



INTEGRATION

of the children of immigrants in the labour market:

AN OVERVIEW



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Presentation

It is a pleasure for me to present the English language version of the report “*Integration of the Children of Immigrants in the Labour Market*”, produced by researchers at the Fundación José Ortega y Gasset-Gregorio Marañón: Rosa Aparicio Gómez, Pablo Biderbost and Andrés Tornos Cubillo, and funded by the Secretariat of State for Migration.

The study, published in Spanish in 2019, addresses an essential area for the inclusion of citizens in general and particularly of immigrants: access to a job that enables them to enjoy a dignified full life.

It falls upon the State Secretariat for Migration both to develop immigration policies and strategies to foster the inclusion of immigrants and to promote equal treatment and non-discrimination, which has a direct effect on the cohesion of a democratic society.

This makes it essential to ascertain the situation of access to the labour market of young people who are children of immigrants, given that their dual condition as youth and being of immigrant origin leads them to face more obstacles than others. Because there has been virtually no research to date that has examined the issue, we consider this study to be an excellent contribution to furthering knowledge about these youth’s trajectories and about how they perceive and interpret situations linked to employment.

The study consists of three parts. The first analyzes quantitative data from the second follow-up survey of the *Longitudinal Study on the Second-Generation -ILSEG* (conducted by Alejandro Portes and Rosa Aparicio) which includes a representative sample of children of immigrants complemented with a sample of youth of Spanish origin. The second delves into the youth of immigrant origin’s subjective perceptions of discrimination in their access to the labour market. Finally, the third part looks into the procedures for the selection of personnel followed by different companies.

The results of the study show that children of immigrants are at a disadvantage as compared to those of Spanish origin. They attain lower levels of education and occupy technical and professional jobs in a lower proportion than their counterparts of Spanish origin. This gap, however, cannot be explained merely by the different levels of education they obtained. Furthermore, the children of immigrants face more difficulties in accessing jobs via the most common channels such as specific platforms or sending CVs.

As Spain’s Ombudsman reminded us in his 2019 report, immigration is a key element in Spanish public policy with a great positive impact in both the present and the future, in the economy and in demographics alike. We also know that the current COVID-19 pandemic, while global, will socially and economically more heavily impact the most vulnerable segments of the population, with a more precarious labour and/or housing situation.

Monitoring the access of the children of immigrants to the labour market before the pandemic –as done in this study- and then, afterwards, will allow us to pinpoint strategies, some of which have already been put forward in the following pages, to reduce these youths’ disadvantage.

Hana Jalloul Muro
Secretary of State for Migration



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The integration of the children of immigrants in the labour market: an overview

Labour market integration is key to the effective integration of the children of immigrants in Spanish society. Analysis of the data of the second follow-up survey to the *Longitudinal Second-Generation Study* shows that the children of immigrants between the ages of 19 and 29 face the same situation of precarious employment suffered by youth of Spanish descent in Spain. Like their Spanish counterparts, children of immigrants are subjected to high labour mobility, temporary employment and low wages. More than three quarters of both groups earn less than EUR 1 000 a month. In both instances, women's salaries are lower than men's.

This would apparently indicate that the children of immigrants have the same job opportunities as the children of Spaniards. However, other data show that they are at a disadvantage. On the one hand, the level of education attained by children of Spanish descent is significantly higher than that attained by the children of immigrants (61% versus 37% have upper level vocational training or university studies). This in itself, gives the former an advantage in the labour market and translates into a significantly higher percentage (12%) of children of Spaniards with jobs as technicians and professionals while the proportion of children of immigrants with unskilled or semi-skilled employment is considerably higher(17%).

However, these educational differences do not account for all of the disparities in the types of jobs obtained by one or the other group. The data show that with the same level of studies, a much higher proportion of children of Spanish descent manage to find employment as technicians and professionals compared to the children of immigrants (40% versus 20% of those with university studies). This would appear to indicate that companies discriminate to a certain extent when recruiting and hiring young people of immigrant origin.



This hypothesis is supported by the survey data and the qualitative interviews conducted. Indeed, the children of immigrants spend more time than those of Spaniards seeking employment and have a more difficult time doing so through the most common channels, i.e. uploading their CVs on specialised web portals or submitting them directly to companies. As a result, the children of immigrants, more frequently than their native counterparts, will have to resort to their immediate surroundings (family and friends) to find employment. This is also one of the reasons why they hold a higher proportion of the jobs at the lower end of the job scale as these will often be the jobs that their parents and other relatives have.

