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The Performance of Bulgarian Undocumented and Legalised Immigrants in the Spanish Labour Market

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Abstract

This paper examines the performance of undocumented and legalised Bulgarian immigrants in the Spanish labour market, their propensity for integration into the receiving society and their intentions to return. Migrant performance is defined by occupational attainment, namely, first and current job in the host country, competition in employment with native workers and migrant remitting/saving patterns. Two other definitions are adopted in the analysis: Foreigners who enter a country either illegally or legally and then take up employment there when having neither a residence nor a work permit or in violation of their entry visas, are defined as *undocumented.* In contrast, *legalised foreigners* are those undocumented foreigners successfully complete a regularisation programme applied by the host country government. A particular problem for research on the labour market performance of undocumented migrants is that it must necessarily focus on the informal economy. This research contributes towards filling this knowledge gap.

Background

There is a considerable volume of research dealing with the economics of international labour migration (for useful reviews see Straubhaar, 1988; Stark, 1991; Borjas, 1994; van den Broek, 1996, and Djajic, 2001) but almost all of it refers to legal migration. Economic research into undocumented migration is much more limited and mainly of a theoretical nature. High quality empirical evidence is still restricted to the US labour market, with first empirical results coming from surveys of undocumented aliens, mostly Mexicans, to the United States (Chiswick, 1984; 1986; Borjas *et al*, 1991). There are a few papers that offer empirical evidence particularly on the earnings performance of illegal immigrants in the United States (Massey, 1987; Chiswick, 1991). Massey's analysis of the weekly earnings and hourly wages of illegal workers has indicated that earnings increase with level of schooling, total labour market experience, and experience in the US labour market. Some other papers have compared earnings of illegal and legal immigrants (Rivera-Batiz, 1999) while Chiswick and Miller, (1998) analysed the language skills and earnings among legalised immigrants in the US. Rivera-Batiz (1999) reported that the average weekly wages for men were substantially higher than for women no matter of their status – legal or illegal and, at the same time, wages of illegal immigrants were significantly lower than those of legal immigrants. Chiswick and Miller (1998) showed that weekly earnings among undocumented men at the time of application for legalisation increased with schooling, labour market experience, and duration of stay in the US, and were higher for married men. The effects of schooling and marriage were reported to be smaller among legalised immigrants than among immigrant men in general.

For the case of Europe, empirical evidence on the labour market performance of undocumented migrants is still scarce given the understandable lack of data. The main difficulty stems from foreigners' illegal status. It is generally difficult to approach them, to interview them, to obtain any information on their skills, wages received, and employment.

A limited number of studies have analysed legal migrant economic performance in Europe (see Adsena and Chiswick, 2004; Buchel and Frick, 2005) but utilizing primarily available data from the European Community Household Panel as well as the British Household Panel Survey and the German Socio-Economic Panel Study. Such surveys are often of limited value because of missing information about certain types of immigration–related issues such as immigration status or country of origin. Moreover, they do not contain individual data on migrant job changes, reasons for changing jobs, ways of finding jobs, fringe benefits or membership of trade unions. We are in a great need of additional, individual-based data material in order to complete the task of estimating migrant economic performance for a particular European destination.

Immigrants in Southern Europe work in a highly segmented labour market, with temporary, low-paid, heavy or dangerous work – the jobs that natives refuse to do, especially in construction, heavy industry and agriculture. Essentially, the role of immigrants in Southern Europe has been to compensate, on a temporary basis, for structural defects in the labour markets. These defects are of three types: insufficient labour supply; inflexible labour markets through over-regulation; and, uncompetitive low-productivity sectors (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004). The progressive fragmentation of the Spanish and Portuguese labour markets, for example, have led to immigrants entering them at various levels. Initially, a dual labour market could be identified, based on the internationalisation of the Iberian economies that generated a demand for skilled professionals from Northern Europe, Asia and Eastern Europe. The other was for unskilled workers, often without legal status. Since the 1980s, these labour markets have fragmented even further, blurring the distinction between temporary and permanent employment. Many of the new jobs have been in insecure, seasonal or temporary, fixed term employment. As nationals are unwilling to take on this type of work, many jobs opportunities have been opened for immigrant labour. The trend has been clearly observed in the Spanish regional labour market. In Andalucia, in particular, immigrants are now doing jobs in the greenhouse agriculture and in the hotel and catering industry (Alvarez, 2000, cited in Corkill, 2001).

In 1999, more than three quarters (76.1%) of the 199,753 legal non-EU migrant workers in Spain were concentrated in five sectors that constitute "labour market niches" for the immigrant labour force: domestic service (26.4%), agriculture (21.2%), unqualified jobs in the hotel and catering sector (11.7%), unskilled construction workers (9.4%) and the retail sector (7.4%)[1]. These are the sectors with the worst employment conditions in terms of human capital, labour relations, working conditions and wage levels. These five sectors, however, represent less than

[1] MTAS, 2000, cited in Sole and Parella, 2003.

