

## New and old waves of migrants: Romanian and Moroccan immigrants on the Spanish labor market

### *Overview*

Among the European Union countries, the Southern ones (mostly Italy and Spain) became the main destination for immigrants over the past 10 years. The major difference (in terms of migration) between the US and EU is historical in nature: while US was built as a *country of immigration*, European countries were historically *sources* of emigration and only over the past 50 years started receiving immigrants. US has a long history of accepting and integrating immigrants; for European countries, the problem of immigration is recent as immigrants have been a constant presence on their territory only over the past 20-40 years.

The ethnic background of US and European Union immigrants differs as well: while the highest proportion of US immigrants come from Latin America (41% in 2000-2005, 51% in 1990-1999) (Martin & Midgley, 2003), EU immigrants come predominantly from former communist countries and/or from former African colonies<sup>1</sup>. A demographic characteristic of the European Union as well is the large number of EU citizens who live and work in a EU country different from their country of citizenship. European Union has been built as an economic community promoting free trade and labor force circulation between member states. A citizen of an EU country who wants to live and work in any other EU country is free to do so.<sup>2</sup> Thus, EU countries have had to define special immigration rules and regulations for EU citizens as opposed to non-EU citizens. Although negotiations are currently underway to unify the immigration policies within EU, one cannot speak of a homogeneous EU-wide immigration policy; each country has the freedom to define its own rules.

After almost 40 years of Franco's regime, Spain joined European Economic Community in 1986 and its economy grew dramatically during the past 20 years. Economic prosperity had consequences in terms of migration as well: while in the 1970s Spain was a country of

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, there are significant differences between EU countries both in terms of the stock of immigrants and their origin. For example, while most of the immigrants in Germany come from Turkey, the largest immigrant community in France is that of Maghrebians coming from the former African colonies of France.

<sup>2</sup> For citizens of countries who joined the EU in the 2004 and 2007 certain restrictions apply.

emigration, late 1980s and the following decades transformed it into a country of immigration. This change started with some of the Spanish emigrants returning home, it continued with citizens of rich European countries moving to Spain in search of cheap housing and Mediterranean climate, as well as Africans and Eastern Europeans looking for better opportunities in a flourishing economic environment. The rate of immigration to Spain has thus increased dramatically during the last two decades, from 1.6 (per 1000 population) in 1991, one of the lowest in the European Union (European Economic Community back then) to 9.4 per 1000 in 2000 and to 17.2 per 1000 in 2007 (Fermin & others, 2005). Since 2000 Spain has had the highest rate of immigration among the European Union countries. The stock of immigrants increased as well, from 1.8% in 1998 to 9.76% in 2008, representing 4,473,499 immigrants in 2008 (Boletín estadístico de extranjería e inmigración, 2009).

*Policies.* Before joining the European Community in 1985, Spain did not have any defined immigration policy as the number of immigrants was negligible. In June 1985, Spain published its first immigration law (The Organic Law on the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain) introducing the important distinction between immigrants coming from European Community countries (extranjeros) and immigrants from other countries (inmigrantes)<sup>3</sup>. The law also included provisions regarding the legalization of the immigrants who were already in the country. In 1991 a second legalization plan was voted and implemented, followed in 1996 by a third one. In 1993 the first guest worker program was passed (for workers in agriculture, construction work and other services) (Calavita, 2003: 29). In January 2000 the Spanish Parliament approved the *Organic law on the rights and liberties of foreigners in Spain, and their social integration* (Ley Organica sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en Espana y su integracion social), one of the most liberal immigration laws everywhere. The law included not only a new legalization of undocumented immigrants, but also full social rights (public education, participation in the national health system, public housing and social security protection) to all immigrants, *regardless of their legal status*. However, they had to be registered with the local authorities (these authorities are not bound to report the illegal immigrants). Some of the provisions of this law were later to be abolished through the Law No 8/2000, but

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<sup>3</sup> One of the principles of the European Community (now, European Union) was to facilitate the free circulation of people and goods between the partner countries. Spain had to include in this law special rights for citizens of the European Community.

immigrants still enjoy many rights (such as participation in the national health system) regardless of their legal status. In 2001, two more migrant legalizations were approved; in 2003 a new law regulated the type of visas and the legal situations of foreigners in Spain (Ley Organica 14/2003). Since 2005 several laws and regulations have addressed the problem of an increasing number of illegal immigrants coming to Spain (in most cases, from African countries) (Real decreto 1988/2005, Ley Organica 13/2007). In 2008 a new law regulated the financial incentives offered to those immigrants who are willing to return to their home countries (Real decreto-ley 4/2008).<sup>4</sup>

If we consider immigration from pull perspective, immigrants come to a host country in order to fill out jobs that native refuse to accept. However, on one hand, if migration legislation is not based on a labor force perspective, immigrants will not necessarily fill out the jobs left open, but they will compete with each other on the job market. On the other hand, the selection of immigrants (who migrates) is influenced by cultural and symbolic factors not taken into account into a pull perspective (Stark& Taylor, 1989). This research will focus precisely on determining whether and why different groups of immigrants occupy different niches of work in Spain. We assume (following Borjas (2003)), that workers with similar levels of education and work experience compete on a national rather than regional labor market and they compete only against those with similar level of human capital. Specifically, we will evaluate the relationship between , on one hand, one's ethnicity/ race, length of stay, gender, age and education and, on the other hand, type of job among the two groups of Spanish immigrants.

Data for this research come from Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes (National Immigrants Survey), 2007, a recent survey done by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics and Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2007. The database includes 15465 respondents and more than 1500 variables about immigrants in Spain. The sample is randomly chosen from the local registers ( in Spain both illegal and legal migrants have access to certain services if they register with the local authorities. The local authorities do not share information about migrants with the migration enforcement agencies). Among many other items, it offers information

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<sup>4</sup> Current economic crisis led to an increase in the unemployment rate, especially among immigrants. The Spanish authorities decided that a good answer to this situation was to persuade immigrants to go back to their countries of origin. The financial incentives were one of the measures designed to persuade these immigrants to go back home.

regarding the timing of migration, demographic characteristics of all people living in the household, living arrangements, level and frequency of remittances, labor force participation and income.

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