Immigrant Earnings Profiles', *International Migration Review* 30: 571-590.

González-Ferrer, A. (2006), *Family and labor strategies in migration. Family reunification, marital choices and labour participation of immigrants in the host country*. Madrid: Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones.

Grasmuck, S. & P. Pessar (1991), *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hatch, P. (2006), 'Immigration Policy: Family Reunification', LWVUS Immigration Study, Background Papers.

Heering, L., R. van der Erf & L. van Wissen (2004), 'The role of family networks and migration culture in the continuation of Moroccan emigration: a gender perspective', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30 (2): 323-337.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994), *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1999), 'Gender and Contemporary Us Migration', *American Behavioral Scientist* 42: 565-576.

Husted, L., H. Skyt Nielsen, M. Rosholm, M. & N. Smith (2000), 'Employment and Wage Assimilation of Male First Generation Immigrants in Denmark', IZA Discussion Papers No. 101.

Jasso, G. & M.R. Rosenzweig (1986), 'Family Reunification and the Immigration Multiplier: Us Immigration Law, Country of Origin Conditions and the Reproduction of Immigrants', *Demography* 23: 291-311.

Jasso, G. & M.R. Rosenzweig (1989), 'Sponsors, Sponsorship and the Immigration Multiplier', *International Migration Review* 23: 856-888.

Jasso, G. & M.R. Rosenzweig (1997), 'Do Immigrants Screened for Skills Do Better Than Family Reunification Immigrants?' *International Migration Review* 29: 85-111.

Jopke, C. (1998), Why Liberal States Accept Unwanted Immigration. *World Politics* 50: 266-293.

Kofman, E. (1999), 'Female Birds of Passage. A Decade Later: Gender and Immigration in the European Union', *International Migration Review* 33: 269-299.

Kofman, E. (2004), 'Family-Related Migration: A Critical Review of European Studies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30: 243-262.

Kogan, I. 2008. 'Broadening theoretical perspective: The role of social resources and cultural capital in immigrant labour market inclusion. The case of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Germany and Israel', paper presented at the CEACS Permanent Seminar Series,

Madrid, 7 November 2008.

Massey, D. (1990), 'Social Structure, Household Strategies and the Cumulative Causation of Migration', *Population Index* 56: 3-26.

Massey, D., J. Duran & N.J. Malone (2003), *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Ministerio del Interior, 2008. 'Las repatriaciones en 2007 aumentaron un 6% a pesar de que la llegada de inmigrantes ilegales disminuyó un 54%', Nota de Prensa, 9 January 2008.

Messina, A. (2007). *The Logics and Politics of Post-WWII Migration to Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

OECD. (2003), *SOPEMI. Trends in International Migration*. Paris: OECD.

Palloni, A., D. Massey, M. Ceballos, K. Espinosa & M. Spittel (2001), 'Social Capital and International Migration. A Test Using Information on Family Networks', *American Journal of Sociology* 106: 1262-1298

Raghuram, P. (2004), 'The difference that skills make: gender, family migration strategies and regulated labour markets', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30 (2): 303-321.

Yu, B. (2008). *Chain migration explained. The power of the immigration multiplier*. Lfb Scholarly Pub Llc.

Zlotnik, H. (1995a), 'The South-to-North Migration of Women', *International Migration Review* 29: 229-254.

Zlotnik, H. (1995b), 'Migration and the Family: The Female Perspective', *Asian Pacific Migration Journal* 4: 253-271.