40 per cent of total employment in Spain, which demonstrates the "ethno-stratification" of the job market (Sole and Parella, 2003). The process of ethno-stratification in Spain was confirmed by a recent study of the La Caixa Bank (2004)[2], which found that 42 per cent of almost one million foreigners (including EU nationals, 30%) who were officially registered to work in 2003, worked either in building, farming or hotels. Recruiting undocumented foreign labour has become common among industries in Spain facing fierce international competition, such as textiles, clothing, leather and winemaking (Corkill, 2001)

Methodology

The analysis in this study is based on data obtained in a survey conducted among the Bulgarian immigrants in the Madrid area of Spain (particularly, in the southern suburbs of Parla and Getafe, and the south-eastern region of Alkala de Henares), in November – December 2003 and in April 2004, some 20 days after the train blasts of 11 March at the Atocha station.

A major statistical issue concerning a survey of this type involves the representative nature of the sample. It has been always difficult to give reliable estimates of the number of immigrants illegally residing and working in a host country and therefore, there is always great uncertainty about the sampling frame. For the case of Spain, Municipality Registers contain some information on part of the undocumented Bulgarian immigrants together with data for legally residing Bulgarian immigrants, but available data does not distinguish between migrant legal status. However, when designing individual data surveys to study human migration and illegal migration in particular, we cannot talk about the representative nature of the sample or the statistical significance of the obtained results. Because migration is a phenomenon that involves such a great deal of moral ethics questions, uncertainty, fears, human emotions, and there should be no other appropriate sample design but the snowballing, "purposive sample".

In total, 202 Bulgarian immigrants living in the Madrid area and over the age of 18, with the exception of only one working Bulgarian at the age of 16, were interviewed in detail about their migration history, labour market performance, working and living conditions, intentions to return and the use of social services in the host country.

The idea was to build some trust between the interviewer (the author of the paper) and the interviewees. For this reason, the survey had an extensive and expensive preliminary part with the objective to gain trust though the establishment of personal contacts with influential people among the Bulgarian community. They provided access to places where Bulgarians gathered, usually Bulgarian-owned businesses ('phone and money houses', *locutorios* in Spanish, coffee shops, restaurants) or private houses. The interviews were fully in the Bulgarian language and the questionnaire, being the main survey instrument, was available in this language.

Empirical results

The results obtained from the survey of 202 Bulgarian immigrants in Spain are organised in such a way as to offer explanations on specific questions related to the Bulgarian migrant performance in the Spanish labour market, their propensity for integration into the host society and their long-term intentions to return back to Bulgaria.

A profile of the Bulgarian immigrants

Fifty four per cent of the sample was male and 46 per cent - female. The majority of them (37 per cent) belonged to the 25-34 age group (20 per cent of the sample were between 25-29 years of age and 17 per cent - between 30 and 34 years of age) while some 8 per cent were above 55.

The main suppliers of migrants from Bulgaria were the city of Shoumen in northeast Bulgaria, which was pre-emigration place of residence of almost 18 per cent of the immigrants, concentrated in the Getafe region in the south of Madrid, followed by the capital city of Sofia (9 per cent), and, the cities in northern Bulgaria – Pleven (7 per cent) and Varna (6 per cent).

The bulk of those interviewed (70 per cent) had completed high school education, usually with technical specialisation; some 5 per cent had completed College education while 3 per cent had not completed their University education and, another 19 per cent had University degrees or post-graduate diplomas. Three per cent of sample had only primary education.

Half of the interviewed immigrants were married, most with spouse and children in Spain while 20 per cent were single. Some 14 per cent were co-habiting with their partners. Another 11 per cent were divorced and 3 per cent reported marriage in name only; 2 per cent were widowed.

[2] Agencia EFE and Expatica News, May 18, 2004 (http://www.expatica.com/source/site_article.asp?subchannel_id=81&story_id=7669) [21 May 2004]

Migration history

The migration history of the interviewed Bulgarians in the sample contains information on their last occupation in Bulgaria, 'push-pull' migration factors, date of first arrival in Spain as well as previous working experience in another foreign country.

Sixty-eight per cent of the migrants were last occupied in Bulgaria in the private sector, either as employees or self-employed, and 25 per cent were employed in the public sector. A small percentage held jobs in both sectors. These were usually people employed in public education, who were also managers of their own real estate businesses. Results support data by the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute on the sectoral distribution of employees showing an increasing share of public sector employment, 59 per cent and 63 per cent in 2001 and 2003 respectively[3].

Six per cent of those interviewed had never worked in Bulgaria, either coming to Spain right after completing or not even completing the high school or working only abroad. Some three people reported earning their living before migration through suitcase trade with the neighbouring countries of Serbia-Montenegro and Romania. A great part of the migrants belonged to the skilled category of workers in Bulgaria. Most of them (26 per cent) were occupied in private services (finance, insurance, communications) or in manufacturing (17 per cent), followed by wholesale and retail trade (16 per cent), construction, education and agriculture. Among them were accountants, auditors, engineers, a criminologist and a University professor, high school and secondary school teachers and journalists. Self-employed migrants had their businesses mainly in the catering and trade; one person reported running a warehouse for the production of fishing tackle (Table 1).

