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Research Material

The National Immigrant Survey of Spain: A new data source for migration studies in Europe

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The National Immigrant Survey of Spain: A new data source for migration studies in Europe

David Reher¹

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Abstract

Spain has recently become the destination for large numbers of international migrants and now ranks as a key focal point for international migration in Europe. Currently, approximately one in ten residents in Spain are foreigners, up more than tenfold from figures existing at the outset of this century. Migration has now become a major social and political issue in the country. In order to provide reliable data about migrants in Spain for researchers and policy makers, acting on a proposal of a research team working within the context of the Population and Society Research Network (*GEPS*), the Spanish Statistical Office has recently carried out an extremely ambitious survey of foreign-born persons currently living in Spain. In the course of the survey, nearly 15,500 persons were interviewed regarding a large array of issues pertaining to their migration experience. Important documentation, including the project report, the methodological specifications of the survey, and the anonymized micro data have recently been made available to the scientific community and to policy makers at the website of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística. The purpose of this paper is to describe this data source, its content, its methodological underpinnings, and the way the fieldwork and data cleaning were carried out. Examples of preliminary results will be presented so as to underscore the potential this survey affords for researchers everywhere.

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1. Introduction

Since the turn of the century, migration in Spain has become a subject of pressing social concern and the source of considerable public debate. The main reason for this is that in the past decade Spain has become an important destination for international migration, attracting immigrants from North Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and many other areas of the world. The intensity of these flows has increased yearly and has turned Spain into one of the major migration destinations in the world. This situation has been caused by a prolonged period of rapid economic growth, the needs of an increasingly fragmented labor market, and the result of incipient population shortages in key age groups due to the galloping process of aging underway in the country. The reality of migration has become a source of concern and public debate in this country both because of the intensity of the phenomenon and because for the first time in centuries Spain has become a country of immigration rather than one of emigration.

The social relevance of this theme has also turned it into a key subject of social and economic research. Most of this research has concentrated on the political dimensions of migration, on the quantification of its main characteristics, on the study of its economic implications and the effects it has on the labor market, and on the social difficulties emerging from this entirely new situation. Less attention has been paid to the way migrants formulate their strategies and how these become operational. Our understanding of the truly social, economic, and cultural dimensions of migrant networks is less than sufficient. These deficiencies have become an important handicap not only for our understanding of migration and migrants themselves, but also for the ability of policy makers to design adequate policies for this new and pressing social phenomenon. The National Immigrant Survey—which will be depicted in this paper³—was originally proposed so as to contribute to alleviating this knowledge gap in our understanding of migration.

The survey was originally proposed by a university-based research team working on migration issues within the context of the Population and Society Research Network (*Grupo de Estudios Población y Sociedad – GEPS*)⁴ for the Spanish Statistical Office (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística – INE*) in July 2004. Preparation took the better part

³ The Ministry of Education of Spain (Research Project SEJ2005-02396/SOCI) and the Ministry of Science and Innovation (Research Project: CSO2008-03616/SOCI) have provided financial assistance for this research.

⁴ The authors of this paper are members of the original research team and are on the Governing Board of the GEPS. David Reher is PI for this project. The team making the original proposal and responsible for the GEPS input into this survey was made up of Luis Cortés-Alcalá, Fernando González-Quinones, Alberto Sanz Gimeno, María Sánchez-Domínguez, and Mikolaj Stanek, as well as the two authors of this paper. Three of the members of this team were eligible to be interviewed for this survey, though none actually were.

of three years, fieldwork started in late 2006, and the final data were made available to the public in July of 2008. The result of this effort was the National Immigrant Survey of Spain (in Spanish: *Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes – 2007*). Henceforth in the present paper, this survey will be referred to either by its English name or by its Spanish acronym (ENI).

Spain already has a substantial set of population statistics that provide information on immigrants and immigration (vital statistics, census, population listings, labor force participation survey, etc.). Despite the wealth of these data sources, Spain still lacked systematic and representative figures on the immigrants living in the country. The ENI was designed to supplement the data from traditional sources by adding details on the migratory experience of individuals with respect to their families, to their labor force participation, to their housing conditions, and to a whole host of other related subjects. The National Immigrant Survey goes far beyond other official data sources in two fundamental ways: (1) It enables us to have access to a wide variety of information about the experiences of individual migrants, thus facilitating a more complete and integrated picture of migration, and (2) It includes a considerable amount of retrospective data that enable us to evaluate the migration experience of individuals from a longitudinal perspective. Both of these perspectives are essential if we are to begin to understand the nuts and bolts of this complex social phenomenon.

2. Basic features of the National Immigrant Survey

The main objective of the ENI is to provide pertinent information on migrants who have been in Spain for at least one year or who intend to stay in Spain for that period. It was designed to offer reliable, contrastable, and representative data for policy makers and for the scientific community.

2.1 The survey instrument and its component parts

The survey instrument is organized into different modules and includes over 1500 variables. The content of these modules is fitting testimony to the breadth and the ambition of the survey.

- Module 1: *The coresident domestic group*. This module includes a series of questions that refer to members of the household of the informant. These include: country of birth, year of birth, age, sex, year of arrival in Spain, and citizenship. It also includes a table designed as a matrix in which the kin links between every member of the household are defined, with links going in both directions. [Tables 0.1 and 0.2 of survey instrument]
- Module 2. *Socio demographic characteristics*. These characteristics include: region of birth, age upon arrival in Spain, languages spoken (max: 6), education, marital status, data on spouse (coresidence, citizenship, place of residence, year of marriage), CEB, coresident offspring >4 (education, linguistic ability), non coresident offspring (age, sex, birthplace, place of residence), non coresident siblings (sex, age, country of birth, citizenship, place of residence), parents (country of birth, age, citizenship, place of residence), migratory trajectory (country, year of residence, reasons for moving, co movers), and current place of residence for all kin. [Questions 1.1-1.43, 2.2, Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.1 of survey instrument]
- Module 3: *Conditions upon departure*. These include: type of housing, place of residence of parents and of partner/spouse, children and siblings, labor status (working, looking for work, student, etc.), sector and occupation, and working conditions. [Questions 3.1-3.11 of survey instrument]
- Module 4: *Conditions upon arrival*. These include: means of transportation to Spain, last country of residence before reaching Spain, contacts upon arrival, and cost of trip. [Questions 4.1-4.9 of survey instrument]
- Module 5: *Labor market activity*. This module includes a series of more or less parallel questions referring to both the current job (previous week) and the first job in Spain. These include: activity status (working, looking for work, etc.), number of concurrent jobs, sector, occupation and job status, and working conditions (including income). There are also some questions designed to bridge the first job and the current job, dealing mainly with periods of unemployment (number, duration). [Questions 5.1-5.25 of survey instrument]
- Module 6: *Housing*. There are a series of parallel questions asked referring to both the current residence and the first residence in Spain. These include: type of housing, year residence began, type of access (ownership, rental, etc.), housing costs (mortgage, total cost, rental type + cost), housing conditions (running water, kitchen, hot water, heating, etc.), general problems with housing and/or with surrounding areas, dimensions (square meters, number of rooms), and number of persons living in this residence (native and foreign-born). There are also some questions designed to assess the internal mobility of the person interviewed (maximum of 15 moves), including the number of changes of municipality and

