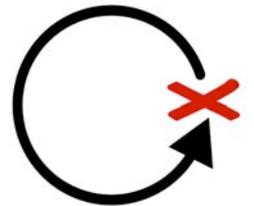




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# **METOIKOS Project**

## **Circular Migration between Morocco and Spain**

Prof. Carmen González Enríquez and  
Dr. Miquel Reynés Ramón  
Real Instituto Elcano



**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**  
**ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES**

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Spain**

**CARMEN GONZALEZ ENRIQUEZ**  
**& MIQUEL REYNES RAMON**

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**The METOIKOS Research Project**  
**Circular migration patterns in Southern and Central Eastern Europe: Challenges and opportunities for migrants and policy makers**

The METOIKOS project looks at circular migration patterns in three European regions: southeastern Europe and the Balkans (Greece, Italy and Albania); southwestern Europe and the Maghreb (Spain, Italy and Morocco); and Central Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine). More specifically, METOIKOS studies the links between different types of circular migration and processes of integration (in the country of destination) and reintegration (in the source country). It identifies the main challenges and opportunities involved in circular migration for source countries, destination countries and migrants (and their families) and develops new conceptual instruments for the analysis of circular migration and integration. The project will develop policy recommendations (a Guide for Policy Makers, available in 10 European languages) for local, regional and national policy makers as to how to frame circular migration with appropriate (re-)integration policies. It will also organise three Regional Workshops (on Spain, Italy and Morocco; on Greece, Italy and Albania; and on Poland, Hungary and Ukraine). The project will foster online discussion on circular migration with a view to raising awareness about the challenges and advantages of circular mobility in the wider EU Neighbourhood and the Euro-Mediterranean region more generally.

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The METOIKOS project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou ([anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu](mailto:anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu)).

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**Carmen González Enríquez** is doctor in Political Science, Professor at the UNED's Department on Political Science and Senior Analyst on Immigration at the Real Instituto Elcano. She has directed various research projects on migration as "Immigration and representation of workers' interests", "Immigration and political parties system in Spain. A comparative perspective", "Preventing ethnic conflict in immigrants' neighbourhoods" or "The challenge of immigration in Spain-Morocco relationship" and has taken part in several European research projects on immigration dealing with the trafficking of human beings, irregular migration or civic participation of immigrants. Among her most recent works it is worth noting the monographic issue on migration policies in Southern Europe in the European Journal of Migration and Law 11/2009 (edited with Anna Triandafyllidou).

**Miguel Reynés Ramón** has a PhD in Sociology (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). He has conducted fieldwork in Togo and Ghana researching into schooling patterns among Ewe and Asante families. His research interests include migration, education policies, education in Africa, kinship, domestic and familial organization and qualitative methodology.

Real Instituto Elcano  
C/ Príncipe de Vergara 51 - Madrid 28006  
Tel 34 91 781 67 70 - Fax 34 91 426 21 57  
e -mail: [cgenriquez@rielcano.org](mailto:cgenriquez@rielcano.org)

## **Abstract**

This report reviews the main features of Moroccan migration to Spain, offering a description of its demographic, social and labour related characteristics, and analyses the institutional framework which regulates the migration between both countries and specially the bilateral accords wich promote circular migration. This kind of migration is mainly found in agricultural, seasonal works and affects around one in teen Moroccan migrants in Spain. The main characteristics of this experience is presented here. The study offers some data on the frequency and nature of contacts between Moroccan immigrants in Spain and their home country, as on the expectancies and wishes related to the return or the visits to Morocco as indicators of the potential circularity of migration should the legal framework allow it.

## **Keywords**

Morocco, Spain, circular migration, temporary migration, agricultural migration, international accords on migration.

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## 1. Introduction

Although Moroccan immigration to Spain is the oldest and one of the most relevant by its size, literature on circular migration between both countries is still very scarce and focused on the analysis of some experiences related with the agricultural seasonal works that employ a minor percentage of the Moroccan immigrants, while demographic statistics only provide some clues that can sustain hypothesis about patterns of circular migration. Grey literature produced in Morocco offers information on the motivations and experiences of return migrants coming from any country, but circular migrants have been absent so far. In this framework the aim of this background report is (1) to describe broadly the nature of Moroccan migration to Spain, (2) to analyze the institutional elements which constraint or promote circular migration between both countries and (3) to describe the experiences of managed circular migration.

## 2. Moroccan immigrants in Spain

### *Demographic features*

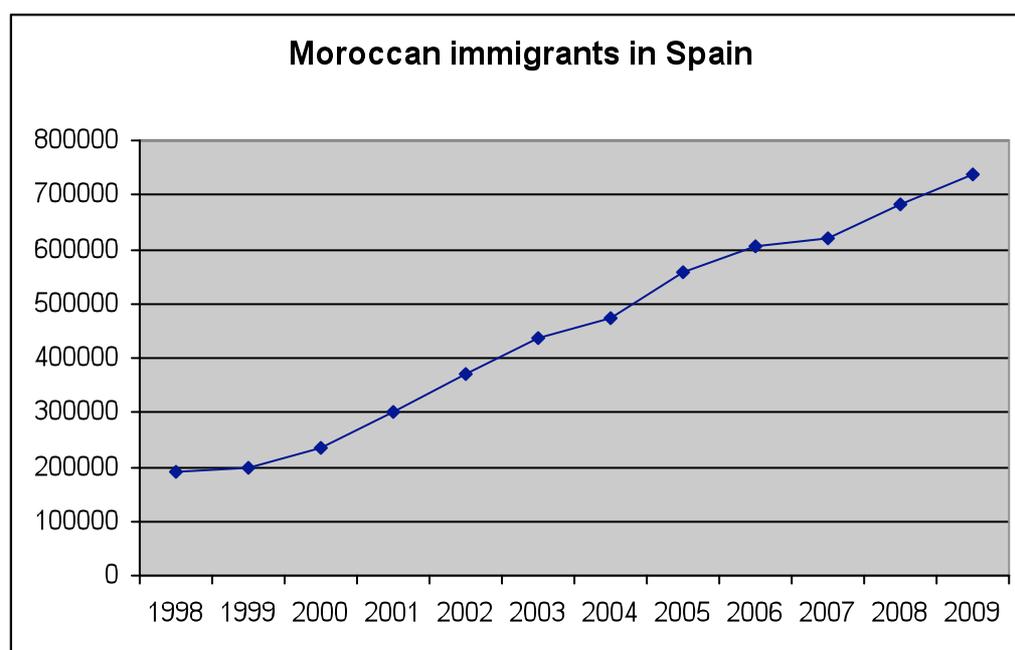
The arrival and settlement of millions of immigrants during the last fifteen years has been the most important demographic and social change Spain has recently experienced, in a very quick and unexpected process. By 1998, almost 1,2 million foreign-born people were living in Spain (2,9% of the population) while eleven years later, they were 6,4 millions (13,8%). The Moroccan migration is the oldest among those economically motivated: it began in the late eighties and concentrated in the intensive labour areas of the Mediterranean Spanish coast, specially in Catalonia, Almería and Murcia. During many years of this period of great inflow of migration, Moroccan immigrants have constituted the largest single national collective, until they were exceeded in 2008 by Romanians. The big unemployment rate in Morocco, specially among youngsters, the difference in the per capita rent between both countries (per capita rent in Spain is 13 times that of Morocco) and the not covered demands on the Spanish work market, all them promoted this important migration flow. Moroccans were, in 1998, 0,4% of the whole population living in Spain and the percentage has constantly increased to achieve 1,57% in 2009, but their relative weight within the total number of immigrants has decreased during this period: by 1998, they represented 16,2% of the total foreign-born population (including EU citizens) and in 2009 the percentage was reduced to 11,4%. The arrival of immigrants from Latin America and the great increase of Romanians explain this loss of weight.