Seventy-seven per cent of the sample reported no working experience abroad before emigrating to Spain and some 23 per cent had worked in another foreign country. After 1990, most of these had worked in Greece, illegally, in the construction, agriculture or domestic services; the usual duration of their work there was between two to three, even to four years. Others worked in Germany, France, Cyprus, and Portugal. Before 1990, a few had worked in the former USSR, Algeria and Angola.

Asked to rank the reasons for leaving Bulgaria, 57 people (29 per cent) chose "I had work but money was not enough to survive or to live a normal life" as the first one. "The lack of prospects for improving the economic situation in Bulgaria" was ranked first by 45 people (22 per cent) in the sample, followed by those who left Bulgaria to join a family member or a partner (14 per cent). Equal number of people emigrated because of "unemployment and no money" (9 per cent) and "better future for their children" (9 per cent). The survey findings reveal the emergence of a family migration model to Spain with one of the spouses coming first, legalising his/her status or even not doing so, and then, the rest of the family following.

Table 1. Distribution of immigrants by sector of last occupation in Bulgaria

Sector	Public	Private	Total	%
Agriculture, hunting, forestry	0	4	4	2%
Manufacturing	7	28	35	17%
Construction	2	13	15	8%
Hotel/restaurant	3	26	29	14%
Wholesale/retail trade		31	31	15%
Education	13	1	14	7%
Health	5	1	6	3%
Other services	20	33	53	26%
'Suitcase' trade	-	-	3	2%
Never worked	-	-	12	6%
TOTAL	50	137	202	100%

Source: Survey results

Almost all of the interviewed migrants in the sample have remained continuously in Spain since the date of their first entry in the country. Most of the interviewed Bulgarians (62 per cent) first migrated to Spain in the period 2000-2002. "Relatives already in Spain" or "friends already in Spain" were pointed out as the main reasons for immigration to Spain. Some 6 per cent came between 1990-1997. Their main reason for migration was the anticipated "possibilities for illegal stay and work, and regularisation". The peak entry-year was 2002 when 31 per cent of those interviewed entered Spain. Another 19 per cent came in 2003 and at the beginning of 2004.

Almost half of the migrants had thoughts of going or attempted to go to another host country before coming to Spain, typically UK, USA, Germany or Italy. Most of them did not migrate to the destination of their first choice because of difficulties in obtaining entry visas or work and residence permits. Spain appeared as their second choice because of expected lower real wages.

Migrant legal status in Spain

More than half of the interviewed in the sample (56 per cent) were residing and working illegally in Spain, some 7 per cent were working on their 3-month tourist visas and 37 per cent had legal

[3] http://www.nsi.bg/Labour_e/LCS03.htm

status in the host country. Almost half of them acquired their legal status through participation in the regularisation programmes of the Spanish government in 2001 and 2002 and another 30 per cent participated in the regularisation programmes in 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. Others managed to legalise their work through an employment offer.

'Entry' jobs for Bulgarian migrants

Migrant performance in the labour market was very much pre-determined by migrant legal status. Some jobs were exclusively available for legal migrants. Most legalized men in Spain were working as qualified builders or drivers for wholesale companies. Others established their own construction companies or companies providing full house maintenance. They were usually family businesses opening jobs for friends or relatives from Bulgaria.

The bulk of those interviewed had first entered the host labour markets possessing neither residence nor work permit, or, often, when violating their tourist visas. Eight people in the sample had never worked in Spain. Four of them were women who were 'tied' family members, following their husbands in Spain to stay home and take care of their children and family.

Table 2. Sectors of migrants' first employment in Spain by gender

Sector	Male	Female	Total	%
Agriculture	9	4	13	7%
Domestic live-in (elderly care/baby-sitting, housework; gardening)	1	29	30	16%
Domestic live-out		23	23	11%
Cleaning (non-domestic)	1	5	6	3%
Construction	49		49	25%
Hotel		2	2	1%
Restaurants, bars	3	7	10	5%
Warehouse	13	8	21	11%
Distribution of leaflets	6	4	10	5%
Natural gas distribution/ installation	3		3	2%
Other	23	4	27	14%
TOTAL	108	89	194	100%

Source: Survey results

Table 2 offers a comprehensive description of the sectors of migrants' first employment in Spain. Almost all of the interviewed were first employed in unskilled jobs. The figures highlight a possible discrepancy between migrants' actual qualifications and the job they were doing. Nonetheless, the results are not surprising taking into account migrant illegal status and their poor to non- existent knowledge of the Spanish language.

Caring professions (household work and elderly care or baby-sitting) were the labour market entry point for female Bulgarian newcomers in Spain, usually illegally residing and working in the country. Some 16 per cent were live-in at their employer's house, being 24 hours at their disposal. This was preferred option for individual female migrants in the early years of Bulgarian migration to Spain.