details of each change (location, type of population), year. [*Questions 1.45-1.65, 6.1-6.14 and Table 6.1 of survey instrument*]

- *Module 7: Contacts with Spanish civil society and with society of origin.* These include: influence of compatriots on decision to migrate to Spain, contacts with society of origin (type, frequency), visits home (number, most recent, motives, duration), remittances (frequency, amount, to whom), ownership and investments in country of origin (type), participation in social and political groups in Spain (both for immigrants and not specifically for immigrants), participation in municipal elections in Spain, legal status in Spain, and plans for the next 5 years. [*Questions 7.1-7.15 and 8.1-8.7 of survey instrument*]

2.2 Some basic definitions

Within the context of this survey, certain definitions were used that are essential for interpreting the data and the results of the survey. The most important of these definitions are listed below.

- *Immigrant.* For the ENI an immigrant is a foreign-born resident of Spain irrespective of his/her nationality. A resident is a person who is present in the country, and has nothing to do with his or her legal status. Persons born abroad with Spanish citizenship from birth and who moved to Spain before the age of two are exceptions to this definition. They are not considered immigrants and were not eligible to be interviewed.
- *Normal place of residence.* This is where a person normally resides. It excludes residences during short periods (< 3 months) for vacations, home visits, business, and for medical and/or religious reasons.
- *Country of origin.* This is the country of birth.
- *Country of residence before coming to Spain.* This is the country where the immigrant had his normal place of residence before coming to Spain.
- *Household.* This refers to the coresident domestic group and includes both kin and non kin.
- *Job.* This refers to any remunerated activity carried out by the informant. Any type of work can be considered a job and an immigrant can have several jobs at once.
- *Income.* This refers to the amount of money an employee receives after all deductions have been taken from his wage.

2.3 Sampling strategies and fieldwork

The basic methodological aspects of the ENI were discussed at length by the Working Group set up to coordinate the survey and were implemented by the Spanish Statistical Office. A full methodological presentation of the National Immigrant Survey can be found at the INE web site (http://www.ine.es/daco/daco42/inmigrantes/inmigra_meto.pdf [in Spanish] or http://www.ine.es/en/daco/daco42/inmigrantes/inmigra_meto_en.pdf [in English]). Both Spanish and English documents at the INE web site contain greater detail about these matters than is available in our paper. The design of the survey and the strategies used for implementing the instrument were of the utmost importance for the success of the project. The main elements of these strategies are explained below.

Universe. The universe of the ENI consists of foreign-born residents of Spain, 16 years of age and older, who have been in Spain for at least one year. If the duration of their stay was less than one year, they needed to state their intention to stay for at least one year. This definition applies to persons born both in developed and in developing countries. The decision to prefer country of birth over nationality was made so as not to miss true immigrants who had Spanish citizenship prior to their arrival in Spain (typical of many Latin Americans), and to be able to study the process whereby Spanish citizenship was obtained. Persons interviewed had to be present in Spain at the time the instrument was implemented. Finally, persons living in collective residences (>15 persons) were not interviewed.

These strategies are not without drawbacks. One of them is that the survey universe includes persons born outside of Spain but who have had citizenship since birth, provided they were more than two years old when arriving to Spain. Many of these persons (though not all) are sons and daughters of Spaniards who were only temporarily abroad at the time of their birth.⁵ Another drawback is that the ENI tends to exclude persons who are involved in seasonal economic activities, especially in agriculture. Finally, certain types of immigrants living in collective residences have not been interviewed either. These problems notwithstanding, the universe of the ENI was defined in this way so that it would provide a clear and understandable framework for an often slippery reality.

Sampling strategies. One of the main tasks of the Statistical Office was to design an effective strategy for locating informants. It is well known that immigrants are a notoriously difficult population to pinpoint, and Spain is no exception. In the case of Spain, this proved to be a difficult but not an insurmountable obstacle, thanks largely to

⁵ Of course, one can always detach these Spanish citizens and work only with immigrants without Spanish nationality.

the existence of the *Padrón Municipal*. The reliability of the *Padrón* itself has often been criticized, especially because of what is felt to be certain inaccuracies in pinpointing current residents. From the standpoint of the ENI, however, the traditional problem of undercounting immigrants may only be a minor problem. This is because immigrants have powerful incentives to be registered on these municipal listings. There are two reasons for this: (1) There is no need to have legal status in Spain when signing up for the local *Padrón*, and (2) All persons on the *Padrón* have the automatic right to basic medical care for themselves and their families, and to educational privileges for their children. This remarkably liberal migration policy in Spain, practically without equal any place else in Europe, provides a powerful incentive for immigrants to be present on this population register, whether or not they are legal. In this way, a major potential problem of immigrants attempting to be 'invisible' becomes much less important. The *Padrón* may also have other problems related to the over counting of immigrants. This is caused mainly by registered persons who then leave the country without 'de-registering'. In order to limit the extent of this problem, in 2005 the Statistical Office introduced a requirement affecting all non-EU residents without a residence permit, obliging them to re-register in the *Padrón* every two years. The revised statistics began to be used on 1 January 2006 and thus the ENI was carried out under the new regimen of registration.

