

## ***A ticket to ride. Immigration policies, channels of entry and migratory processes.***

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### **Introduction**

The role, effectiveness and outcomes of immigration policies have attracted increasing attention in the recent migration literature. However, existing studies have only partially explored how immigration policies contribute to shaping the compositional breakdown by channels of entry of migration flows and the migratory patterns of different categories of migrants. Labour migration policies across the EU typically focus on narrowly defined 'economic migrants' (EU workers and/or non-EU migrants entering EU countries via labour migration routes). Yet so-called 'non-economic migrants' (e.g. family members, students and refugees), who make up a significant proportion of inflows in most EU countries (e.g. about two thirds of long-term migrants in France and the Netherlands and just under half in the UK and Italy), are generally allowed to work, although they may be subject to various degrees of restrictions. This 'hidden' workforce plays an important and often neglected role in European labour markets. Given the varying degree of selectivity implicit in the admission criteria for different categories of labour migrants, and the different sets of economic rights and entitlements attached to the different immigration statuses, labour market outcomes are likely to vary by immigration category on arrival.

Besides, even though migration is often a decision made at familiar level, the interaction between the migratory patterns of different members of the same household has been neglected in literature.

A major reason for these wide knowledge gaps is that there has been virtually no information in European data sources on immigration status on entry or the type of permit migrant workers have at the time of the data collection. Censuses and the major national household surveys generally provide reasonable coverage of the migrant population but do not record these information. The EU Labour Force Survey – i.e. the main source of labour market data for most European countries – only includes questions on nationality and/or country of birth (and in some countries year of entry) and do not allow analysts to differentiate between migrants who entered Europe for work, family, humanitarian or other reasons and via different immigration/legal channels. Similarly, major administrative data sources (e.g. population registers, social security records) do not normally keep track of the legal situation of migrants as they progress through the system, while specific administrative records for the foreign national population (e.g. residence permit, grants of settlements) do not provide sufficient information on labour market participation.

In order to fill part of the knowledge gap surrounding the experience of migrants in the EU labour markets, an 'ad hoc' module of the EU-LFS on the situation of migrant workers and their descendants was carried out in 2008 – hereon referred to as AHM 2008. This supplementary module included a bespoke set of questions collecting information on reasons for migration, date of acquisition of citizenship, duration of work/residence permit and restriction attached to immigration status. The combination of these variables offers the unprecedented opportunity to analyse in greater detail the employment outcomes of the different categories of migrants across EU countries.

This paper builds on this recently released dataset to shed new light on the composition of immigrant household and the interaction between the trajectories of immigrant partners admitted to EU countries on different grounds (employment, family, humanitarian, ancestry, study etc.). It has been developed as part of the international project 'LAB-MIG-GOV: Which labour migration governance for a more dynamic and inclusive Europe?' and comes together with national case studies assessing migration policy trends in five major EU immigration countries – France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK, hereon referred to as the

LAB-MIG-GOV countries. Its core aim is to provide a better understanding of how migration policies – intended here as the regulatory framework governing the admission of foreign nationals– shape migrant patterns of incorporation across the EU.

Focusing on the type of entry in the host country in different European countries, we want to stress the relevance of specific migration policies on migrants’ access. In this sense, this paper aims to fill a significant knowledge gap in the academic literature and migration policy debates by providing a comparative perspective on the effectiveness of the different European migration regimes in tracing the patterns of entry and settlement of different categories of migrants operationalized on the basis of the household composition and the year of entry.

## Data and methods

The analyses included in this paper are based on statistical exploitation of the EU Labour Force Survey’s 2008 Ad-Hoc Module on “the labour market situation of migrant workers and their descendants”. The aim of this module was to get a more comprehensive and comparable set of data on the labour market outcomes of migrant workers by collecting specific information on this target group in addition to the core variables normally included in the core LFS questionnaire. The 11 additional variables making up the AHM 2008 covered the acquisition of citizenship, country of birth of mother and father, reason for migrating, restrictions in the legal status, language skills, and use of public facilities (or other type of support) for the recognition of overseas qualifications and obtaining employment.

The core component of our approach is the construction of specific immigration categories which approximate, as far as possible, immigration status on arrival of the migrant workforce in the six selected countries. Due to the lack of specific information on the type of permit/visa (or lack of) held by migrants when they entered the country, our immigration categories were derived by combining information provided by the core LFS module on country of birth, nationality and year of residence, with AHM 2008 variables on the country of birth of parents, main reason for (last) migration and the year of acquisition of citizenship. The immigration categories used in our analysis were identified as follows: 1. *Free movers* (migrants born in another EU-15 or EFTA country, including both foreign nationals and those who have acquired citizenship of the country of destination, and individuals born in the post-enlargement EU-12 who moved to the destination between 2004 and 2008); 2. *Work* (employment) 3. *Family* (including both marriage and family reunification); 4 *Other* (including study, asylum, descendants of emigrants, i.e individuals born abroad but citizens of the country of destination from birth and migrants whose father and/or mother were born in the country of destination). We refer only to the first generation immigrants. Therefore, in our dataset we dropped out people migrated before 15 years.