Harvesting olives, grapes, cherries, strawberries, orange or sheep grazing was the entry niche for almost 7% of the working sample in Spain, men and women. Also, employment in small-scale businesses for printing leaflets/flyers, distributing leaflets *(cartero* in Spanish) and, cleaning offices, shops and newly built houses under the management of a cleaning agency usually owned by legal Latin American migrants were a labour market entry option for both Bulgarian men and women in Spain. Entry jobs for Bulgarian men in Spain were heavy, unqualified jobs in construction. The companies they worked for were usually managed and/or owned by legalised Bulgarians. Some of those Bulgarian middlemen or construction owners would prefer to employ only illegal Bulgarians in order to minimise production costs. These were clear examples of ethnic businesses with ethnic exploitation. No knowledge of Spanish language was required and the payment was usually low, with 10-12 working hours per day.

Job-searching mechanisms for the first job in Spain

It is interesting to see the way migrants found their first job in Spain. Some 80 per cent of the sample reported finding their first job through relatives or Bulgarian friends/acquaintances, which provides empirical support for the migration network theory. Only the "pioneer" Bulgarian migrants who arrived in Spain before 1998, found their first job alone asking different employers. Most of those interviewed had waited from a few days to three months to find their first job.

Competition in first employment between Spaniards and Bulgarian migrants

Almost 60 per cent of the interviewed in the sample reported that there were no Spaniards applying for their first jobs. "Many working hours" and "low payment" were stated as main reasons for the lack of competition for jobs between Spaniards and immigrants. In other cases, the lack of competition was predetermined by the ethnic character of the businesses they were employed in, which was not necessarily

Bulgarian. Sometimes, it was a Chinese restaurant or Russian/Polish construction companies where Spaniards were never employed.

Job turnover

Job turnover is an important characteristic of migrants' employment patterns. Most illegal Bulgarian men employed in construction reported frequent job changes. However, illegal employment of men was usually correlated with high job mobility and long unemployment periods. Job mobility among regularised Bulgarian migrants did lead to an improvement in their employment opportunities. Some 7 per cent in the sample reported job change because of self-employment. Self-employment of Bulgarians in Spain, almost exclusively attributed to legality in the labour market, can be considered an employment opportunity created as a result of dynamic developments and increased flexibility in the host labour markets. Among them, there were people who had a shop for clothes; a family business for telecommunication services and for the publication of the first Bulgarian newspaper in Spain; family businesses for interior house design or full house maintenance, Bulgarian restaurants, a food store, and a hairdresser's salon. Self-employment for two other people was also both an opportunity and the only option to enter the labour market. One of them was a dressmaker working from home, finding her customers, and taking care of her child. The other one was a man, playing an accordion in the Madrid underground.

Most recent occupations of Bulgarian migrants in Spain

At the time of the interviews, some 23 per cent in the sample had not changed their first job. Usually they were women, live-out housekeepers or in elderly care. There was low job mobility among them, explained mainly by migrant illegal status. By contrast, illegal status was the main determinant of the high job turnover of Bulgarian men, employed mainly in construction. It is interesting to shed some light on the main reasons migrants were changing jobs. Eight people changed their last job because of problems at the work place related to their illegal status. This reason for a job change was often formulated as "I was laid off because my employer was penalised for employing undocumented migrants" or "The employer was constantly on the alert of my illegal status, which was putting enormous pressure on me." Seven people changed job to become self-employed and another seven people found a job that offered better employment and social status. Some three people who acquired legal status reported a change of work to undertake employment that corresponded to their qualifications and training prior to migration. Other people changed jobs because of irregular payment, change of place of residence or death of the elderly person they were taking care of. An interviewed woman was on one of the trains that exploded on the morning of 11 March 2004. She was commuting from southeast of Madrid, Alkala de Henares, to central Madrid. She was heavily injured and psychologically traumatised. She changed job to avoid commuting on the trains.

Table 3 [see Appendix A] offers a detailed description of migrants' last or more recent job in Spain compared to their 'entry' job in the host labour market. A high proportion appeared to be occupied in medium or low skilled jobs. The findings significantly differ with the initial migrant employment in Spain. The figures suggest improvements in migrant occupational attainment over time. A considerable proportion of women who were live-in housekeepers or in elderly care when they first arrived in Spain changed their jobs for live-out housekeeping and/or elderly care or baby-sitting. There are some changes in occupational status that are not visible from the table. They are usually reflected in job changes within the same employment sector. Such an example are some Bulgarian men who started as labourers in construction but with increased duration of stay in Spain, improved knowledge of the foreign language and, in some cases, acquired legal status, they managed to climb up the occupational ladder to professional builders.