Despite these advantages, locating immigrants still posed many challenges. In the course of the pilot studies (October 2005 and April 2006) different strategies were implemented (500 interviews each). The first pilot study, carried out in October of 2005, was based on a random sample of foreign-born people taken from the *Padrón* and carried out in the Balearic Islands, Malaga, and Madrid. The results were not at all encouraging because, basically, significant proportions of people were not where the *Padrón* said they were.

The second strategy was also based on the *Padrón*, but this time it was a sample of households rather than one of individuals. Two types of household samples were generated: (A) households with immigrants, and (B) households without immigrants. In order to control for the reliability of these samples, each was drawn independently. The results of this test suggested that in 3% of type B households there were indeed immigrants present. This was the strategy used in the survey itself. A three-stage sampling strategy was used in both cases, with stratification of first stage units (census sections) in accordance with the size of the municipality to which the section belongs. A sample of ten dwellings (second stage units) was selected in each sample section.

Finally, a person (third stage unit) was selected with equal probability from among the list of persons born abroad and who reside in each dwelling.⁶

The survey instrument itself was adjusted after each of the pilot studies and in accord with the recommendations stemming from the discussion groups organized among immigrants and potential interviewers to test the instrument itself. An underlying strategy for the instrument itself was to avoid any questions that might be considered invasive or which required the informant to make use of personal opinions. While this limited the scope of the survey, it tended to give greater reliability to the data actually compiled. It took informants an average of 40 minutes to complete the instrument.

Fieldwork and response rate. The questionnaire itself was administered directly by interviewers from the INE. One week prior to the interview, a letter was sent to the residence explaining the project and requesting permission to carry out the interview. The Statistical Office used interviewers who came preferentially from the Social Sciences and who were concerned about social issues. Data collection was done directly on computers which had copies of the instrument in several different languages. For those informants unable to fill out the questionnaire in Spanish, a telephone hot line was set up (Arabic and English). This service was only requested by 26 persons.

Fieldwork for the ENI took place between November 2006 and February 2007. The reference date for the survey itself is 1 January 2007.

The response rate for the National Immigrant Survey was encouraging. A total of 15,465 interviews were carried out. A total of 32,541 households were visited initially. From this total, an effective sample of 17,700 households, in which there was at least one foreign-born person 16 years and older, was generated. The response rate of 87.4%, with respect to this effective sample, was obtained. This rate compares favorably with those obtained in other statistical operations carried out by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). The general response rate (the quotient between questionnaires obtained and total number of dwellings visited [sampled + substitutes]) was 47.5% (63% if we do not consider among the dwellings visited, those listed that were framework errors).

Both INE and GEPS collaborated in checking the data for errors, inconsistencies, and incorrect codifications, assisted by technology designed by the INE and especially adapted for a survey of this size. It is our considered conclusion that the resulting data are of extremely high quality, limited perhaps mostly by the ability of the informants to remember accurately all of the information requested of them.

⁶ More details on sample type, size, allocation and selection, estimators, calibration, and sampling errors, can be found at http://www.ine.es/en/daco/daco42/inmigrantes/inmigra_meto_en.pdf.

The survey results can be considered statistically representative for all of Spain, for the main autonomous regions of the country, and for the most numerous migrant groups.

2.4 Data format and availability

On July 23, 2008 the Statistical Office (INE) made the official results of the National Immigrant Survey available to policy makers and to researchers on their web site (www.ine.es). All of this material is accessible free of charge to anyone interested. These data include:

- *Preview of results* released in May 2008. These consist of a few general tables and are of limited use to researchers.
- *Survey instrument*. This set of files contains the instrument in Spanish, English, French, German, Arabic, and Romanian. Only the Spanish version contains the variable names within the instrument itself.
- *Interactive tables*. A series of tables have been set up allowing users to design their own tables for specific research needs. The system used is the same as the one used for other INE databases (census, vital statistics, labor force participation survey, etc.). [*Table titles in Spanish.*]
- *Support documentation*. The website also has auxiliary documentation, including a history of the initiative, the methodology used in the survey, and the main classifications. This documentation was prepared by specialists at the INE. [*Only available in Spanish*]
- *Project report*. There is a book-length project report (*Informe de la Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes -2007*) written by our own research team (Reher et al. 2008). This report can be downloaded in its entirety or by chapters. [*Only available in Spanish*]
- *Micro data*. The website also contains the micro data from the ENI with one support document.
 - There is a document containing all of the variables integrating the database. This includes: variable name, explanation, question it relates to in the instrument, string/numeric, length, and variable labels. [*Only available in Spanish*]
 - The data can be downloaded as a text file and input into whatever program a researcher prefers to use (SPSS, Stata, SAS, etc.). Since the database contains nearly 1,600 variables, importing it is at times a bit of a dizzying prospect. With a little patience it can be done with no major problem.

The micro data have been anonymized in the following ways:

- (1) All name fields and all place names have been removed.
- (2) All reference to the municipality of residence has been replaced by size categories.
- (3) The number of occupations and economic sectors have been re-coded into one-digit and two-digit classifications, respectively.
- (4) Certain countries of origin with few immigrants have been regrouped into larger categories.

These data also include two variables that can be used to weight the different statistical analysis. One of them (*FACTORP*) is a weight for individuals, and the other (*FACTORV*) contains a weight for households. For example, any analysis using *FACTORP* will yield a total number of cases of approximately 4.5 million persons. Any analysis using *FACTORV* will yield a total of approximately 2.2 million cases. These weights help fit the survey results to the actual sample frame for Spain. Age, sex, origin and region of Spain have been used in defining these weights. These projections refer to 1 January 2007.

In order to facilitate the task of generating a usable data file, a data dictionary file (with the variables' names, positions, and value labels) has been made available for researchers at our research group's web site: http://www.geps.es/fileadmin/docs/ENI2007_DLIST_GEPS.sps.

3. Some immigrant characteristics in the light of ENI

3.1 Basic sample characteristics

A total of 15,465 interviews were carried out in the National Immigrant Survey. This total is large enough to contain pertinent information on a large number of migratory groups. Table 1 contains the main groups included in the survey, the actual number of interviews carried out, and the weighted sample size. These data give an idea as to just how rich the potential afforded by data from this survey actually is.