LFS dataset contains information for all member of each household. By matching information on both partners, we can identify the composition of the couple in terms of entry category. Additional information on the year of arrival make it possible to add relevant detail in the immigration pattern of the couples. A relevant distinction has been made between immigrant couples (both partners from a foreign country), mixed couples (one immigrant partner and one native) and singles (immigrant without a partner in the same household). Table 1 shows the number of couples and singles in the LFS dataset by country.

Table 1. Sample description

	DE	ES	FR	IT	UK	TOT
immigrant couples	692	1,078	540	1,064	1,157	4,531
mixed couples	404	692	594	984	1,091	3,765
native couple	6,207	17,801	9,452	28,108	18,255	79,823
immigrant single	547	1,291	644	1,453	1,950	5,885
native single	9,639	25,209	13,823	40,232	26,571	115,474
Tot	17,489	46,071	25,053	71,841	49,024	209,478

## Preliminary results

Our first explorative analyses strongly suggest that the composition by category of entry of the migrant workforce across EU receiving countries strongly reflects the differences in national migration policy regimes. Looking at the differences between those with a partner and those without a partner in the original dataset (figure 1), we see the percentage of those who entered for family reason is clearly higher among those with a partner but it is quite high also among those without a partner. It is worth noting that in UK, France and Germany entry for employment is not prevalent also among individual without a partner.

In figure 2 we show results considering the combination of partner's entry categories. In Italy couples in which one partner entered for employment and the other for family is much more prevalent than in other countries, Spain included. In Italy the incidence of couples in which at least one partner entered for employment is almost 90% whereas in Spain is 72% and Germany is only 20%.

Comparing couples in which both partners arrived after 1998 with couples in which at least one partner arrived before 1998 (Figure 3), we see a clear reduction in the percentage of work/family couples in all countries but UK. The main change in the UK, and to a lesser extent in France and Germany is the increasing proportion of couples with both partners as free movers. In Spain, we found an higher proportion of couples with both partners arrived for employment among those arrived after 1998 and in Italy we have an increasing relevance of category work/other mainly due to the combination between one partner from a post-enlargement EU-12 (arrived after 2004) and one partner arrived for employment.

Figure 4 focuses on the time of arrival of partners for immigrant couples. Migration is mainly a simultaneous event in Germany whereas in Italy we see a clear prevalence of couples arrived in different years. Germany is also the country with a lower proportion of couples where the woman arrived before.

Table 5 shows the prevalence of some specific trajectories experienced by partners. The typical pattern with the man arrived before for work and woman arrived later for family reasons is very common in Italy but quite an exception in UK and Germany, with Spain and France in the middle. Besides, in Italy and Spain about 15% of couples arrived for work together, a pattern that is less common in other countries. Finally, UK and France see almost 20% of couple arrived together as a free movers.

In conclusion, our first preliminary results suggest that despite some limitations in the data (e.g. our analysis also referred to a pre-crisis scenario, the lower share of family migrants compared with other data sources, and the limited coverage of post-enlargement EU-12 migration to Southern Europe), the 2008 ad-hoc module of the EU Labour Force Survey focusing on migrant workers allows to analyse the immigrant household composition with unprecedented wealth of detail.

Figure 1. Entry categories among first generation immigrant from non-EU countries according to country of arrival and the presence of partner in the household. First generation immigrants migrated after 15 years.