**Table 1. Total population, foreign-born population and Moroccan population**

Year	Total	Foreigners	Moroccans	% Foreign.	% Morocca.	%Mor/For
1998	39852651	1173767	190497	2,9	0,4	16,2
1999	40202160	1259054	196595	3,1	0,5	15,6
2000	40499791	1472458	236517	3,6	0,6	16,1
2001	41116842	1969270	299907	4,7	0,7	15,2
2002	41837894	2594052	370720	6,2	0,9	14,3
2003	42717064	3302440	438221	7,7	1	13,2
2004	43197684	3693806	474523	8,5	1,1	12,8
2005	44108530	4391484	557219	9,9	1,2	12,7
2006	44708964	4837622	605961	10,8	1,3	12,5
2007	45200737	5249993	621295	11,6	1,4	11,8
2008	46157822	6044528	683102	13	1,5	11,3
2009	46745807	6466278	737818	13,8	1,6	11,4

SSource:

Source: INE Padrón



Immigrants come from all regions in Morocco, but mainly from two provinces, the North (Tánger and Tetuán) and the North East (Nádor), close respectively to the Spanish towns of Ceuta and Melilla. These two areas account for almost half (47%) of Moroccan immigrants.

Despite their longer period of stay, Moroccan immigrants present a low rate of naturalization. Only 15% of Moroccan-born population living in Spain has naturalized, a percentage similar to that of much later arrived Ecuadorians and lower than Argentineans or Colombians. Institutional and legal constraints can explain this result: Moroccans need to demonstrate a legal settlement of at least 10 years in Spain to apply for naturalization, while Latin-American immigrants only require two years. On the other hand, Moroccan legislation does not allow double nationality and Moroccan state does not issue Moroccan passport to those naturalized in a foreign country.

**Table 2. Naturalization by country of origin**

Country	Total	Naturalized	% Naturalized
Rumanía	762163	3340	0,43
Marruecos	737818	109960	14,9
Senegal	55212	1907	3,45
Argentina	295401	99829	33,79
Bolivia	229375	5920	2,58
Colombia	358762	62458	17,4
Ecuador	479117	69789	14,56

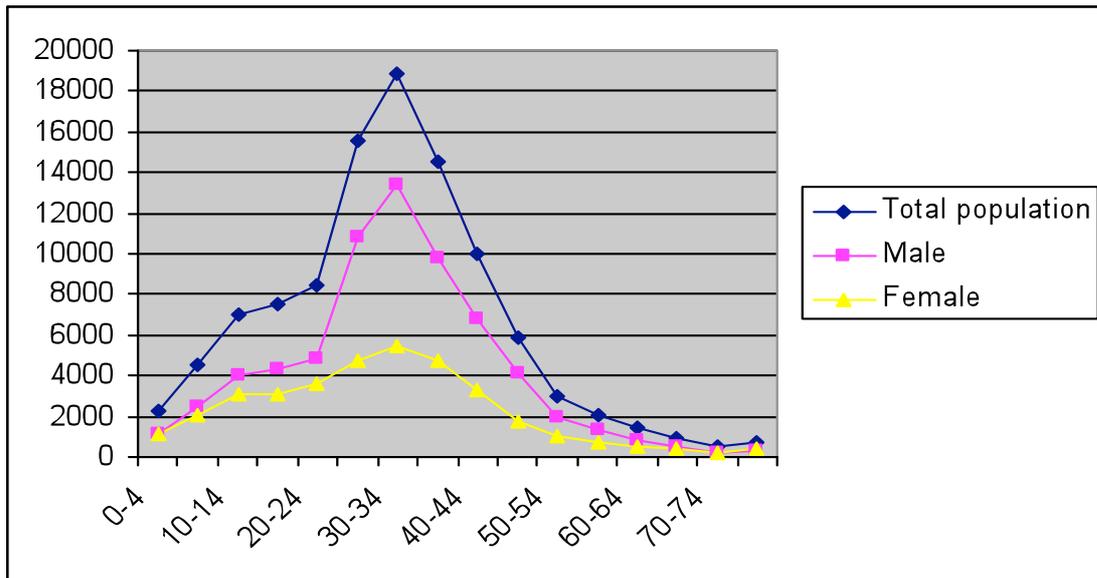
Source: INE Padrón

As regards its demographic features, Moroccan immigration is young, concentrated between 25 and 45 years, and with a clear predominance of men over women, in clear contrast with sex balanced Latinamerican or Eastern migration. By 1998 Moroccan female immigrants accounted for only 55% of males. This distribution shows the pattern of the early stage of the immigration process: males - mainly young males- immigrate firstly, and, some years later, their wives and children rejoin them. Figure 1 and 2 show how the age pyramid is swelling in its left side due to the arrival of children or their birth in Spain<sup>1</sup>.