Table 4. Current employment of migrants by their legal status in Spain

	Legal	Illegal	Tourist	Total
Domestic live-in	1 (0.5%)	12 (5.9%)	5 (2.5%)	18 (8.9%)
Domestic live-out	4 (2.0%)	21 (10.4%)	1 (0.5%)	26 (12.9%)
Cleaning non-domestic	5 (2.5%)	10 (4.9%)	1 (0.5%)	16 (7.9%)
Construction	11 (5.4%)	32 (15.9%)	1 (0.5%)	44 (21.8%)
Hotel/ Restaurant	8 (3.9%)	6 (3.0%)	1 (0.5%)	15 (7.4%)
Warehouse	9 (4.5%)	12 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	21 (10.4%)
Drivers	7 (3.5%)	2 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (4.5%)
Self-employed	11 (5.4%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	13 (6.4%)
Other	14 (6.9%)	16 (7.9%)	0 (0.0%)	30 (14.8%)
Not working	4 (2.0%)	2 (1.0%)	4 (2.0%)	10 (5.0%)
TOTAL	74 (36.6%)	114 (56.4%)	14 (7.0%)	202 (100.0%)

Source: Survey results

Table 4 gives a detailed account of the sectors of migrant current employment by their legal status. Illegal Bulgarian men were concentrated in the construction sector working side by side with legal Bulgarian migrants. Equal proportions of them were unskilled labourers or professional builders. Almost equal numbers of undocumented and legal migrants were working in warehouses for packing sand, printing leaflets, colouring souvenirs or assembling furniture. Figures suggest that the bulk of Bulgarian illegal migrants were absorbed in the Spanish labour market in a manner similar to legal migrants, a result that partially suggests signs of an ethno-stratified host labour market. Moreover, undocumented Bulgarians in construction, cleaning and small-scale businesses seemed to experience improvements over time in earnings and occupational status, as did legal Bulgarian migrants. Live-in employment in housekeeping and elderly care or baby-sitting, 24 hours at employers' disposal was a market niche almost exclusively occupied by illegal or semi-legal migrants working on their tourist visas. This was a safer and cheaper option for Bulgarian women with uncertain legal status in the country. Live-out employment in households was also a preferred option mainly of illegal Bulgarians. Other occupations where legal and illegal Bulgarians were working together included guards for nightclubs or private guards, mechanics in auto-repair shops, technicians in TV – repair shops or technicians installing air-conditioners.

Another aspect of migrant performance in the host labour market refers to the problems migrants face at work. Table 5 shows that 93 people or 46 per cent of those interviewed reported no problems' at their current work place. Of them, 54 were working illegally in Spain. Equal numbers of people, sixteen, ranked 'employer difficult to work for', 'problems with other Bulgarians' and 'employer does not want to register me' as their first work–related problem, followed by 'heavy manual work/ unbearable working conditions' selected by 14 of the interviewed migrants. 'Hostility of locals towards migrants' was mentioned as the main problem at work by eight of the interviewed Bulgarians in the sample. Most of them were undocumented migrants. They were usually earning their living though the distribution of fliers. Another 12 people mentioned 'low/irregular payment' and 'many working hours' as the main problems they face at workplace. Only two of them were working legally. Other problems included: hostility by other migrants (competition for jobs in the personal services sector between Latin Americans and East Europeans was reported), language barriers or psychological problems caused by taking care of mentally ill children or adults.

Table 5. Problems faced by migrants at work by legal status

Problems at work	Legal	Illegal	Tourists	Total
No problems	39 (19.2%)	50 (24.8%)	4 (2.0%)	93 (46.0%)
Heavy work	4 (2.0%)	9 (4.5%)	1 (0.5%)	14 (7.0%)
Difficult employer	8 (3.9%)	7 (3.5%)	1 (0.5%)	16 (7.9%)
Hostility of locals	3 (1.5%)	5 (2.4%)	0 0.0%	8 (3.9%)
Hostility of migrants	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.0%)
Bulgarian co-workers	5 (2.5%)	11 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (7.9%)
Registration	3 (1.5%)	12 (5.9%)	1 (0.5%)	16 (7.9%)
Low/irregular payment	0 (0.0%)	7 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (3.5%)
Working hours	2 (1.0%)	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.0%)	5 (2.5%)
Language	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.5%)	1 (0.5%)	4 (2.0%)
Not enough work	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.0%)
Other problems	6 (3.0%)	4 (2.0%)	1 (0.5%)	11 (5.5%)
Never worked in Spain	3 (1.5%)	2 (1.0%)	3 (1.5%)	8 (3.9%)
TOTAL	74 (36.6%)	114 (56.4%)	14 (7.0%)	202 (100.0%)

Source: Survey results

Migrant wages

Table 6 shows the variation in migrant monthly wages by sector of employment. Compensation levels for Bulgarian migrants varied between sectors of employment, occupational status within a sector, and employment experience in the Spanish labour market. Drivers were 'taking home' between €1,500 to €2,700 per month and they were mostly doing international or internal routes. Two of the drivers were earning between €500-800 per month because of their illegal status that would allow them to work within Madrid area only. Family businesses reported more than €2,000 monthly profits. Illegal Bulgarian men in construction doing unqualified jobs reported irregular employment, which resulted in low monthly earnings, sometimes below €500. Wages in live-out elderly care and/or housekeeping and cleaning jobs, were correlated with the number of employers and the total hours of work per month. In those sectors, the average net hourly wage was low, at about €4.50, requiring excessive hours of work. The average remuneration for live-in employment in households was between €500-800 per month. Undocumented Bulgarian women there were getting some benefits-in-kind as well such as shelter and food. Professional builders, on average, were earning about €1,200 per month.

Hotel maids were earning between €800 and €1,000 monthly.