In spite of the discrimination that these data apparently indicate, the percentage of children of immigrants who claim to have been discriminated against personally when seeking employment or at work is not very high (28%) and the percentage of those who say they have frequently or regularly suffered discrimination is very low (1%). In fact, a similar proportion of the children of Spaniards claims to have been discriminated against under these same circumstances (28%). There are, however, differences in the reasons why members of the two groups believe they have been discriminated against. Children of immigrants mostly claim it is because of their national origin or their ethnical and cultural characteristics, while the children of Spaniards offer other reasons such as gender (women), age, lack of appreciation for their work, and so forth.

However, members of both groups agree that Spanish society discriminates against immigrants. Approximately 40% of both groups so assert in the quantitative survey (41% and 39% respectively) and the children of immigrants in the qualitative sample express this same view.

Hence, there is a large gap between recognition of the existence of discrimination towards immigrants in general and recognition by the children of immigrants of having been personally discriminated against. The qualitative part of the study offers some clues that help make sense of this. There we discover that the children of immigrants who were born in Spain or who arrived at a very young age, tend to identify less as children of immigrants. They feel 'Spanish' and therefore believe that they have the same possibilities and opportunities as any other young Spaniard. It is with this mindset that they tend to interpret the difficulties they face when entering the labour market, i.e. they do not perceive themselves as children of immigrants. There is only one circumstance in which they recognise the undeniable existence of discrimination: Muslim women who wear a veil. Some of our survey participants, such as people of colour or those with different customs, may suspect discrimination after repeated rejection, but they tend to prefer to offer other explanations more consistent with their feeling of being Spanish.



The children of immigrants do recognize having been discriminated against when they were at school. They talk about having been rejected and ridiculed by their classmates and having suffered injustices and been given fewer opportunities to study due to prejudice on the part of some teachers.

A review of company selection practices enabled us to identify three different ways that job openings are advertised, and candidates selected. Depending on which of the three is used, the children of immigrants will be likely to be excluded. It was also observed that most companies do not have explicit mechanisms to prevent possible bias that could lead to the rejection of young people of immigrant origin in the selection of candidates.

What we discovered in this study about the disadvantages that the children of immigrants often face when entering the labour market leads us to suggest some possible measures:

- More specific training of teachers allowing them to recognize that they may be unintentionally introducing racist and xenophobic bias in their dealings as teachers with their students who are children of immigrants, thus hampering the chances of the latter to attain the level of studies they aspire and are capable of.
- Provide young people with the preparation they need to meet the requirements of company selection processes.
- Offer young people ongoing guidance and support services to get their professional career on track. This could take the form of a vocational mentoring programme.
- Raise companies' awareness of the potential for discrimination and encourage them to put mechanisms in place to prevent the risk of making racist or xenophobic judgments in personnel selection processes.



1 Introduction

Although it is impossible to ascertain the number of working-age children of immigrants in Spain given the way in which official statistics are collected, there is no doubt that they account for a significant part of the working population. However, there are virtually no studies that shed light on their situation even though this information is vital to knowing how they are integrating into the Spanish society.

One of the key questions is whether the children of immigrants, who have been schooled and have socialised in Spain, have the same opportunities as those of Spanish descent when entering the labour market, or whether they suffer what Heath refers to as the “Ethnic penalty”¹, i.e. discrimination based on national origin or racial or cultural characteristics. The study summarized in this text has attempted to address this issue by conducting a diagnosis of the labour market integration of children of immigrants aged 19 to 29 and, more especially, of the potential obstacles they may encounter along the way, including discrimination.

Episodes of labour market discrimination suffered by individuals of immigrant origin have **negative consequences** for their integration into host societies. As noted by Heath *et al.* (2013), these negative effects are observed in different ways. **Individually**, immigrants lose interest in investing time and material resources in education. **Socially**, the potential institutionalization of these practices translates into economic loss for the country. In response, governments have designed public policies to discourage discrimination in the workplace. Examples of these include the implementation of anti-discriminatory legislation with sanctions for non-compliance, affirmative action policies, the institutionalization of human resources selection through anonymous CVs, and diversity-based management.