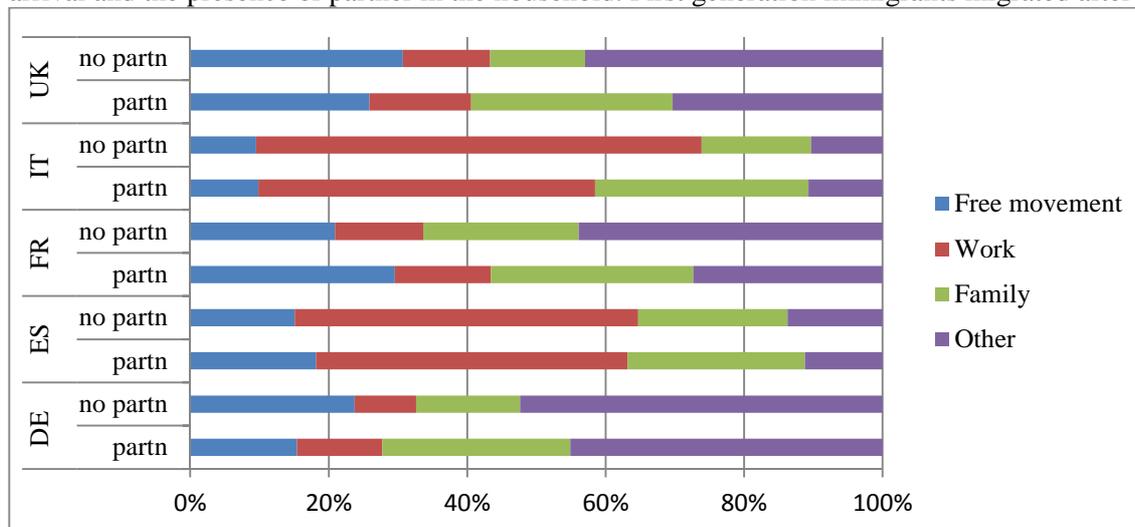


Figure 2. Distribution of immigrant couples according to the combination of entry category for both partners. First generation non-EU immigrants migrated after 15 years.

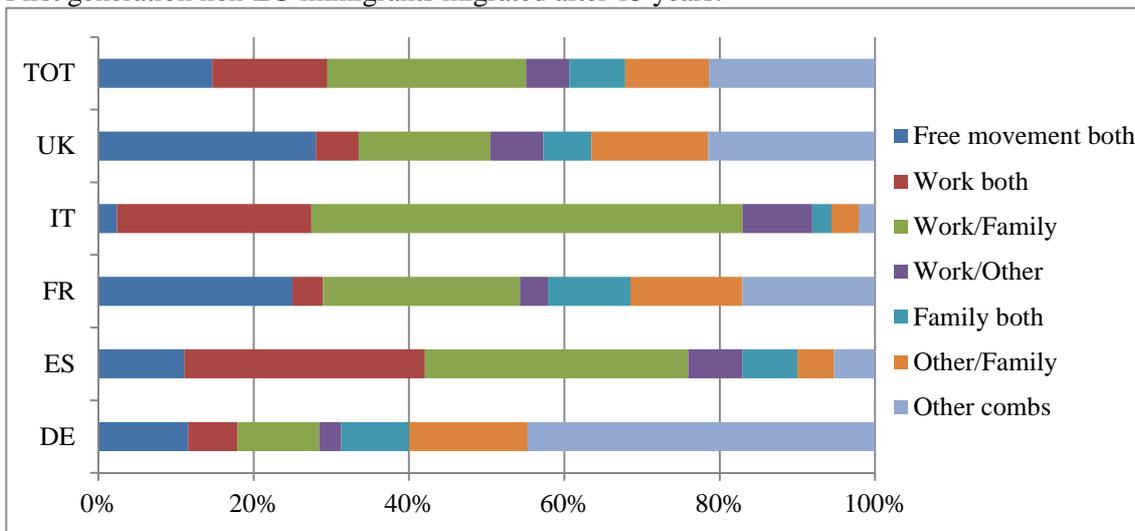


Figure 3. Distribution of immigrant couples according to the combination of entry category for both partners and year of arrival in the host country. First generation non-EU immigrants migrated after 15 years.

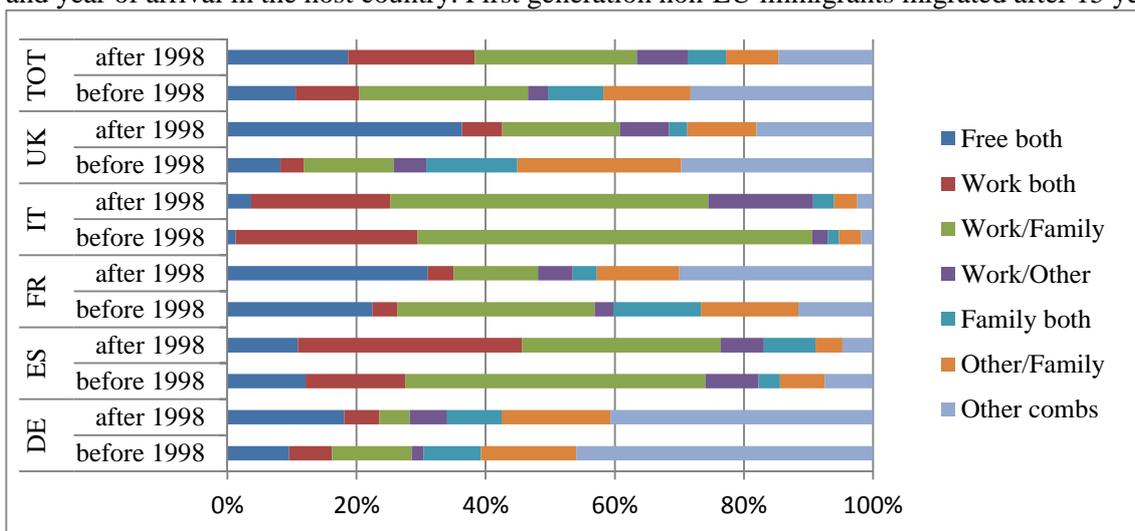


Figure 4. Distribution of immigrant couples according to the timing of arrival of partners. First generation immigrants migrated after 15 years.