Table 6. Monthly wages of migrants by employment sector

	Under €500	€501-€800	€801-€1000	€1000-€1500	Over €1500
Domestic live-in	8	9			1
Domestic live-out	15	6	4		1
Cleaning (non-domestic)	8	8			
Construction	2	15	7	15	5
Hotels/ restaurants	2	6	4	3	
Warehouse	3	6	4	6	2
Drivers		2		1	6
Self-employed		1	2	4	6
Other	5	11	5	3	6
Not working	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	43	64	26	32	27

Source: Survey results

A 2004 survey by the Spanish Trade Unions UGT[4] on the wages of Spaniards, called 'poor workers in permanent employment', concludes that 'there is Spain rather different than the one represented by politicians'. The survey findings revealed that even though the official average wage in the country was €1,430, there were still a million and a half workers earning below €600 per month. For example, a guard was earning €781 per month while Bulgarian migrants in the sample report working as guards, reported earning, on average, €800. A Spanish saleswoman was earning €658, whereas a Bulgarian woman in the sample working for a big supermarket in Madrid was earning around €700. A native nurse assistant was earning €612. Bulgarian migrants doing the same job reported similar wages. Sometimes, migrants would work more hours to compensate insufficient earnings.

More than half of the interviewed migrants in the sample reported no benefits – in-kind (e.g. like paid vacations or two additional monthly salaries) received from their jobs. However, fringe benefits were not necessarily attributed to legal employment as some illegal migrants with good bargaining skills were getting them as well.

Almost all interviewed Bulgarian migrants in the sample had medical coverage that entitled them to free medical service. In Spain, there were still remaining signs of tolerance towards illegal immigrants by the Spanish authorities: all illegal immigrants had the right and were even encouraged to register at the Municipality they resided in order to obtain medical card for free public healthcare and education. Bulgarians that had used medical services were highly satisfied with the quality of services provided at the Spanish public hospitals. There was no discrimination between legal and illegal foreigners. Five women in the sample had given birth at Spanish hospitals. They talked about the generosity of the health system and the human and highly professional approach of the medical personnel.

Job-searching mechanisms for migrant current job in Spain

Bulgarian migrants in the sample were asked about the way their current or more recent job in Spain was found. The survey findings confirmed the major role that Bulgarian migrant networks played in the job searching process in Spain. About 60 per cent of those had who changed job in the host country found their last occupation through other Bulgarians, friends or relatives in Spain. It was speculated that some Bulgarian women were trading jobs between each other, thus distorting to a great extent the traditional role of networks in the international migration. Migrants, with legal status and with over five years of stay in Spain, would go alone asking different employers for vacancies. Bulgarian immigrants, regardless of their status but with similar duration of stay in Spain, were using the same job finding instruments for their most recent or current job. Some of them were placing their own adverts in a newspaper, sticking them up or distributing them to prospective employers. Others were recommended by their former employers. A few people with an average of 5 years of stay in Spain reported finding their last job with the assistance of Spanish friends. Nobody in the sample reported using the web for job searching.

Competition in current employment between immigrants and Spaniards

Table 7 reveals information on Bulgarian migrants' awareness of whether there were Spaniards applying for the same job they were most recently or currently doing. More than half of the respondents (60 per cent) gave a positive answer. Of them, equal numbers were employed legally and illegally. They were mainly occupied in construction, small-scale businesses or cleaning different offices, shops and new buildings. Another 30 per cent of the sample of working Bulgarians believed that there were no Spaniards

[4] The survey was published, citing the Spanish magazine 'Interview', in the Bulgarian newspaper in Spain 'New Word', issue 24, 5 March- 12 March 2004, p. 10.

applying for their jobs. Most of them were illegal migrants, working as labourers for Bulgarian middlemen or owners in construction, washing dishes in restaurants or in live-in housework or elderly care. Some 10 per cent did not have any opinion on this question.

Table 7. Awareness of competition from Spanish workers by employment sector

	Yes	No	Don't know
Domestic live-in	4	9	5
Domestic live-out	13	10	3
Cleaning (non-domestic)	12	3	1
Construction	25	14	4
Hotels/ restaurants	9	6	
Warehouse	15	4	2
Drivers	7	2	
Self-employed	10	3	
Other	22	6	2
TOTAL	117	59	17

Note: *Ten people in the sample were not in employment in Spain and this question was not applicable to them

Source: Survey results

Bulgarian migrants were also asked whether there were other nationalities with them doing the same job. Figures revealed that Bulgarian migrants in cleaning jobs, small-scale industries and construction were sometimes working side by side with Romanians as well as Ecuadorians and Columbians. As a result, some job-related conflicts and problems between Bulgarians and Romanians were reported.

Migrants who declared that there were Spaniards applying for their current or most recent job, were also asked about their awareness of the money Spaniards made for the same job. Half of them believed that Spaniards were earning more money for the same job and most of these were working illegally. Less than half supported the opposite view and the bulk of these had legal residence and working status in Spain. A very small fraction was not aware of the money Spaniards were making for the same job.