1 Heath, AF and Cheung, AY, 2007.



However, it is important to consider that the discrimination suffered in different social dimensions by **groups in relative disadvantage** is difficult to measure through research (Beauchemin, Hamel, Lesné and Simon, 2010; Simon and Stavo-Debauge, 2004). The discrimination faced by **immigrants in the workplace**, regardless of their generation, is no exception. This discrimination can be experienced at different times (figure 1) during the course of one’s working life: incorporation, promotion, remuneration and dismissal (Heath, Liebig and Simon, 2013).

Figure 1. Discrimination in the workplace: moment, effect and policy



Source: Heath et al. (2013)



Two clarifications need to be made regarding the above-mentioned **difficulties encountered in measuring discrimination**. First, certain events or processes that are typically interpreted as discriminatory could be due to other **observable and unobservable factors**. Specifically, in the workplace, certain episodes of presumed discrimination against immigrants could be the result of less developed skills in cognitive, non-cognitive and management areas, in social networking, background, geographical access, technological resources, and personal motivation. Isolating these different variables requires working with precise indicators and implementing sophisticated impact assessment mechanisms (Biderbost and Jiménez, 2016).

Secondly, a distinction must be drawn between **objective and subjective** discrimination (figure 2). Objective discrimination is that which can be verified through experiments where an attempt is made to detect the delay rate, in comparison to the native population, which immigrants face in being called for a job interview, being recruited or being promoted (Booth, Leigh and Varganova, 2012; Fibbi, Lerch and Wanner, 2006; Heath *et al.*, 2013; Simon, 2005). A comparison of average wages for the same job or unemployment rates between natives and immigrants can also be used to objectively measure labour discrimination. Subjective discrimination, in contrast, is that which is described or felt by those involved in the labour process in question (selection, promotion, remuneration or dismissal): workers, superiors and other stakeholders. These testimonies / opinions are collected through surveys. When these surveys focus on members of groups allegedly affected by discrimination, they are typically referred to as victimization surveys. The biggest disadvantage of this type of measurement is that it is very difficult to prove the validity of the reasons given by the respondents² (Heath *et al.*, 2013).

² Becker (1957) points to a third difficulty encountered when measuring discrimination. This author suggests, on the one hand, that in economic environments, certain agents prefer their counterpart (customer, employee, supplier, etc) to be of a particular origin. This is called taste-based discrimination. On the other hand, he refers to statistical discrimination. This occurs when economic agents lack information on certain features of their counterpart (productivity, creditworthiness, etc.). Ethnicity, as an observable characteristic, comes into play when making decisions (Heath *et al.*, 2013).



Figure 2. Difficulties in measuring labour discrimination



Source: Booth, Leigh and Varganova, 2012; Fibbi, Lerch and Wanner, 2006; Heath et al., 2013; Simon, 2005.

The aim of this study is to address the labour market integration of the children of immigrants from different angles, precisely because of the various dimensions this issue has and the difficulties in observing and measuring them.

Three different approaches were used, the first two taking the population of children of immigrants from age 19 to 29 as the target group and the third focusing on companies:

- a. The **Quantitative approach**, in addition to showing how topic under study is distributed among the target population, combines objective and subjective information. On the one hand, it produces data on observable aspects such as time spent seeking a job, the correlation between level of education and job type, salary, and so forth. On the other hand, it offers information on perceptions and experiences related to discrimination. All this from a comparative perspective, observing the achievements of the children of immigrants as compared to those of Spaniards.



This part of the study consisted of the ad hoc use of a sub-sample that included both the children of immigrants and those of Spaniards who had already joined the labour market. It was obtained from the second follow-up survey to the *Longitudinal Study on the Second-Generation*³. The sub-sample was composed of 1603 children of immigrants and 467 children of Spanish parents.

- b. The aim of the **qualitative approach** was to delve deeper into perceptions and experiences related to the labour market integration of certain groups of immigrant origin at greater risk of discrimination because of their national origin, race or ethnic background. Forty-five in-depth interviews were conducted (15 for each group of children of immigrants from Morocco, the Dominican Republic and Peru between the ages of 19 and 29 with different levels of formal education).
- c. **A qualitative exploration of employers' practices and attitudes** when publishing job offers and selecting and hiring candidates for the positions offered was conducted through 25 in-depth interviews of human resources managers in companies of different sizes and in different industries.

The main findings are summarized in the following chapters.