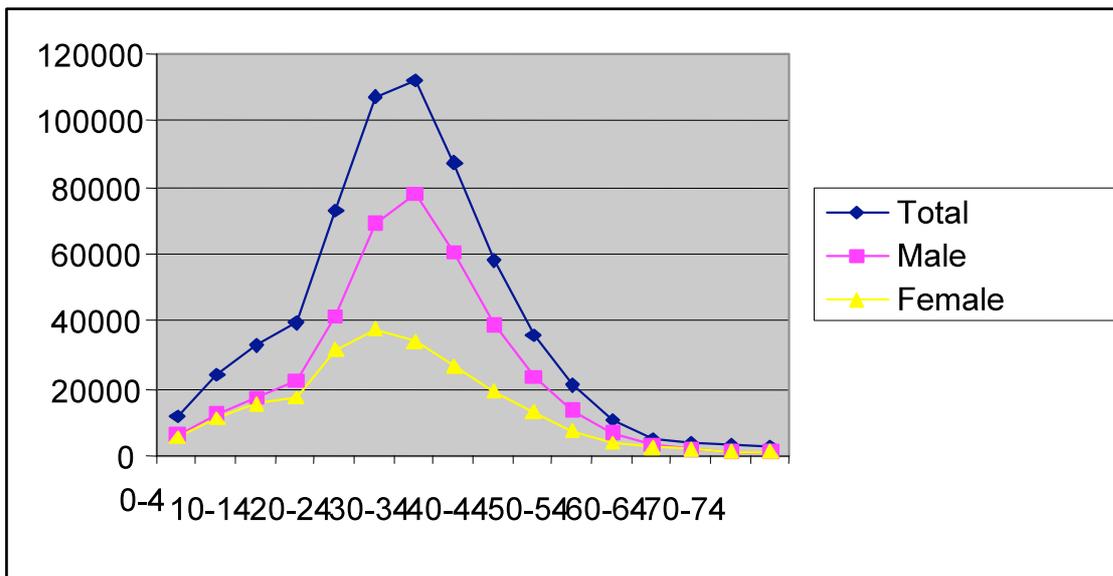
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<sup>1</sup> The report "*Les Marocains Résidant à l'étranger*" underlines a similar sex distribution among Moroccan immigrants in other European countries. In Spain and Italy this disproportion is bigger, while France and

**Figure 1. Moroccan population by age and gender, 1998**



**Figure 2. Moroccan population by age and gender, 2009**



Source: INE Padrón

As for their geographical distribution in Spain, this is very uneven. Their presence is much higher in regions with intensive agriculture or specially vigorous construction sector, as these two have been

(Contd.) \_\_\_\_\_

Belgium, which an older Moroccan migration, have more proportionate Morocann populations (Haut-Commissionat au Plan, 2007: 22).

since the beginning the main “niches” of Moroccan activity. Data from the Padrón indicate that 29% of Moroccans are living in Catalonia, 17% in Andalusia, 12% in Madrid, 10% in Valencia and 8% in Murcia, i.e., the Mediterranean arch and the capital.

As stated, Moroccans form the most ancient collective of labour immigrants settled in Spain. According to the National Poll on Immigrants (ENI), conducted at the end of 2006, about 40% of Moroccans arrived before 1997, the highest percentage among the different groups of immigrants. Thus, Moroccans’ average length of stay in Spain achieves 14 years, the highest average length (Reher and Requena, 2009). Following with ENI data, almost 91,5% of Moroccans has lived their first migration experience in Spain and this immigration has a clear economic motivation: As indicated by ENI, 60% of Moroccans were not working before migrating to Spain. Half of those not working were students and the rest were job-seekers or inactive women. Regarding those already working in Morocco before migrating, they were evenly distributed among these four main sectors of occupation: agriculture, industry, trade and construction.

As for family composition, Moroccans show the highest rate of married migrants: just 36,6% of them are not married while these percentages achieve 60 and 65% among Ecuadoreans, Colombians or Bolivians. These data and the great difference between the number of male and female Moroccan immigrants show the pattern of immigration that involves the previous arrival of males followed by their wife and children. Another survey , “Les Marocains resident à l’étranger 2005” (Haut Commissariat au Plan, 2007) offers a portrait of Moroccans households in Spain: Moroccans live in relatively large households (on average 4,03 people per household, not always family related) and fertility rates of Morocco-born women living in Spain are among the highest compared to other Moroccan women living in Europe, with 2,75 children on average.

**Table 3. Family status of immigrants adults**

	<b>Not married</b>	<b>Married</b>
<b>Moroccan</b>	197561	342212
<b>%</b>	36,6	63,4
<b>Ecuadorean</b>	219907	151836
<b>%</b>	59,2	40,8
<b>Colombian</b>	177440	122039
<b>%</b>	59,2	40,8
<b>Bolivian</b>	102841	54891
<b>%</b>	65,2	34,8

Source: ENI

Cebolla and Requena (2009), using data from ENI, show that Moroccans present the largest proportion of endogamy: in 87% of all couples, both members are Moroccans. Some difference appears between men and women: endogamy reaches 86% among Moroccan males (a few points lower than endogamy among Ecuadorians or immigrants from Eastern Europe) and 89% among females. All other collectives of immigrant women living in Spain show lower percentages. This pattern of endogamy is also found in the rest of Moroccan immigrants living abroad (in Europe), with the exception of Moroccans living in France where endogamy is lower (Haut-Comissariat au Plan, 2007: 37-37).

	Male	Female
Moroccans	86	89
Ecuadoreans	91	78
Other Andine countries	81	61
East europeans (Most of them Romanians)	90	80

Source: Cebolla and Requena (2009)

A relevant peculiarity of Moroccan immigrants in Spain is their level of education, the lowest among all immigrants groups, with the highest percentage of illiteracy and educational attainment below secondary level, a feature which has greatly restricted their job opportunities. Illiteracy is much bigger among women than among men.

**Table 5. Level of education by region or country of origin**

<b>Region or country of origin</b>	<b>% illiterate</b>	<b>% under secon</b>	<b>Years of educa</b>
<b>Andine countries</b>	0,9	19,5	12
<b>Rest of Latin America</b>	0,4	19,6	13
<b>Asia</b>	2,1	30,3	12
<b>Ecuador</b>	0,4	33,1	11
<b>Africa (Morocco excluded)</b>	18,7	42,2	11
<b>Morocco</b>	21,2	57,7	10

Source: ENI

Comparing Moroccan immigrants living in Spain and those living elsewhere (Haut-Comissariat au Plan, 2007: 75), the main difference is the percentage of immigrants without formal education, higher in Spain (20%) than in any other country. Another remarkable difference concerns higher education. A little more than 10% of Moroccans living in Spain has attained this level of education while this percentage reaches more than 20% in France, Germany or Belgium. Broadly speaking, the level of education of Moroccans living in Spain is very similar to those in Italy.