Immigrants in Spain come from a relatively limited number of countries, especially in comparison with the situation in other parts of Europe. Latin Americans, as well as persons from Western Europe, Morocco, and Eastern Europe (mainly Romania) stand out. Even though the ENI gathers information on immigrants from 143 different countries, 80% of them come from a total of 20 countries, and 60% come from a total of 10. Moroccans, Romanians, and Ecuadorians represent 30% of the total

number of immigrants resident in Spain. Most of the immigrants interviewed are persons who arrived in Spain over the past 10 years. By implication these are new groups, with relatively shallow links with Spanish society (Table 2).

Table 1: Immigrants in the ENI by country of origin. Sample size and population represented in the survey

| | Sample Size | Population | Percent | Cumulated Percent |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|---------|-------------------|
| Morocco | 1,850 | 539,773 | 11.9% | 11.9% |
| Romania | 1,335 | 430,930 | 9.5% | 21.4% |
| Ecuador | 1,308 | 371,743 | 8.2% | 29.7% |
| Colombia | 1,031 | 299,479 | 6.6% | 36.3% |
| United Kingdom | 764 | 269,470 | 6.0% | 42.2% |
| Argentina | 793 | 231,630 | 5.1% | 47.3% |
| France | 948 | 203,309 | 4.5% | 51.8% |
| Germany | 628 | 159,922 | 3.5% | 55.4% |
| Bolivia | 465 | 157,732 | 3.5% | 58.9% |
| Peru | 404 | 138,593 | 3.1% | 61.9% |
| Venezuela | 382 | 106,220 | 2.3% | 64.3% |
| Bulgaria | 323 | 99,919 | 2.2% | 66.5% |
| Portugal | 508 | 88,017 | 1.9% | 68.4% |
| Brazil | 345 | 82,401 | 1.8% | 70.2% |
| Cuba | 343 | 82,083 | 1.8% | 72.0% |
| Dominican Republic | 282 | 80,115 | 1.8% | 73.8% |
| Uruguay | 259 | 79,800 | 1.8% | 75.6% |
| Ukraine | 223 | 67,587 | 1.5% | 77.1% |
| Italy | 193 | 59,249 | 1.3% | 78.4% |
| Switzerland | 228 | 56,247 | 1.2% | 79.6% |
| China | 121 | 53,887 | 1.2% | 80.8% |
| Chile | 171 | 53,047 | 1.2% | 82.0% |
| Algeria | 203 | 52,829 | 1.2% | 83.2% |
| Other Countries | 2,358 | 762,541 | 6.8% | 100.0% |
| Total | 15,465 | 4,526,522 | 100.0% | |

Table 2: Immigrants by date of arrival and origin

| | Before 1986 | 1987- 1991 | 1992- 1996 | 1997- 2001 | 2002- 2007 | d.n. | Total |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------|-------|
| Developed Countries | 36.7 | 8.2 | 9.2 | 18.0 | 27.0 | 1.1 | 100 |
| Andean Countries | 2.0 | 3.1 | 3.6 | 47.7 | 42.0 | 1.6 | 100 |
| Other Latin American | 16.9 | 7.4 | 6.2 | 20.8 | 47.4 | 1.2 | 100 |
| Africa | 16.2 | 8.9 | 12.2 | 29.4 | 30.8 | 2.6 | 100 |
| Other European, rest of world | 4.4 | 3.0 | 4.9 | 28.2 | 58.2 | 1.3 | 100 |
| Total | 15.3 | 6.0 | 7.1 | 28.9 | 41.2 | 1.5 | 100 |

Note: The general groups of origins used for this table are: 'Developed countries' (EU 15, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Norway, USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand), 'Andean countries' (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia), and Other European and rest of world (This category is dominated by nations from Eastern Europe, but also includes countries in Asia and Oceania.). The other categories are self-explanatory.

When looking at the characteristics of migrants according to origin, the ENI points to the existence of two general migratory typologies. On the one hand, persons coming from Andean, African, and Eastern European countries have all the earmarks of what might be called 'economic migrants'. They are young, they have arrived recently, they work in relatively low-skilled jobs, and they participate in tightly knit ethnic networks. On the other hand, immigrants coming from developed countries are quite different, with high levels of education, significant proportions of people who have come to Spain to retire, and a high percentage of persons living in single-person households and working—if indeed they are working—in highly skilled jobs (López 1995, Solé 2006, González 2008). Persons coming from other Latin American nations have much more in common with immigrants from developed countries than they do with persons from other parts of the world. It is quite clear that in Spain there are 'foreigners' and then there are 'immigrants'. The differences in these characteristics are so strong that caution must be used when using the same terminology for both groups.

In Spain there has been uninterrupted immigration for the past two decades. It is unquestionable that the intensity of arrivals is much greater in recent years, but the numbers of persons who arrived years ago and decided to stay is also important. The ENI enables us to see just how different these two migrational flows actually are. Even at the risk of excessive generalization, it is not unwarranted to affirm that immigrants who arrived years ago were often relatively well-off, often came as children within the context of family migration, oftentimes immigrated with a Spanish passport, and at present usually occupy relevant social and economic positions in Spain. Those persons who have arrived recently, on the other hand, have come from different world regions, are generally of working age, came as individual migrants, and occupy relatively low positions on the labor market. These differences cannot be explained alone by

considering the time these people have been in Spain, or by the potential for social mobility that it offers, but rather because we are dealing here with essentially different migration flows: one which is relatively tranquil, based on preexisting ties with Spanish society, and the other much more hectic in which persons come to Spain at the time of a sea swell of migration, coming from new countries, and have chosen Spain perhaps because it was an easier place of entry than other destinations that might have proved more attractive (UK, USA, etc.).

3.2 Socio demographic characteristics: A lesson in heterogeneity

In this section, we will give a very rapid rundown of some of the basic socio demographic characteristics of migrants in Spain, as shown by the results of the ENI.

The majority of persons interviewed in the ENI (79%) are not Spanish citizens, though a considerable percentage held a Spanish passport. If we only look at those arriving in the past decade, however, a much higher percentage (93%) does not have Spanish citizenship. Basically these migrants have come to Spain at economically active ages, though there is also a significant contingent of persons who are over 60 years of age and who have come to Spain for reasons of retirement. Immigrants from Africa and from the rest of Europe are predominantly male populations, with sex ratios near 100 among immigrants from developed countries. Migration from Latin America tends to be dominated by women.