³ ILSEG is a longitudinal study that has followed a sample of children of immigrants, complemented by a sample of children of Spanish descent, over a period of 10 years. The first survey was conducted in 2007-2008 and targeted adolescents born in Spain or who arrived before their 12th birthday, who had at least one parent of foreign origin, and who were in their first, second or third year of compulsory secondary education (ESO). Students were chosen from a representative sample of public and semi-private schools in Madrid and Barcelona. A sample of nearly 7000 children of immigrant parents from all nationalities and whose average age was 14 was obtained. The first follow-up survey was conducted in 2012 when a sample of youth of Spanish descent was added. A second follow-up survey, serving as the basis for this report, was conducted in 2017. The main objective of ILSEG was to gain insight into how the children of immigrants adapt to the host society.



2 Main socio-demographic characteristics of the sample of young people of immigrant descent and native Spaniards

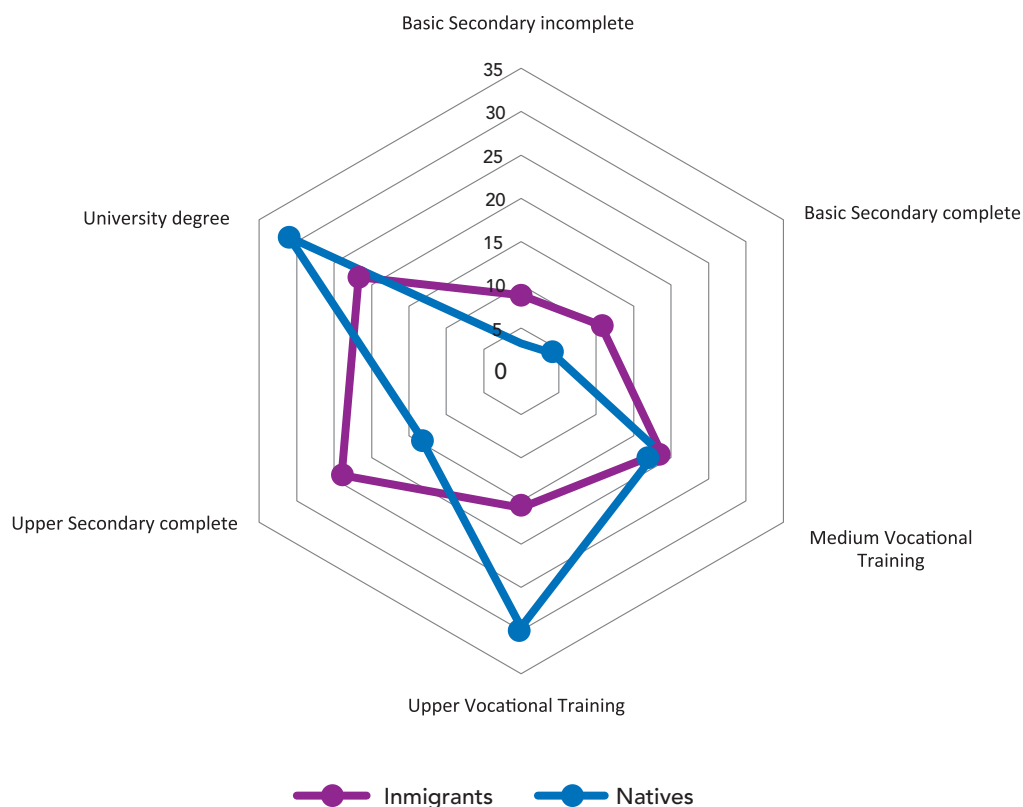
Before examining the different aspects of the labour market integration of young workers of foreign and Spanish descent included in the sub-sample, we should first provide an overview of their socio-demographic characteristics that may affect that integration:

- The majority in both groups were between 21 and 23 years of age (70%).
- There were more women than men in both groups (accounting for 54% and 53% respectively).
- Practically all the nationalities present in Spanish society were represented in the sample of children of immigrants, the predominant ones being Ecuadorian, Moroccan, Colombian, Peruvian, Romanian, Bolivian and Dominican.
- The vast majority of the young people in the sub-sample still live with their parents, but there were significantly more Spanish natives in this situation (84.4% compared to 72.7% of children of immigrants). Surprisingly, there were more women living on their own, the biggest difference being amongst young women of foreign origin (31% of women versus 22% of men).
- The vast majority of these young people were single, but compared to the children of Spanish descent, a significantly higher proportion of children of immigrants were married or lived with their partner (16% of the children of immigrants versus 10.5% of the children of Spaniards) and had children (9.1% and 1.3% respectively). This latter situation was most prevalent among Bolivians, Ecuadorians and Dominicans.