Togheter with the labour and family immigration there is a small amount of Moroccan University students staying in Spain with a special “student permit”. In 2009 they were 2590 students (1370 boys and 1220 girls), many of them in the southern University of Granada. They form the fourth biggest group of foreign students, after Colombia, México and USA (Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración)

### 3. Integration in the labour market

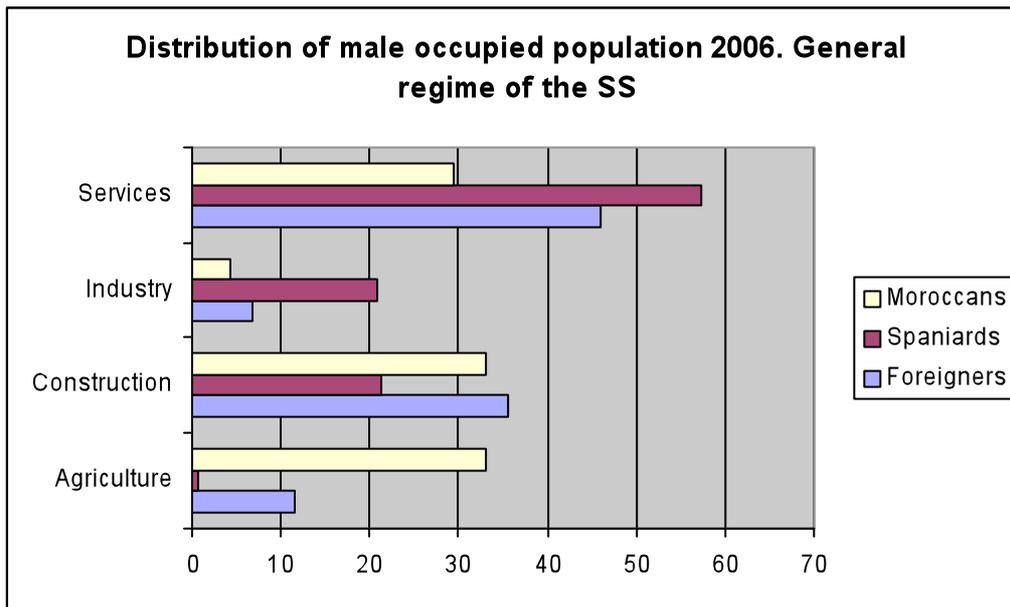
In a clear contrast with other immigrants groups, the rate of activity among Moroccans in Spain is strongly marked by gender: male immigration is a laboral one and in consequence almost the entire male population between 16 and 64 years is active, while female immigration is familiar and mostly inactive. Only one in three Moroccan immigrant women is active, the lowest activity rate among all female immigrant groups. The sectors of activity are also defined by gender: Moroccan men have found a job in the construction sector, followed by services and agriculture, while women have been employed mainly as domestic help. Also in contrast with other European countries, qualified Moroccan migration (that employed in posts who usually demand university degrees) is almost non-existent in Spain.

As the present economic crisis began to be noticed in the job market in 2007, we use 2006 as reference year of the expansive period. By then, Moroccans' concentration in agriculture in the general regime of the Social Security was triplicating that of the whole migrant population and it was 30 times bigger than that of Spaniards. Also in the construction sector, Moroccan concentration is more pronounced than that of the whole foreign population and Spaniards. 29% of Moroccan affiliated in the general regime of the NISS where working in the construction sectors, 7 points above the rest of foreign workers and 12 points above Spanish workers.

**Table 6. Distribution of Moroccan and other workers per labour market sector**

2006		Agriculture	Construction	Industry	Services
<b>Total</b>	<b>Foreigners</b>	5.7	20.3	10.9	62,5
	<b>Moroccans</b>	15,9	31.0	12,3	40.8
<b>Male</b>	<b>Foreigners</b>	11,56	35,55	6,9	45,97
	<b>Spanish</b>	0,66	21,25	20,86	57,21
	<b>Moroccan</b>	33,18	32,98	4,4	29,42
<b>Female</b>	<b>Foreigners</b>	9,4	2,28	4,11	84,19
	<b>Spanish</b>	0,27	10,26	2,65	86,8
	<b>Moroccan</b>	20,97	3,47	4,19	71,35

Source: Cebolla and Requena (2009) for the total data and SS for the gender data



Source: Social Security

Spanish Social Security is divided in several regimes. The biggest is the General one (76% of employed population in 2006), followed by the self-employment regime (18%), the agrarian (4%), the domestic help (2%), and two minors ones devoted to sea workers and minery. Moroccans working in the agriculture sector are affiliated mainly through the general regime (214,538 workers in 2006), as employees, but a significant number was affiliated as autonomous agrarian workers (62.193)<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 7. Distribution of Moroccan workers affiliated to the SS according to regimes, 2006**

General	Self-employed	Agrarian	Sea workers	Minery	Houseworkers
67,96	4,78	22,74	0,28	0,00	4,25

Source: Institute National of Social Security (INSS)

<sup>2</sup> The relatively big size of this last group probably hides an irregular behaviour but we do not count with sufficient information on this realm.

Coherently with their minor level of qualification, Moroccan immigrants's position in the occupational structure has been the lowest among the important immigration groups, concentrated in the manual works, with a very small presence on the higher levels. Almost all Moroccan immigrants are manual workers, and half of the total is occupying non-qualified manual jobs. Again this is the lowest level among immigrant groups.

**Table 8.- Distribution of Workers affiliated to the Social Security among occupational groups (horizontal percentages) Year 2006**

	Total	Engineers and administrative or shop staff	Auxiliar administrative staff	Manual qualified workers	Manual nonqualified workers
<b>Foreigners</b>	967.033	3,3	16,8	44,5	35,3
<b>Spaniards</b>	14.171.100	17,8	33,3	32,5	16,4
<b>Moroccans</b>	185.856	0,8	6,8	44,2	48,1