Educational levels of immigrants in Spain are not dissimilar to those of the Spanish Population as a whole. This result has been reached by other researchers (Izquierdo 2003, Consejo Económico y Social 2004), though important differences emerge when controlling for age and origin (Garrido 2005). The ENI shows that 59% of immigrants have finished their secondary education and another 20% has a higher degree. If we look at education by origin, highest levels are found among persons from developed countries, followed by those from parts of Latin America. Africans have the lowest levels of education. It is interesting to note that women immigrants—with the exception of those from Africa—tend to have higher levels of educational attainment than men.

Table 3: Some immigrant socio demographic characteristics by origin

| | Spanish citizens | Average age | Sex Ratio | % with less than primary education | % with higher education | Activity rates |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Developed Countries | 30.5% | 47.1 | 104.7 | 14.5% | 29.1% | 55.9% |
| Andean Countries | 14.2% | 34.2 | 85.5 | 20.0% | 15.9% | 85.4% |
| Other Latin American | 37.4% | 38.7 | 81.8 | 14.4% | 28.9% | 76.2% |
| Africa | 17.8% | 37.0 | 197.3 | 25.6% | 9.4% | 72.9% |
| Other European, rest of world | 6.2% | 34.3 | 118.9 | 13.1% | 17.9% | 84.5% |
| Total | 20.9% | 38.4 | 109.2 | 17.3% | 20.5% | 74.8% |

If we examine the marital status of immigrants, the ENI shows that slightly more than half are currently married, followed by a large contingent of never married persons (38%) as well as 7% of persons who are separated or divorced (Table 4). The highest levels of never married persons can be found among Latin Americans, even though in populations of Andean origin the custom of cohabitation is widespread. The highest levels of married populations can be found among Africans where, besides, there is also a high proportion of persons married who do not live with their spouses. Divorce and separation are found most frequently among women. Marriage with Spaniards—a key indicator of integration— shows that the highest levels by far can be found in persons from developed countries and from non Andean Latin American nations. The highest levels of marital endogamy can be found among Eastern Europeans, Andeans and Africans, especially Moroccans.

The number of children ever born (CEB) for women who have finished their fertile period (50-54 years of age) is 2.03. This is a moderately low level of fertility, but is still 28% above that of Spanish women, and substantially below the levels holding in most of the countries of origin (with the exception perhaps of Eastern Europe). Not surprisingly, lowest levels of fertility are found among women from developed countries, followed closely by women from Eastern Europe, with African women having the highest fertility.

Table 4: Some immigrant family characteristics by origin

| | % Married | % Cohabitant | MHS | Single person households | % married with Spanish | CEB* |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------|
| Developed Countries | 56.0 | 14.6 | 2.75 | 12.2% | 49.1 | 1.52 |
| Andean Countries | 41.1 | 22.0 | 4.14 | 2.4% | 17.6 | 2.46 |
| Other Latin American | 49.6 | 14.1 | 3.53 | 5.7% | 41.0 | 2.10 |
| Africa | 60.9 | 4.2 | 4.27 | 4.7% | 23.3 | 2.57 |
| Other European, rest of world | 54.9 | 15.1 | 4.01 | 3.4% | 12.7 | 1.76 |
| Total | 52.3 | 14.4 | 3.71 | 5.8% | 29.6 | 2.03 |

* Women 50-54 year old.

Mean household size among immigrants is 3.7. In households in which there is no family nucleus, MHS is relatively high (3.26) and there is a high proportion of males (69%), indicating the existence of specific migratory strategies of certain population subgroups. The important presence of persons not related by kinship, especially in households of persons from Andean countries, from Eastern Europe, and from Africa, is also worth noting.

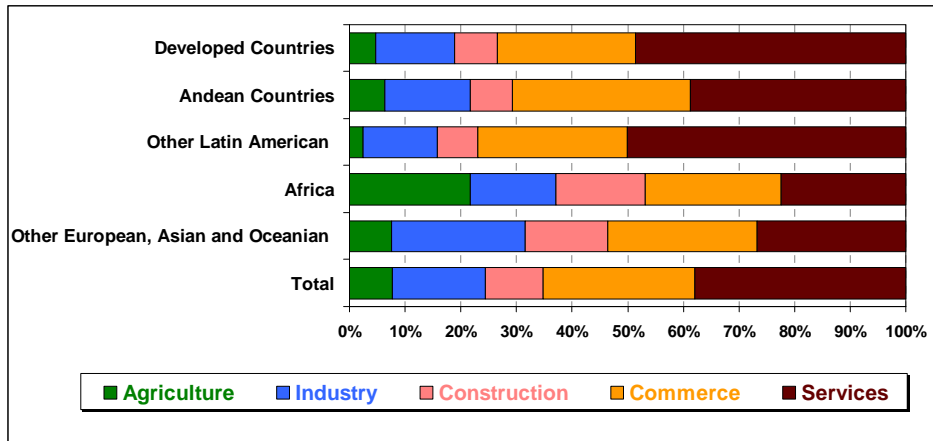
One quarter of immigrants' children continue to live in their countries of origin. More than one-third of these children are below 15 years of age and nearly 3 in 5 are between 15 and 29 years of age. The proportions of young children living apart from their parents are highest among immigrants from the Andean region, whereas for children 15-29 years of age it is highest among immigrants from the rest of Europe. These sorts of results point to the existence of different strategies involving the families of those persons coming to Spain. It is interesting to note that the percentage of African children living with their parents is far higher than it is for the other two groups of typical economic migrants. The extent to which we are looking at different migratory strategies or merely different family strategies is open to question.

3.3 Conditions upon departure and upon arrival

Levels of economic activity of migrants in their countries of origin at the moment of their departure for Spain are, generally, high and likely higher than those of their societies of origin. The type of economic activity and age upon departure are closely related, as are activity and the moment of arrival in Spain (Reher et al. 2008). Another determinant of people's economic activity at the moment of departure for Spain are the social and economic structures of their societies of origin. In this sense, people from,

say, Argentina, tend to be fairly highly qualified in origin, but those from Romania, Morocco or Ecuador tend to work in low-skilled jobs. Taken together, however, nearly half of the immigrants in Spain upon departure were working in the services sector in their societies of origin, whereas one in five were occupied in industry or in commerce, with lower levels for construction and for agriculture (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Economic sector of immigrants working in country of origin by origin



The means of transportation used to reach Spain depends basically on the country of origin and the economic position of the immigrant. The majority of immigrants arrive by air, followed by different ways of reaching Spain by land (cars, busses, trains). These two means of reaching Spain have accounted for nearly 88% of all arrivals in the country since 1991. Another 10% arrive by boat. Nine-tenths of all immigrants began their trip from within their country of birth, and nearly eight in ten have only lived abroad in Spain.