The majority of the interviewed Bulgarians who responded positively on the question whether Spaniards were making more money for the same job, estimated that the difference was at least as much as 40 per cent. Almost all of these were undocumented migrants: men were mainly carpenters, welders, labourers in construction, guards in nightclubs, or assemblers in small-scale furnishing businesses, while women were in cleaning jobs and in restaurants. Those undocumented migrants working in warehouses estimated the difference to be as much as 30 per cent while legalised migrants there reported a much smaller difference at about 10 per cent. The obtained results support Elliot's (1991) segmented labour market theory, according to which migrants, being undocumented and therefore employed predominantly in the second tier of the labour market or somewhere on the margins between the two tiers, experience earnings that result from the characteristics of the jobs they are doing rather than the stock of their human capital. Of course, the differences may be explained also by poor knowledge of the Spanish language, low transferability of training between Bulgaria and Spain or asymmetry of information.

Remitting/saving behaviour

Forty-two per cent of the interviewed working Bulgarians in Spain, regardless of their legal status, reported sending regularly money to Bulgaria. Most of them had either their families or just their children in Bulgaria. They were frequently sending small amounts of money. One hundred euros can be estimated to be the average amount sent per month. It varied, however, depending on the number of family members/ relatives in Bulgaria and their needs. Those not remitting at all (29 per cent of the working sample) were mainly young people between 19-29 years of age, mostly illegal migrants or working on their tourist visas. They were either single or married but with spouse and children in Spain. Some of them confided that they could not send money because of irregular jobs and low payment, correlated with their illegal status. Another 28 per cent were sending money to Bulgaria sporadically, to help parents or relatives and friends when in need or on special occasions. Their profile was very similar to the one of those not remitting at all.

More than half of the migrants preferred to send their money through the legal channels of Western Union and Money Gram. Just a small fraction (5 per cent) was using banks for their transfers. Others reported bringing money to families and relatives when visiting them in Bulgaria.

Most of those remitting regularly to Bulgaria reported sending annually between 10 and 30 per cent of their income. Undocumented migrants were sending greater shares of their income to Bulgaria. Some of them avoided keeping money in Spain and sent more than 50 per cent of their annual earnings.

More than half of those sending money to Bulgaria (73 per cent) reported that money was used mainly for consumption, buying food and paying bills, and for healthcare. Six people bought or built a house/garages from their remitted savings to Bulgaria. Some productive use of

remittances was recorded when migrants employed workers in Bulgaria to either build or renovate houses: two people completed building a house and another 12 people renovated their houses. Other people were paying back loans or financing the education of their children in Bulgaria.

More than half of those interviewed in the sample reported saving money in Spain and most of them were saving between 10-30 per cent of their earnings. Some 15 people reported saving more than 50 per cent of their earnings. Almost all of those making savings, regardless of status, preferred to keep their money in a bank in Spain. Six people had invested their savings in a flat/house in Spain. They had been residing, on average, eight years in Spain. A small fraction of the Bulgarians that reported saving in Spain preferred to keep their money at home. They were residing and working illegally in the country and thus feeling uncertain about their stay in Spain.

Migrant current living conditions

A few questions were asked to outline the idea of migrant integration into the receiving Spanish society. These questions included their treatment by the authorities, the quality of migrant accommodation and the set of relationships between Bulgarian migrants, their employers and the local Spanish people.

Spain was considered an 'attractive destination' by almost all of the interviewed Bulgarians in the sample. None of them was ever stopped by the police to produce evidence of residence status in Spain. Only three undocumented men reported being stopped by the police during anti-terrorist raids. They were freed after identifying themselves.

Table 8 outlines Bulgarian migrant housing patterns. Figures suggest that Bulgarian migrants affect the housing market in Madrid as the bulk was living in rented accommodation, flats or rooms in flats. Some 14 undocumented migrant women were living in their employers' houses and the same number of people, all legally residing in Spain, was living in their own or their parents' flat. Most of the people were living in poor conditions, sharing two to three bedroom flats, and renting a room in them. As a result, 5 to 7 people were sharing a lavatory. Two undocumented Bulgarian men were living in a room with three other people. It was usual practice that two Bulgarians, not necessarily partners or friends, would share a room for cheap rents. Only 34 people in the sample reported renting a flat. They were often family people with two children who intended to settle in the host country. Bulgarian migrant accommodation strategies reflect migrant saving behaviour.

Table 8. Type of accommodation of migrants by legal status

	Legal	Illegal	Tourist	Total
Rent a flat	23	11	0	34
	(11.4%)	(5.5%)	(0.0%)	(16.9%)
Rent a room	36	92	10	138
	(17.8%)	(45.5%)	(5.0%)	(68.3%)
Employer's house	1	10	3	14
	(0.5%)	(5.0%)	(1.4%)	(6.9%)
Hosted by friends	0	1	1	2
	(0.0%)	(0.5%)	(0.5%)	(1.0%)
Own flat	14	0	0	14
	(6.9%)	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	(6.9%)
Total	74	114	14	202
	(36.6%)	(56.5%)	(6.9%)	(100.0%)

Source: Survey results

Most of the interviewed in the sample reported good treatment by their employers. Some of those working for Bulgarian owners or middleman were not satisfied with their employers' attitudes.