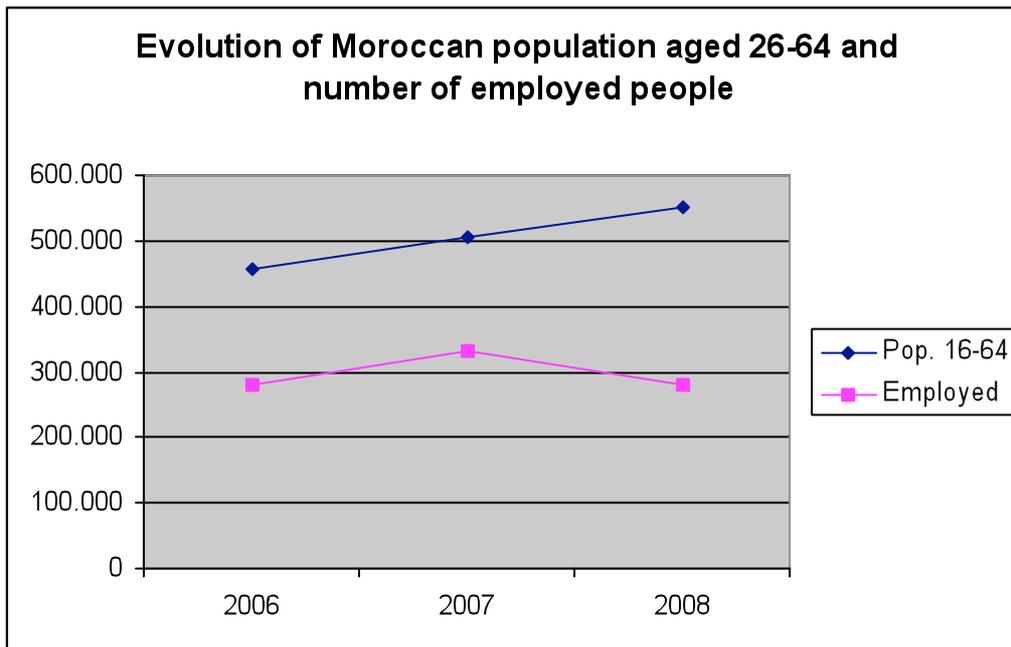
Source: INSS

The preeminence of the construction sector in the Moroccan activity in Spain has translated into bigger unemployment once the “housing bubble” exploded in 2007. So, according to Social Security data, Moroccans lost 16.555 jobs in the construction sector during 2008 i.e., 30% of all their jobs in the construction. The Labour Force Survey show that Moroccans lost 51.000 jobs from 2007 to 2008, but, as immigration continued to happen and their population kept growing, their occupation rate decreased till 51%. This means that 1 in 2 Moroccan immigrants aged 16 to 64 was non employed in 2008 (including here the non active, mostly female population).

**Table 9. Moroccan immigrants aged 16-64, employed and occupation rate**

	Pop. 16-64	Employed	Occupation rate
<b>2006</b>	458.256	281.608	61,4
<b>2007</b>	506.440	331.122	65,3
<b>2008</b>	550.494	280.567	50,9

Sources: Padrón and Labour Force Survey (taken here from Pajares, 2008, 2009, 2010)



Immigrants have been much weaker than natives confronted to the economic crisis, and their unemployment rates have been constantly higher than those of Spaniards. Their lower level of qualification, their concentration in the construction sector, the most affected by the crisis, and their lack of social networks which could help them to find a new job, explain this difference. And, among immigrants, Moroccans have suffered the worst fate, as their concentration in the construction service and their lack of qualifications was more pronounced. Thus, the unemployment rate among Moroccans was the highest in 2008: 35%, compared with 19% among Latin Americans or 12% among Spaniards. During 2009, unemployment in Spain has continued growing, and at the end of the year affected to 19% of the whole population and 30% of foreigners, but we do not count with separate data referred to Moroccans for this date<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 10. Unemployment rates by region or country of origin and year**

	Spanish	Moroccan	All Foreign	EU	Other Europe	Lat.-Ameri.	Rest of world
<b>2006 (IV qua.)</b>	7,7	18	12	10	10,3	11,4	16,2
<b>2007 (IV qua.)</b>	7,9	20	12,4	11,4	17,1	10,8	17,1
<b>2008 (IV qua.)</b>	12,5	35	21,3	18	21,4	19,4	30,3

Source: Labour Force Survey (taken here from Pajares, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> During the first quarter of 2009, unemployment among immigrants coming from the “rest of world” amountd to 38%, and Moroccans form the biggest group among them. (Arango and González 2009)

The data referred to the Social Security affiliation show a even bigger effect of the economic crisis, i.e. a greater decrease on employment. The difference between the number of those employed, as it results from the Labour Force Survey and the number of those affiliated to the Social Security can be understood as the amount of “hidden work” developed by Moroccan immigrants. The difference is more noticeable among women, as most women working as domestic help do not pay Social Security fees.

Another source of weakness of immigrants` position in the labour market is the highest percentage of non-permanent contracts among them. Confronted with the need to diminish their payrolls, enterprises fire firstly those workers with a temporary contract, as these are entitled to minor compensation pays. Due to their smaller period of stay in the labour market, most immigrant workers are contracted as temporary. 60% of Moroccan workers had a temporary contract in 2006, while the corresponding percentage among Spaniards was 38% (INSS)

#### **4. Legal status**

Spain has not provided legal and realistic channels for legal immigration till 2005, and even since then these channels are not quick and simple enough for the small enterprises which form the main employers of immigrants. As a consequence, immigration to Spain has been characterized by irregularity since its beginnings in the late 80s while extraordinary regularisations have been used as the main tool in the positive policy of management of migratory flows and the imposition of visas has become the most effective measure against irregular arrivals. As Moroccan immigration is the oldest among that of a laboral motivation, it was also the first affected by the imposition of visa, decreed in 1991. Since that year, migration from Morocco grew steadily but became irregular. Instead of arriving legally in the ferry which crosses the Gibraltar straits in half an hour, immigrants began to arrive in “pateras”, small boats, which made the same crossing. During many years, along the 90s, there was no police answer to this continuous irregular influx, and these immigrants found easily a irregular job in the intensive agriculture sector in Almería, Murcia, Alicante o Catalonia. It was only in the new decade, after the events of El Egido (Almería) of January 2000, which showed serious coexistence problems between Spaniards and Moroccans, when the Spanish government began to make efforts to order and curtail Moroccan migration. These efforts were also the result of the discovering of a much greater than expected number of irregular immigrants during the extraordinary regularisatio process of 2000. In 2001 was signed an agreement on immigration between Morocco and Spain which

established a special legal channel of immigration for Moroccan workers<sup>4</sup>, but several conflicts among both governments prevented its effective implementation until 2005 while irregular migration from Morocco continued to increase. In an attempt to diminish it, a sophisticated electronic mechanism of surveillance (the SIVE, Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior) was deployed firstly in the Gibraltar Straits and then in other areas of Southern Spain, capable of detecting virtually all boats approaching Spanish coasts. Nevertheless, immigrants continued to arrive irregularly from Morocco as its government refused from time to time to receive them, breaching the letter and spirit of the accord of readmission signed in 1992 and, in spite of the fact that the SIVE detected their arrival and the Guardia Civil found them, many of these immigrants remained in Spain with an expulsion order that could not be executed. Since 2005 the labour agreement signed between Morocco and Spain has been used mainly to recruit labourers for seasonal agricultural works

Hence, although the stock of Moroccan irregular immigrants had previously been decreased by the regularization processes of 2000-2001, in 2005 there were at least other 87.000 Moroccans irregularly staying (those who apply for regularisation, around 16% of the Moroccan population in Spain). As only active age persons with a job contract could apply, the real number of irregular stayers should be higher. Anyhow, this percentage of irregularity was much lower than that of the average extra-community aliens, this last close to the 50% in the beginning of 2005.