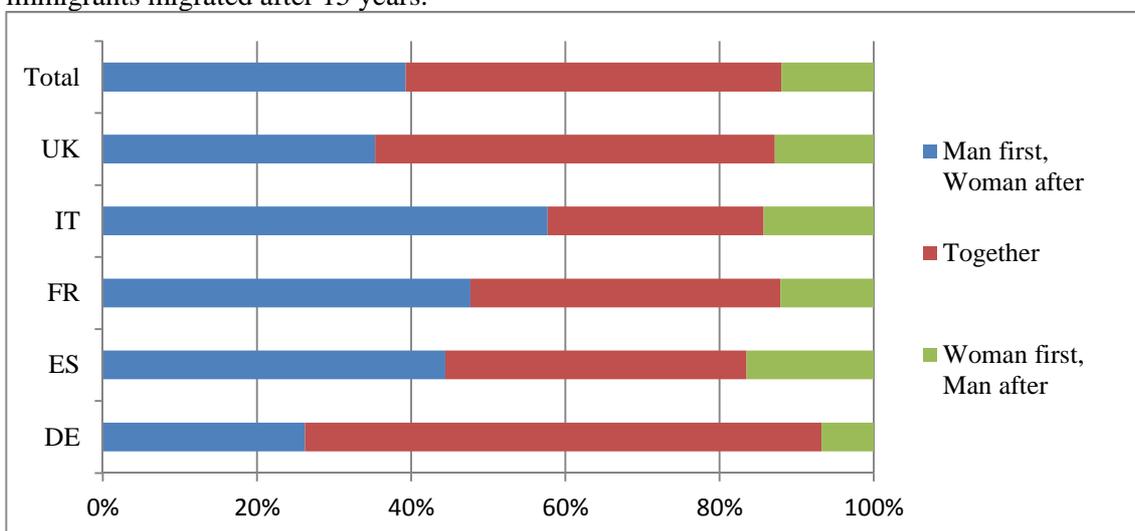
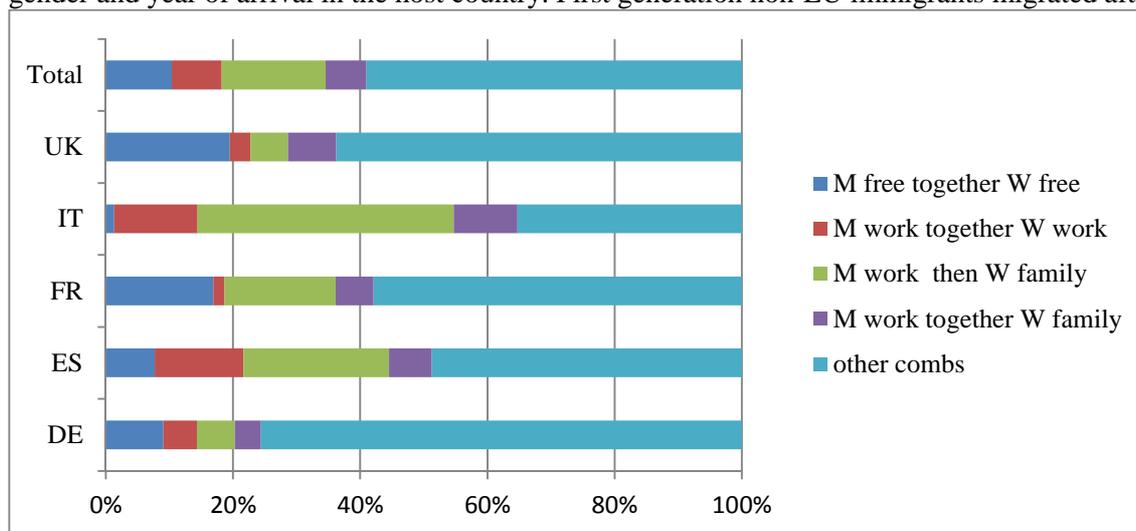


Figure 5. Relevant trajectories experienced by immigrant couples based on entry category for both partners, gender and year of arrival in the host country. First generation non-EU immigrants migrated after 15 years.



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