Bulgarian migrants tended to settle in communities in Madrid, which was reflected in the question 'Do you make friends with the other Bulgarians here?', when more than half of the respondents (60 per cent) answered definitely 'yes'. They were usually living in the south- and south-east of Madrid, in Parla, Getafe and Alkala de Henares, where there were high concentrations of Bulgarians. They would limit their social interactions to other Bulgarians only. This could partially explain the fact that some 84 people reported no friendships with local Spaniards.

Intensions to return

When asked about their intensions to return to Bulgaria, 53 per cent responded they would like to return and most of them would do so when at retirement age. Eleven per cent did not plan to return to Bulgaria while some 8 per cent added that they would "never" return to Bulgaria. Twelve per cent were not sure about repatriation; and, 14 per cent would return, even immediately if the "economic situation in the country improves". Some of them put their hopes in the EU accession of Bulgaria in 2007.

Conclusions

The structural features considered to be important for the performance of the Bulgarian undocumented and legalised migrants in the Spanish labour market were sector of employment and the competition/complementarity between immigrants and similar Spanish workers.

The empirical results showed that the bulk of the interviewed in the sample first entered the Spanish labour market through the underground economy doing unskilled jobs in domestic services, cleaning, construction, agriculture and small-scale businesses. Legalised Bulgarian men in construction, middlemen or owners, were often first employers to new coming Bulgarian undocumented workers, offering low payment and excessive working hours.

A preponderance of the sample started their first employment in the host labour market with very poor or no knowledge of the Spanish language.

Results revealed that job mobility among regularised Bulgarian immigrants lead to improvement in their employment opportunities and earnings. Self-employment and the establishment of family businesses appeared to be employment opportunities for the leaglised migrants in the sample. Similar results were obtained for the undocumented Bulgarians in construction, cleaning and small-scale businesses. Over time, they seemed to experience improvement in earnings and occupational status, as did legal Bulgarian migrants. Moreover, the figures presented here suggest that the bulk of undocumented migrants were absorbed in the Spanish labour market in a manner similar to legalised Bulgarian migrants, a result that suggests signs of ethno-stratification of the Spanish labour market.

In addition, empirical results revealed that Bulgarian migrants, irrespective of their legal status, were competing for jobs with local population since 60 per cent of those interviewed said that there were Spaniards applying for their most recent or current jobs. These were mainly jobs in construction, cleaning and small-scale industries. Undocumented migrants, however, believed that Spaniards made more money for the same job and the estimated difference was 'at least as much as 40 per cent'.

In the long-run, the process of deskilling of Bulgarian immigrants may be observed in Spain as the current employment of a considerable share of the interviewed in the samples was not related to their prior-to-migration work experience.

The Spanish government completed a new regularisation programme in May 2005 for an estimated 1 million undocumented foreigners in the country[5]. About 25,549[6] Bulgarian workers (3.7 per cent of the foreign workforce in Spain) applied for legality. Most of the undocumented Bulgarians in the sample are expected to have successfully completed the programme and acquire legal status. Different speculations could be made for the consequences of this newly acquired legal status on migrant economic performance in the Spanish labour market and their intensions to return home. It might be expected that migrants lose their 'comparative advantage' of cheap labour in sectors in the informal or semi-formal economy where natives also apply for the same jobs but at the same time, they could also get access to new market niches in the formal economy, including the opportunity for self-employment. It might, however, have negative effects on migrants' real income in sectors, where there are only foreigners employed. Legalised Bulgarians are also expected to increase their planned stay in Spain and reunite with family members left behind. Legalisation of undocumented migrants, at least theoretically, should be much more of opportunities rather than restrictions.

[5] Under the new rules, an undocumented immigrant may attain legal status by producing a work contract of more than six – month duration, evidence of residence in Spain at least half a year and proof of no criminal record.

[6] www.mtas.es/balance/pagina8.htm

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Appendix A

Table 3. Distribution of migrants by their first and last job in the Spanish labour market

					First	*Job in*	*Spain*				
	Agriculture	Domestic live-in	Domestic live-out	Cleaning (non-domestic)	Construction	Hotels/ Restaurant/ Bars	Warehouse	Distribution of leaflets/ Natural gas distribution	Other	TOTAL	%
Last job in Spain											
Domestic live-in (elderly care,/baby-sitting, housework; gardening)	1	13		2	2		1			19	9
Domestic live-out	1	5	16	1		1	1	1	1	27	13
Cleaning (non-domestic)	2	3	3	1		4	2	1		16	8
Construction	4				30	1	4	3	2	44	22
Hotels/Restaurants/ Bars	1		1		4	4	1	2	1	14	7
Warehouse		2	1		6		6	1	4	20	10
Drivers	1				6				2	9	4
Self-employed		2				2	4		2	10	5
Family businesses		1							2	3	1
Other	3	4	2	2	1		2	5	13	32	16
Never worked in Spain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	4
TOTAL	13	31	24	6	49	12	21	13	27	202	100

Source: Survey results