<b>Table 11.- Regularization process of 2005. Main results</b>		
	Applications	Regularised
<b>Total</b>	<b>691,655</b>	<b>578,375</b>
<b>Main single nations</b>		
Ecuador	140.020	127,925
Romania	118,546	100,128
Morocco	86,806	68,727
Colombia	56.760	50,417
Bolivia	47,325	39,773
Bulgaria	25,598	22,239
Argentina	23,896	21,519
Pakistán	15,782	8,602
Uruguay	10,650	9,653
Brasil	10,488	8,069

Source: Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, Anuario 2005

Spain-Morocco relationship has been traversed since the independence of the Moroccan kingdom for various contentious issues, such as the sovereignty of the towns of Ceuta and Melilla, on African soil,

<sup>4</sup> “Acuerdo sobre mano de obra entre el Reino de España y el Reino de Marruecos”, published in the State

the support of Spain to the Saharan independence attempts, the trade competition on several agricultural products, or the exploitation of fishery sea waters. To all these potential conflict in 2002 the occupation by Moroccan troops of the small island of Perejil was added, causing almost two years of scarce communication between both countries. In this context, immigration has been used by the Moroccan regime as a tool and as an asset in its relations with Spain, and only since 2004, when the European Union conditioned the advancement towards an accord with Moroccan effective cooperation in the prevention of irregular migration, Moroccan irregular immigration came to an end. As a matter of fact, in January of 2008 the number of residence permits issued to Moroccans nationals was higher than the number of Moroccans included in the Municipal Registers, or Padrón, i.e., apparently all Moroccan immigrants were regular. In the same date, estimated irregularity among all Third Country Nationals in Spain was 19%. (González Enriquez 2010). This inconsistency between the number of permits and the number of registers can be hiding a return to Morocco or a migration to other European countries of those with permanent residence permits.

## **5. Spanish-Moroccan mutual perceptions**

There is already an important amount of literature dealing with the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of Moroccans and Spaniards regarding their mutual coexistence which consistently states the lack of empathy between both groups. Public opinion polls conducted by the Spanish CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas) show since late nineties that Moroccans form the less valued collective of immigrants, even below the Subsaharians, apparently more distant culturally.

This bad position in the public opinion existed already before 11-September 2001 and was reinforced since then and specially by the 11-March 2004 attack in the Madrid trains which caused 191 deaths and whose perpetrators were Moroccan immigrants. After this last terrorist blow, social environment deteriorated and the media reported during 2004 that Moroccan immigrants were finding increasing difficulties to rent a flat or to get a job. A poll conducted by the Real Instituto Elcano shortly after the attack found that a non negligible 19% favoured the option of expelling all Moroccan from Spanish soil <sup>5</sup>.

Fortunately this very negative attitude provoked by the attack has been tempered since then, but nevertheless Moroccans continue to form the less appreciated immigrant group. The backwardness of the rural areas from which many of these immigrants come, the illiteracy of many of them, specially women, the use of headscarf or the rigid separation between men and women, become arguments used

*(Contd.)* \_\_\_\_\_  
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by Spaniards to explain their refusal (González-Enríquez and Álvarez-Miranda 2005; Pérez-Díaz, Álvarez-Miranda, and González-Enríquez, 2001)

Moroccans are conscious of this less favourable public opinion and express complaints about discrimination. According to the opinion poll conducted in 2009 by the Conseil de la Communauté Marocain a l'Etranger, 53% of Moroccans living in Spain think that Spaniards hold a bad or very bad image of them while 80% state that it is more difficult for Moroccans to find a job or to rent a flat (67%) Qualitative researches confirm that Moroccans feel discriminated not only in comparison with Spaniards but also with other immigrant groups (Martín Muñoz 2003; Pérez, Alvarez and Chulia 2004). A more recent research (Álvarez Miranda, 2007) compares national and international links and feelings of three muslim immigrants collective in different European capitals (Moroccans in Madrid, where 2004 people were interviewed; Turkish in Berlin and Bengalis in London). According to her report Turkish living in Berlin and Moroccans living in Madrid feel quite less identified with the host country than Bengalis in London. 67% of Moroccans interviewed did not agree with the statement "I feel Spanish". This lack of identification with the host country amounted to 87% among Turkish in Berlin and 9% among Bengalis in London.

In spite of their older presence in Spain, 29% of Moroccan immigrants recognise that they do not speak Spanish well enough, a percentage only exceeded by Chinese. The lack of Spanish fluency is much stronger among Moroccan women: two thirds of them cannot use the language (Cebolla and Requena 2009).

## **6. Moroccan circular migration. First approach**

At this stage of the research it is extremely difficult to identify indicators and data that can provide a portrait of the magnitude and nature of the Moroccan circular migration to and from Spain. Surveys and statistical data do not include information on this topic and reports on Moroccan immigrants do not proportionate us but some clues, as the frequency of visits to Morocco, investment there or plans to keep staying in Spain. The researches based on opinion polls among migrants offer a picture of very low circularity: between 3 and 5% of Moroccan immigrants in Spain plan to return to their country during the next months or years (excluding seasonal workers from the sample and also excluding short travels to visit relatives).

*(Contd.)* \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>5</sup> Barómetro del Real Instituto Elcano, June 2004. <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/>

Institutional constraints did not favour circular migration during the years of Spanish economic growth and presently economic crisis and the lack of job opportunities make it even more difficult. Only during the nineties, when Moroccan immigration was mostly irregular but tolerated, *de facto* circular migration was easy (but there is no evidence about its amount). Once controls were tightened up in the new century, irregular migrants found increasingly difficult to return to Morocco and go back again to Spain and those immigrants with a residence permit are not allowed lengthy stays in foreign countries. This is the case even with the permanent residence permit, obtained after five years of legal stay. As a matter of fact, only naturalized immigrants do not find legal constraints to circular migration, but as already mentioned, just a small percentage of Moroccan immigrants has naturalized. On the positive side, the 1979 accord on Social Security contributions allows Moroccan migrants to return to Morocco without losing the rights acquired after paying Social Security fees in Spain.

During the decade of 2000, only migration channeled through special accords has been circular. The origins of this form of circular migration can be found in the general accord between Morocco and Spain for the recruitment of workers, signed in 2001 and, as stated, only activated in 2004. The accord establishes the main traits of the processes of migration: communication of offers, professional requirements, travel arrangements and immigrant workers' social rights, among other minor details. Using this legal tool, the agricultural employers of the Huelva province devoted to the strawberries growing have been selecting Moroccan temporal workers since 2004. As the first experience that year finished with a 60% of workers not returning to Morocco, i.e. becoming irregular immigrants in Spain, the criteria to select candidates evolved: Since 2005 employers offer contracts only to women between 18 and 45 years old, with experience in the agricultural labors and with small children. They earn salaries between 800 and 900 Euros during the campaign, more than ten times higher than the agricultural salaries in Morocco. Only those who return to Morocco once the contract is finished can be hired the following year. This way of selection of temporary immigrants has achieved a high percentage of return to Morocco; non-return has decreased till 8%. The accord has also been used by agricultural employers in Almería (Southeast coast) but on a much lesser extent.