- More than half of the children of immigrants have Spanish nationality (54%) or permanent residence (30%).
- Regarding education, (figure 3) shows that young people of immigrant origin are clearly at a disadvantage as compared to their native counterparts. This can be used as a reliable predictor of each group's mode of arrival to the labour market. First of all, the percentage of young people of foreign origin who have not completed secondary school is four times higher than that of Spaniards and, while the percentages of those from the two groups that have middle-level vocational training is similar (approximately 18%). The proportion of natives who have completed advanced vocational training or who have some type of university training exceeds that of young people of immigrant origin by 13.8 and 9.3 percentage points respectively. Secondly, it is worth noting that the women in both groups outperform men in terms of education.

Figure 3. Differences in the level of education achieved by children of immigrants and those of Spanish descent (percentage)



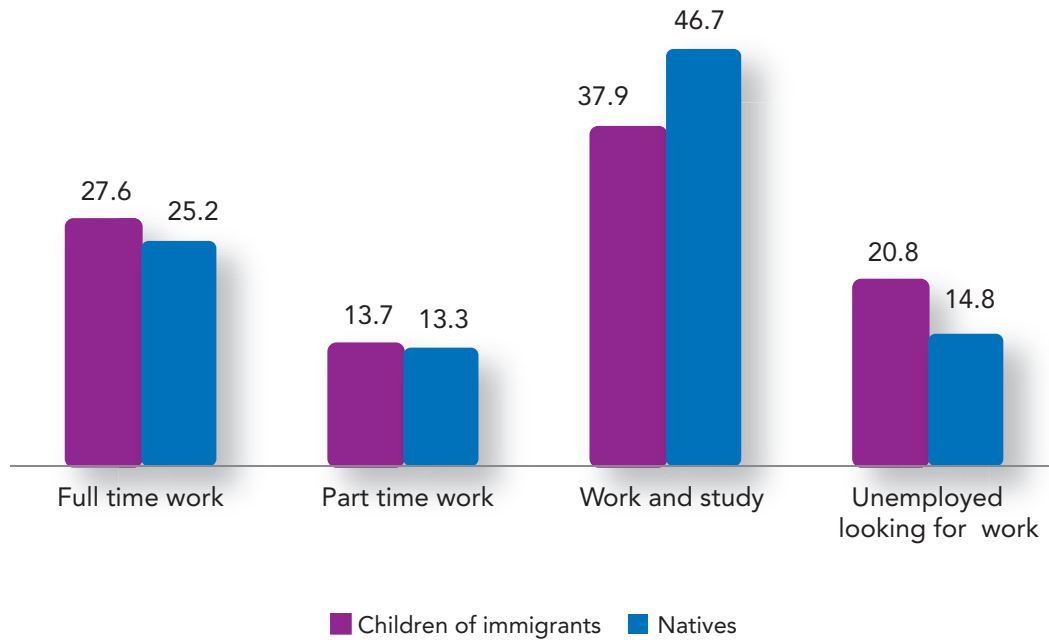


3 The labour market integration of the children of immigrants and Spaniards

Data from the third phase of the *Longitudinal Study on the Second-Generation* on which part of this study is based, show that between the ages of 19 and 29 a **slightly larger proportion** of the 2271 children of immigrant parents versus the 700 children of Spanish descent comprising the sample (70% and 66% respectively) are no longer studying and are either working full or part time, are unemployed or are looking for work. Figure 4 shows the employment rates of the two groups.



Figure 4. Employment rate (percentage)



Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

Figure 4 illustrates at least two important differences between children of immigrants and Spaniards. First, nearly 10% more young people of Spanish descent study and work at the same time, giving them an advantage over the medium term. Also, the unemployment rate is significantly higher for the children of immigrants.