An extremely interesting aspect of the way migration networks function is the existence of contacts in the country of destination for recent arrivals. The proportion of immigrants with these sorts of contacts has increased steadily over the past years, and for the most recent arrivals (2002-2007), 83% of these immigrants had prior contacts in Spain. By implication, this means that most of the immigrants arriving recently already have family members or friends presently living in Spain. This fact not only stimulates

further migratory moves, but also conditions the way migrants make their initial adjustments to the destination society, possibly limiting their vulnerability in some cases,⁷ at least at first. Along this line, it is also worth noting that only 19% of immigrants were forced to go into debt in order to pay for their move to Spain, due probably not only to the existence of savings, but also by the ability of immigrants to make use of family economic resources afforded by the networks themselves.

3.4 Labor activity

The differences in working force participation among migrants from different countries of origin can be summarized in the following way: Persons from more developed countries tend to stand out in certain sectors; certain types of job qualification and levels of income; they occupy a preferential position in quality jobs, ones that require high levels of education; immigrants from non Andean Latin American countries occupy a position on the labor market that is not dissimilar to that of persons from developed countries, except that participation levels in these types of jobs is somewhat lower than for persons from developed countries; and immigrants from the other three origins used here (Africa, Eastern Europe, and Andean countries) tend to occupy less skilled positions in the labor market, often working in rural environments, in personal services or in construction.

According to the ENI, an important part of the active population currently works in the lower echelons of the labor market. Half of these people are employed in unskilled jobs or in jobs requiring low levels of skills. There are also considerable data suggesting that many immigrants occupy positions in the labor market beneath the levels that would correspond to their levels of education.

The working conditions of immigrants in their current jobs are substantially different from those existing in the jobs they had when they first arrived in Spain. People who arrived at the beginning of the boom period of immigration in Spain currently have much better jobs than those who arrived recently. This can be seen in several of the indicators that can be generated from the ENI (income, job qualification compared between current and first job in Spain, contract duration). If we compare, for example, the employment status of people's first job in Spain with that of their current job, this upward labor mobility can be easily seen. In Table 5 the largest changes affect the weight of unskilled workers that is 22% in first jobs and only 13% in current jobs, but is present at every level of employment.

⁷ In other cases, networks may make migrants more vulnerable: being part of a strong ethnic network may end up limiting access to the opportunities afforded by the host society.

Table 5: Employment status of current job by that of first job in Spain. Vertical percentages

| Current job in Spain | First job in Spain | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------|-------|
| | Large and small employers | Managers and professionals | Non-manual employees | Super-visors | Unskilled workers | Others | |
| Large and small employers | 46.4 | 23.0 | 8.6 | 8.7 | 4.2 | 10.4 | 11.0 |
| Managers and professionals | 12.2 | 53.0 | 9.1 | 3.4 | 2.6 | 3.8 | 10.3 |
| Non-manual employees, lower grade | 29.2 | 14.4 | 63.8 | 15.4 | 16.6 | 31.2 | 37.0 |
| Supervisors | 9.5 | 6.9 | 11.7 | 63.8 | 35.7 | 20.4 | 25.5 |
| Unskilled workers | 2.3 | 1.5 | 5.6 | 8.3 | 39.6 | 8.2 | 13.3 |
| Others | 0.5 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 1.3 | 26.0 | 2.9 |
| Total | 5.1 | 8.7 | 40.3 | 16.0 | 22.4 | 7.5 | 100.0 |

When interpreting these results it is important to remember three factors that can have a cumulative effect:

- (1) the time spent in Spain enables persons to adapt to the Spanish labor market;
- (2) the structural characteristics of the immigrant population in both moments analyzed; and
- (3) the institutional and economic conditions existing when the actual insertion into the labor market takes place.

In any case, a useful comparison of mobility would require a decomposition of the effects by several factors such as origin, education, age or duration of current stay in Spain.

On average, immigrant workers in Spain have had 2.9 contracts since their arrival in the country. Persons of African origin are those who have had the most contracts (3.5) as well as those with the highest incidence of unemployment. As many as three quarters of the people from Africa have been unemployed for a month or more at least once during their stay in Spain. Almost half of the wage-earning immigrant workers have temporary labor contracts. These high levels of temporary employment are most visible among recent arrivals, independent of their origin.

3.5 Links to societies of origin and to Spanish society

Migratory movements take place within social networks that differ by size, density, and relational intensity (Pascual 2007). Contacts with relatives, neighbors, and friends in the society of origin (and “from” the society of origin) are ways of keeping these links alive. Even so, as roots in Spain become deeper, it is also likely that these links will gradually begin to weaken or at least will have to share relevance with links that have been formed in the host country.

An initial snapshot of these links can be found in the initial decision to migrate, which is not normally taken in a social void, but rather reflects the influence of an individual’s immediate surroundings. Results from the ENI show that half of the immigrants interviewed were influenced in their decision to migrate by other persons they knew who had already immigrated to Spain. This sort of influence varies, among other things, with the moment of arrival in that levels of influence are lower for those who arrived in Spain some years ago than for recent arrivals (Figure 2).

Another interesting aspect of life in migrant communities concerns the links people maintain with their societies of origin. The maintenance of contacts, visits home or sending remittances are all examples of these sorts of links. In this sense, the ENI shows that the likelihood of maintaining these sorts of links is inversely proportional to their cost (Figures 2 and 3). This is why contacts (by telephone, letters or e-mail) are more frequent than actual visits home and these are more frequent than sending remittances. Maintaining these sorts of links are also negatively related to the time immigrants have been in Spain and, in the case of visits home, by the distance between the home country and Spain. Understandably, the links between families and kin are the ones that weather the test of time best.