**Table 12. Number of Moroccan seasonal workers employed in agriculture through the Labour Force Accord**

	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>HUELVA</b>	2778	11043	18.766	760
<b>ALMERÍA</b>	118	287	744	404
<b>TOTAL</b>	2.896	11.330	19.510	1.164 + 6000*

\*The strawberries campaign includes the planting in October and the recollection the following year. These 6000 immigrants are Moroccan women selected for the 2010 part of the campaign.  
Source: Spanish Embassy in Rabat

Special mention deserve the accords signed between the Moroccan “*Agence Nationale de Promotion de l’Emploi et des Compétences*” (ANAPEC) <sup>6</sup>, belonging to the Ministry of Labour, and some Spanish institutions in the framework of the mentioned Accord for the recruitment of workers. The most relevant agreement is that signed in 2006 with the city council of Cartaya, a Spanish southwestern village in the province of Huelva, in the framework of the AENEAS project, supported by the European Union and devoted to the “Integral and ethical management of circular migration between Morocco and Huelva”. The aim of the agreement was to recruit Moroccan workers to be employed during the planting and harvesting of strawberries, it envisaged the stay of about 1,000 workers in Cartaya during six months in the first year (from January to June 2007) while AENEAS was expected to provide information, management of the selection process, formation on security and health aspects related with the work, visas, contracts, accommodation, travels and two informatic centers where workers could communicate with relatives using Internet, placed in the Moroccan village of Benslimane and in Cartaya. The agreement should last until 2010 and immigrants had the guarantee that their contracts would be renewed <sup>7</sup>. The Foundation for the Foreign Workers in Huelva was created to develop the AENEAS project and includes three commissions, one formed by Local Councils of the strawberry area (COMI), the second including Trade Unions and immigrants’ associations (COSTE) and the last one devoted to associations of farmers (COPA).

Remarkable agreements are also those signed by ANAPEC with VIPS enterprises, an extended and well-known group dealing with restaurants and 24-hours-open markets. The first agreement was signed for the period 2003-2006 and envisaged the recruitment and formation of 1,000 Moroccan workers (200 by year) that would get a permanent employment (i.e. providing for a non circular way of migration). The 2007-2011 agreement increased to 2,000 the number of Moroccan workers in the same terms. The agreement with “Grupo Hermanos Martín”, a society that manage more than 100 supermarkets in southern regions, seems to be at its earliest stages. The agreement, signed in February 2008, establishes the beginning of contacts in order to recruit an imprecise number of workers. These Moroccan workers would be firstly temporary employees (during 12 months) and then would become permanent. However, there is no additional information on the current stage of this accord. We can make similar statements on the agreement signed between ANAPEC and the “*Servei d’Ocupació de Catalunya*” (SOC) the Catalanian regional public employment service. The accord, signed November 2008, establishes a cooperation between both public services in order to coordinate, inform and

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<sup>6</sup> [www.anapecinternational.com](http://www.anapecinternational.com)

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://ayto-cartaya.com/inmigracion/images/inmigracion/Documentacion/Aeneas/Proyecto%20AENEAS%20Cartaya%20actualizado%2023-06-08.pdf> Accessed in March 2010

provide professional formation to Moroccan immigrants recruited to work in Catalonia, but there is no information regarding its current development.

All these accords and practices of migration confront since 2008 with the abrupt rise of unemployment in Spain which has greatly reduced the job opportunities for immigrants. The effect has been noticeable in the agricultural works one year later, in 2009, when Spaniards who became unemployed in 2008 exhausted their unemployment benefits. Then a clear return to agriculture was visible, a sector fully abandoned by Spaniards during the years of the economic boom, creating an autochthonous demand for these kind of jobs and a social and political pressure over employers<sup>8</sup>. This pressure has expelled circular migrating workers in favour of natives or old immigrants already staying in Spain. Thus, while in 2005 34,000 immigrants arrived to Huelva with a temporary contract to work in the strawberry sector (coming from Morocco, Eastern Europe and Latin America), in 2009 they were only 11,000<sup>9</sup>. Most Spaniards that have come back to the agriculture since 2008 were working earlier in the construction sector, whose recovery in the next coming years is far from probable, a fact that would lead to a continuing pressure over the agricultural work market. Hence, most probably this presence of native population in the agricultural works would persist during years as there is no other work intensive sector which can in the next future provide jobs in a so broad extent.

Leaving aside temporary contracts and accords, statistical and surveys information can provide some clues about the frequency, intensity and nature of contacts between Moroccan immigrants in Spain and their native country. These are relevant indicators of the potential circular migration should the institutional framework favor it. We count with four main sources about these contacts: the Poll to Moroccan Citizens living in Spain, developed in 2009, the Spanish Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes (ENI) conducted during the last weeks of 2006, the survey “*Les Marocains Residant à l’Etranger*”, whose field work was conducted in 2005, and the report “*La reinsertion des migrants de retour au Maroc*” based on a survey conducted during the years 2003-04. The ENI was directed by the Spanish Instituto Nacional de Estadística and the three others by Moroccan state or semi-state organisations (the Conseil de la Communauté Marocain a l’Etranger and the Haut-Commissariat du Plan for the last two ones).

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<sup>8</sup> See [http://www.soitu.es/soitu/2009/08/27/info/1251392898\\_118631.html](http://www.soitu.es/soitu/2009/08/27/info/1251392898_118631.html), and <http://www.huelvainformacion.es/article/provincia/501563/miles/inmigrantes/se/quedaran/sin/trabajo/la/campana/fresera.html>. Also:

[http://www.elpais.com/articulo/andalucia/campo/absorbe/70000/obreros/sectores/crisis/elpepiespand/20100309elpand\\_9/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/andalucia/campo/absorbe/70000/obreros/sectores/crisis/elpepiespand/20100309elpand_9/Tes)

<sup>9</sup> See [http://www.elpais.com/articulo/andalucia/Drastica/caida/contratos/origen/campana/fresa/Huelva/elpepiespand/20100125elpand\\_4/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/andalucia/Drastica/caida/contratos/origen/campana/fresa/Huelva/elpepiespand/20100125elpand_4/Tes)

According to the most recent of these researches (Poll to Moroccan Citizens living in Spain, 2009), the 32% of Moroccan citizens living in Spain visit Morocco several times at year, while 44% do it once at year (i.e. 76% visit at least once Morocco). This percentage is bigger than the corresponding one among Moroccan immigrants in other European countries (69%) and lower among second generation Moroccans in Spain (62%). Most first generation immigrants in Spain plan to spend their retirement in Morocco (69%), in a clear contrast with immigrants in other European countries (52%) with a longer history of Moroccan migration, while among the second generation of Moroccan immigrants in Spain only a small 5% plan to move to Morocco on a permanent basis. 50% of immigrants in Spain support economically relatives in Morocco, 45% own a house or flat there and 31% is owner of an agricultural plot, but only 15% keeps any kind of economic activity in Morocco (including trade with Morocco). As for their image of Morocco, 73% think that economy is evolving in the good direction in their home country, a much bigger percentage than in other European countries (58%), but opinion is much worse relating with human rights. Only 52% keep positive expectancies regarding the Moroccan evolution on this realm. These expectancies are relevant as they can foster or diminish the wishes and plans for return.