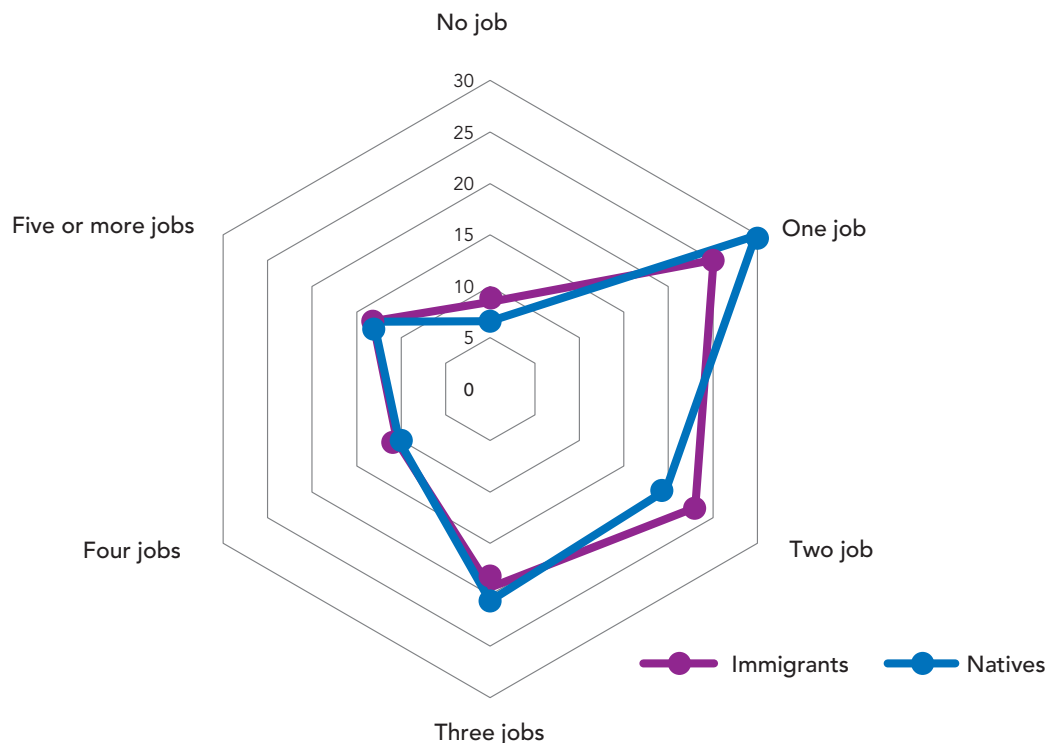


Do the children of immigrants and those of Spaniards have the same precarious situation in the labour market?

If we focus on other aspects such as the number of jobs held since they joined the labour market and the terms of their contracts, we find that the trajectory of children of immigrants is quite similar to that of Spaniards.

Data regarding the number of paid jobs held over the last four years show a **high degree of labour mobility**: over 40% of both groups had three or more jobs during that period (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Number of paid jobs held in the last four years (percentage)



Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed



Also, members of both groups engaged in many **part-time jobs**: more than half (55%) of the children of immigrants held only or mostly part-time jobs while this was the case for 60% of the children of Spanish descent. The higher number of children of Spaniards who work and study at the same time accounts for this difference.

Moreover, practically 79% of both groups are salaried workers and more than half of them have temporary contracts (52% of the children of immigrants and 55% of the natives). In addition, 13% of children of immigrants and 10% of natives work without a contract. These latter figures are probably even higher judging from the fact that a quarter of the young people in both groups claim that their employer does not pay into the social security system on their behalf (25.6% and 25.3% respectively) as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Social security contribution

	Children of immigrants	Children of Spaniards
Yes	73.0	72.7
No	25.6	25.3
Did not answer	1.4	2.0
Total	100	100

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed



Wages were similar for the children of immigrants and natives, i.e. **very low** in both cases. Nearly three out of four young people earned less than EUR 1000 per month and, of those, 1 out of 3 earned less than EUR 600, although there were more children of Spaniards among those earning less than EUR 600 owing to the fact mentioned earlier that more of them work and study at the same time (table 2).

Table 2. Personal income of children of immigrants and children of Spaniards (percentage)

	Children of immigrants	Children of Spaniards
EUR 600 or less	33	38
EUR 601 to 1000	41	40
EUR 1001 to 1500	13	12
Over EUR 1500	3	0
Did not answer	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

*14.1% children of immigrants with university studies did not give their employment and are not included in the figure

The data up to this point indicate **precarious employment conditions** characterised by short-term or non-existent contracts and low wages **for all young people**, irrespective of whether they are of immigrant or Spanish descent.