Figure 2: Remittances, contacts with family and acquaintances in country of origin, and influence of family and friends in decision to migrate by date of arrival

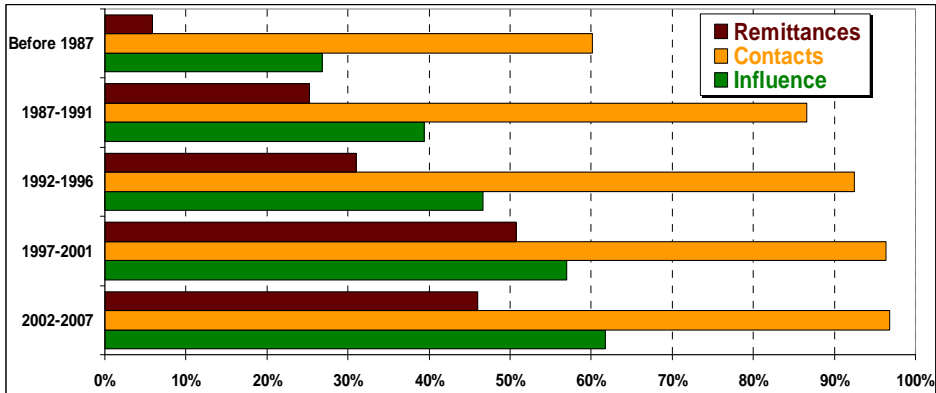
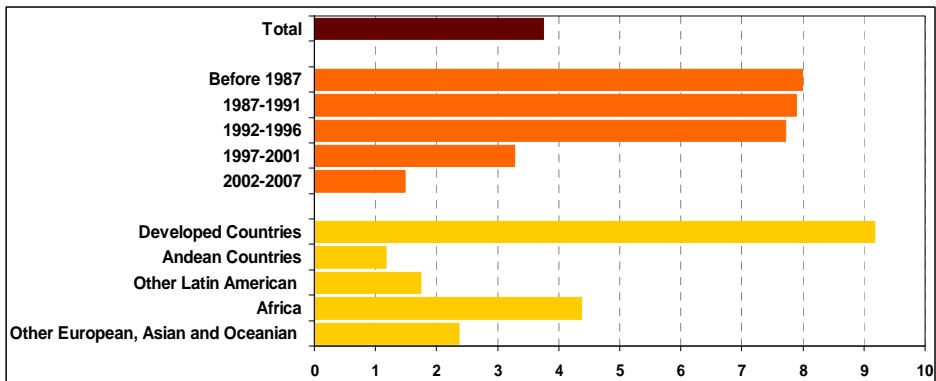


Figure 3: Number of visits home by date of arrival and origin



Another aspect of this issue refers to the relations that immigrants establish with their host societies. Involvement in institutions of the host society is a good indicator of the degree to which immigrants are or feel integrated. In this sense, the results from the ENI are not encouraging, at least at first glance. Levels of participation of immigrants in Spanish associations are extremely low, independently of whether or not these groups are oriented specifically to the immigrant community. This result is due, at least in part, to the fact that most immigrants come from societies in which levels of voluntary associations are relatively low and they have come to a country (Spain) where participation in this sort of social group is often not given the importance it has in other countries (Northern Europe, the USA, etc.) where civil society is stronger (Requena 2001).

Despite these caveats, however, it is also clear that there is a positive correlation between participation in these associations and the time immigrants have been in the country. This result is congruent with the interpretation of this indicator in the sense that the longer immigrants are present in Spain, the higher their levels of integration into the host society will become (Reher et al. 2008).

4. Final assessment and conclusions

4.1 Usefulness

The National Immigrant Survey is an important new source that contains detailed data on international migration to Spain. It contains a large array of socio demographic, family, and labor characteristics regarding informants. As well it consists of a set of data covering the period from the original decision to emigrate in the societies of origin to the present, including information on migratory trajectories both abroad and within Spain, changes in residence in Spain, and the social networks that contextualize and constrain the migration experience. It also contains relevant data decisions made by immigrants not only in their choice of a destination society but in the way they set up strategies for social and economic promotion once there.

The ENI was carried out in a country that has recently changed from being a major exporter of human capital to becoming one of the main world destinations for international migration. This context has led to an intense public debate regarding immigration that has often made use of inadequate information (partial, asymmetric, overly general), and this has substantially lowered the level and quality of public debate. Everywhere, informed public debate requires good data, and Spain is no exception. It is our hope that the National Immigrant Survey will fill this knowledge gap, at least in part, because:

- (1) it has been carefully devised and quality control has been high,
- (2) it gathers data on a large universe of foreign-born immigrants in Spain, and
- (3) it includes a number of relevant dimensions of the migratory process.

An important advantage of the ENI is that it was not designed with a particular political agenda in mind, yet rather with the nonpartisan belief that reliable data is essential for informed debate and adequate policy.

A new source such as the ENI, that offers reliable data on many different aspects of the migration experience, should also prove to be a real contribution to research efforts, not only about migration in Spain but also about migration in a comparative perspective. Considerable interest in the ENI has already been expressed by researchers both in Spain and elsewhere. The data it affords provides an ideal context in which new ideas and old theories can be tested. It also may provide the basis for useful international comparisons. The results stemming from research will, in turn, have a positive effect on the quality of public debate both in Spain and in other countries.

The usefulness of the ENI for research is also related to the important size of its sample, to the ambitious structure of the survey instrument, as well as to the fact that it brings together a wide variety of data relating to the experience of individual migrants. This will enable researchers to deal with issues or with different migrant groups that heretofore were difficult to analyze. It is our belief that the research potential of the ENI is enormous and should last for years.

4.2 Limitations and drawbacks

Despite this wealth of quality and quantity data, the ENI is not without its drawbacks. Available funds, time, and information have ended up imposing conditions on this project that have limited some of the original objectives. These constraints affect the content, coverage, methodology, and interpretation of results.

The survey instrument, despite its rather encyclopedic nature, does not contain data on certain themes that might be of potential research interest. The instrument excluded all questions related to opinions and attitudes of the informant. This decision was imposed in part not only by the great length of the survey instrument, but also as the result of a preference in design for hard contrastable data over attitudinal dimensions. We felt that the purpose of this initial survey was to offer a portrait of the immigrant community and that the response would be more reliable if questions were not invasive. The instrument also leaves out other important themes, such as the use of public services in the country, health issues, and the way migrants spend their available income. All of these dimensions will have to be addressed in future surveys.