The Spanish ENI (2006) showed that just 2,7% of Moroccans planned to return to their country within next five years. It is the lowest proportion among big immigrant groups such as Ecuadorians (14%), Colombians (7%) or Bolivians (23%). According to the ENI 76% of Moroccan immigrants send usually remittances. Calculations of Spanish Central Bank estimate the total amount of these remittances in 528 millions Euros in 2007. However, other sources as the Moroccan “*Office des Changes*” calculated a bigger amount, of around 800 millions (Moré, 2009), including in the estimate the use of informal channels of remittances.

The report “*La reinsertion des migrants de retour au Maroc*” based on a survey conducted during the years 2003-04 which interviewed 1,500 return migrants from any country (i.e. not differentiating the Spanish case), find an average age of return of 64 years, i.e., those who returned were retired. Broadly speaking, return was the final stage of the migration process: just 18% of returned immigrants had the purpose of migrate again. Nonetheless, the report provides some data that allows to conclude that around 6 or 7% of returned immigrants has followed a circular trajectory.

This retirement is the reason of return as declared by 46% of interviewees, followed by family problems (16,5%), and health or labour problems (9 and 8%). Concerning their relations with host countries, 51% of returned immigrants had revisited them at least once since their return. 12% had gone back there more than ten times, but the report does not provide information about their ages. The

main reasons to revisit host countries were affairs related to the payment of pensions or salaries (33%), visiting relatives (19%), administrative proceedings (18%) or health care (11%). Only 10% mentioned business as the reason of their visits, a small percentage that again indicates low circular migration.

The report “Les Marocains résidant à l’étranger” (fieldwork conducted in 2005) could be described as complementary source to the previous one. It has two advantages: a greater sample (3,000 households) and the possibility to differentiate among host countries. All following data come from chapter four of that report: Moroccan immigrants in Spain visit more frequently their origin country than those living in France or Italy, probably due to the geographic proximity. The report does not collect information on the reasons of the visits but it relates it with the main characteristics of household heads. Socioeconomic level or labour situation are quite related to the frequency of visits, as a better situation allows more frequent visits.

Notwithstanding this, it is worth paying attention to the clear relationship between investments in Morocco and frequency of visits. There are no separate data for Spain, but, generally speaking, those with investments in Morocco visit their country at least once a year in a higher percentage than the rest of immigrants. Simultaneously, those immigrants who have the intention to return to Morocco visit the country in a higher proportion than those who plan to stay in the host country. Thus, the proportion of Moroccan immigrants settled in Spain who has some kind of investment in their country could provide a hint about the magnitude of circular migration, even though it is a very inexact indicator and we can not establish a direct relationship.

**Table 13.** Percentage of households heads who have invested in Morocco

<b>Spain</b>	30,6
<b>France</b>	50,8
<b>Italy</b>	43,8
<b>Belgium</b>	42,4
<b>Netherlands</b>	46,9
<b>Others</b>	45,5

Source: *Les marocains résident à l’étranger*

According to table, the investment in Morocco of Moroccan immigrants living in Spain is the lowest in Europe, probably due to their relatively new settlement and their low socioeconomic situation. We should take into account that investment does not imply a productive activity, which should be the category that seems to induce circular migration. For instance, 81% of investments made by Moroccans living in Spain are dedicated to properties (it is not known if this property is devoted to be used as residence or as business), 8,3% to the commercial sector and 4,6% to the agricultural sector.

Regarding the possibility or the purpose of returning to Morocco, 61% of head households and 57% of their partners living in Spain have the intention to return to their country of origin in the short or the long term. It is a similar percentage to the European average. At the same time, there is a clear pattern shared by all Moroccan families living abroad: children of these families show a lower percentage of intention of returning to their country.

As for the reasons of desired return, 18% of Moroccan immigrants in Spain in 2005 declared an unsatisfying situation, the highest proportion in Europe, which suggests specific integration problems. Another 26% argued their projects in Morocco as main reason to return. This fact makes them –we could hypothesize- more or less serious candidates to become circular migrants.

**Table 14. Reasons to return to Morocco**

	<b>Family in Morocco</b>	<b>Not Satisfied in the host country</b>	<b>Projects in Morocco</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Spain</b>	43,2	18,2	26,2	11,8
<b>France</b>	44,4	10,7	25,2	19,7
<b>Italy</b>	31,4	16,7	38,4	13,6

Source: *Les marocains resident a l'étranger*

## **Concluding Remarks**

Despite the proximity between Morocco and Spain, circular migration between both countries has been so far refrained by a legal and institutional framework which has prevented immigrants to return and come back and has limited it to seasonal agricultural works, thus making circular and seasonal non differentiable realities. Immigrants employed periodically on this kind of jobs account for less than 10% of all Moroccan immigrants in Spain. As a consequence, circular migration has not received relevant scholar attention, focused on the virtues of the specific programs designed to foster this seasonal and circular agricultural migration.

Besides, the elements in the literature related with brain-draining and circular migration as a tool to reduce it, have scarce if any application in this case, as qualified immigration coming from Morocco is almost non-existent in Spain, in a clear contrast with France, destiny of a good portion of Moroccan graduates.

The specific difficulties that Moroccan immigrants face in their social integration and acceptance from the native population play against the desing of new specific frameworks for promoting circular

migration between Spain and Morocco. On the other hand, counteracting this disadvantage, the dense network of mutual dependences between both countries favours the development of Spanish measures to offer legal channels of immigration to Moroccan workers. Finally, the present economic crisis has reduced circularity as it has curtailed the number of job offers for foreigners even in the agricultural sector, which is experiencing a return to its activities of native and already settled immigrant population.

The nature of contacts between Moroccan immigrants in Spain and their home country offers contradictory signs regarding the potential for circular migration should the legal regulation favour it. The low educational level and the rural character of most immigrants do not favour circular patterns as do the small investment in Morocco. But, on the other hand, the wish to return to Morocco, the good expectancies regarding its economy or even a certain dissatisfaction in Spain could promote forms of circularity.

Questions related with the specific integration and reintegration problems that can affect circular immigrants are still completely open and will be addressed through interviews in the next phase of our research while it will also produce a more complete knowledge of the nature, mechanisms, and extent of the circular migration experienced presently and in the last years.

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