Secondly, the coverage of the sample is far from complete. Apart from the restrictions related to our definition of the sample universe and the sampling strategy described in Section 2.4 of this article, the sample is incomplete in three ways.

- (1) Considering that the sample frame has been based on the *Padrón*, those immigrants who were not registered on the *Padrón* when the fieldwork took place are not represented in the ENI. As argued above, we continue to believe that our sample is a representative one, but it is obvious that certain groups are probably underrepresented (irregular immigrants or seasonal workers, for example) and others are entirely absent from the sample (persons living in collective residences).
- (2) By basing the survey on foreign-born people, a certain number of Spaniards are present in the database. While having Spanish citizenship is not necessarily a problem in a study of this nature, having citizenship since birth and/or having come to Spain at a very young age may influence the results obtained. These limitations, themselves the result of the way the universe was defined, should be kept in mind by the users of this data set.
- (3) A final limitation of this type is that the survey does not include a reference group of native (Spanish-born) Spaniards. Issues of time, money, and the appropriateness of the instrument led the INE to discard this possibility. In any case, researchers can address this problem either by using persons from developed countries as the reference group or by generating proxy indicators of ‘Spaniards’ directly from the micro data themselves (such as persons with Spanish citizenship from birth and who arrived in the country at a young age).

While the sample size of the ENI is more than sufficient for many types of analysis, it is wholly inadequate if regional dimensions of migration are of interest. This is especially the case in regions where relatively few people were interviewed or where spatial aspects of migration are of particular interest (in Andalucía, for example). While the project was still in the planning stages, the Spanish Statistical Office proposed to the different autonomous regions the possibility of setting up special samples for their regions. With the exception of three regions (Balearic Islands, Murcia, and Navarra), this offer was ignored, likely in part because of the region-center rivalry still existing in the country. This is most unfortunate because even though most regions have their own migration surveys, few if any of these surveys have anywhere near the quality that the ENI does. For these regions, it is an example of opportunity lost.

The type of questions posed informants also conditions the types of analysis that can be carried out. Here we are referring to the fact that the survey includes numerous retrospective questions together with considerable information referring to the present

conditions of the immigrant. Understandably, not all immigrants arriving in Spain in recent years continued to be present in Spain at the time of the interview. Those who have returned to their countries of origin or those who have moved on to another destination are completely absent from our sample; we have no information at all about them. This introduces an important selection effect into our sample. It introduces a type of bias that probably increases with time and is thus greater for those immigrants who arrived in Spain earlier. The fact that this type of problem tends to affect all surveys of this nature does not minimize its importance. Researchers, especially those who are interested in retrospective perspectives, would do well to give careful attention to this potential bias.

A final limitation of the ENI is related to the long period of time that has transpired between the fieldwork and the actual presentation of the micro data. At the end of 2006, when the fieldwork was undertaken, immigration to Spain was extremely intense due in no small measure to the high rates of economic growth. The ENI data have come into play at an entirely different moment of Spanish history, one in which economic growth is rapidly falling, a possible recession lurking on the horizon, sharply increasing unemployment, and a sea change in its ability to attract and to retain immigrants. It can be argued that the characteristics of the migrant groups present in the country at the end of 2006 are substantially different from those present today. More than an argument against undertaking a project like the ENI, this problem points to the importance of making the ENI the first of a series of migration surveys that can provide data adjusted over time.

4.3 Prospects and opportunities

Limitations notwithstanding, the National Immigrant Survey is the most comprehensive source available for the understanding of migration in Spain and one of the most unique data sources available anywhere in Europe. If it does not give rise to a treasure trove of quality studies it will be difficult to justify the expense and effort involved. We have every hope that it will and that our understanding of the migration process will be qualitatively enhanced both in Spain and elsewhere. Giving this data source the attention it deserves is a challenge for researchers everywhere.

Another unique aspect of this initiative is that it arose from a close collaboration between a university-based research team of social scientists and the National Statistical Office of Spain. This type of collaboration between users of data and producers of data is quite rare in Spain and possibly elsewhere in Europe. The success of the ENI should encourage statistical offices and researchers to undertake other collaborative initiatives

in the future. Population issues are sufficiently pressing and important to warrant innovative approaches to the design and use of data.

Where to from here? It is our opinion that, ideally, the success of this effort in data production should lead in two complementary directions.

- (1) In Spain the flush of success should encourage authorities to consider the possibility of repeating the surveys similar to the ENI in the near future. There are many ways of doing this. A possible survey design might have a core module of questions asked of immigrants at fairly regular intervals plus a specialized module for each new survey. Independent of the precise design, however, we feel that the availability of time-dependent information on immigrants⁸ would deepen and broaden our understanding of this key social group in the future.
- (2) One of the great challenges Europe has in addressing the issue of international migration is a lack of strictly comparative data on key aspects related to migrants and to the migration experience. Important surveys in other European countries are available, such as the *Living Conditions among Immigrants Survey* (2005/2006) in Norway or the *Enquête longitudinale sur le parcours et le profil des migrants récemment arrivés ou régularisés en France* (2006, 2007) in France. New projects are now being developed, like INED's *Enquête sur les migrations entre l'Afrique et l'Europe (MAFE)* on migratory exchanges between Africa and Europe, currently centered on the study of Sénégal. Despite these important initiatives, it is still difficult to find comparable sources and data due to different degrees of coverage and completeness.⁹ We feel that the existence of the ENI in Spain should encourage willing countries to consider the possibility of undertaking a transnational survey, like the ENI carried out, at roughly the same time. The knowhow for this sort of operation clearly exists in Spain as well as in other countries, a fact that helps reduce the costs of future surveys. An initiative of this sort might prove to be an excellent way of generating truly comparable information on immigrants in a selection of European countries.

⁸ In spite of the evident analytical advantages, longitudinal or panel approaches to migration are not easy to accomplish.

⁹ The Norwegian and the French surveys do not target all immigrants. The Norwegian sample consists of people living in Norway for at least two years with a background from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia-Montenegro, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Somalia, and Chile. The French survey includes persons 18 years or older who have received their first valid residence permit one year ago or more, and who are eligible to sign the Reception and Integration Contract (CAI). The MAFE project will construct a new data set for Afro-European migration.

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