Specificities of the children of immigrants

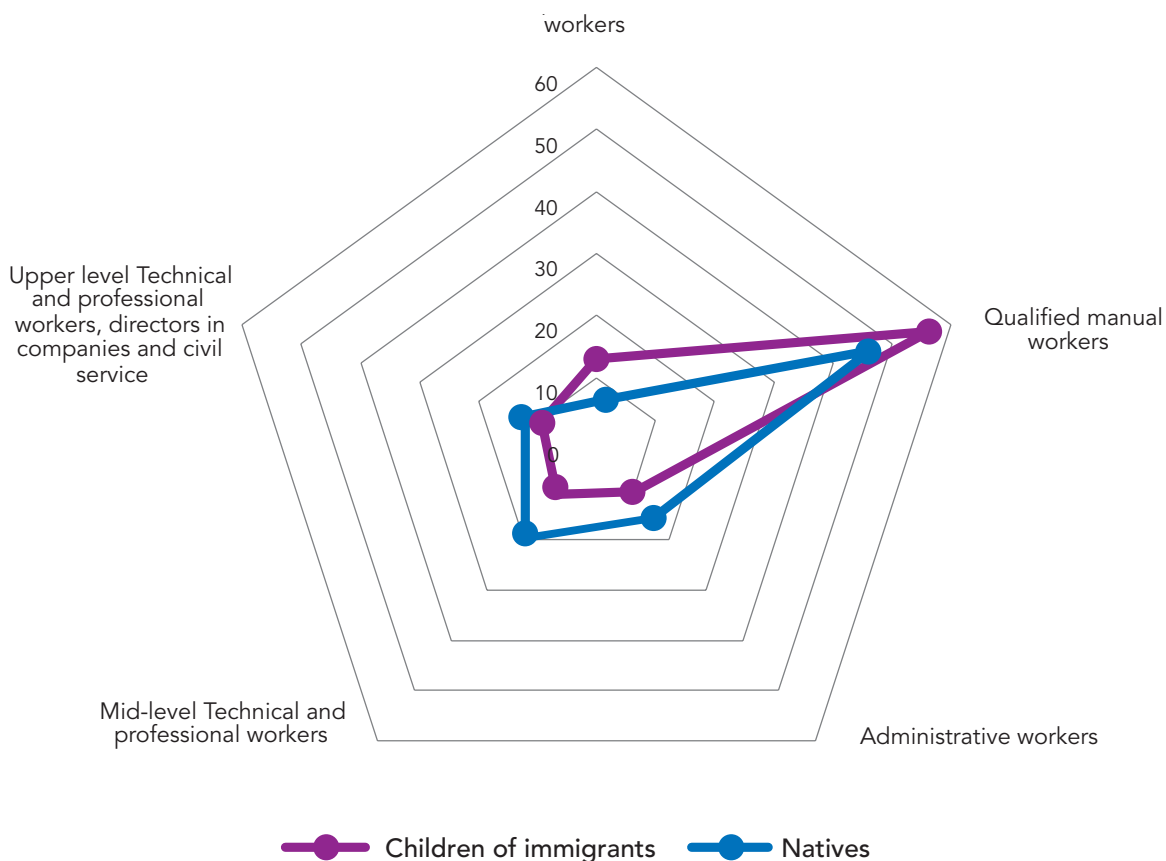
As we have seen, in many aspects the children of immigrants face the same working conditions as the children of Spaniards. In other words, these conditions apply to all young people under 30. However, other data indicate that the former group faces handicaps that the latter does not. These handicaps are mainly found in four areas: the proportion of unemployed people, the time spent seeking a job, the channels used to that end and the type of job found.

We have already seen that young people of immigrant descent have a higher unemployment rate (21% compared to 15% for their native counterparts). It also takes the children of immigrants longer than the children of Spaniards to find employment. Of young people of Spanish origin, 64.2% claim to have found their first job in less than 3 months. That percentage drops to 55.3% for young people of immigrant descent. Moreover, the proportion who claim to have spent over a year searching for their first job (3.9% natives vs. 6.9% children of immigrants) is 1.8 times higher in the case of the latter group. And, among those currently unemployed, 7.5% more children of immigrants than natives have been seeking employment for more than a year.

Similar disparities were found when we compared the kinds of employment that young people from the two groups had at the time of the survey. We should first mention, however, that at the time of the survey most of the young people had very little work or professional experience. Despite that, a significantly higher number of young people of Spanish origin managed to find administrative, technical or professional positions. In contrast, we found that nearly four times more young people of immigrant origin hold cleaning and domestic service jobs in comparison with young people of Spanish origin (figure 5).



Figure 6. Categories of jobs held by children of immigrants and children of Spanish descent (percentage)

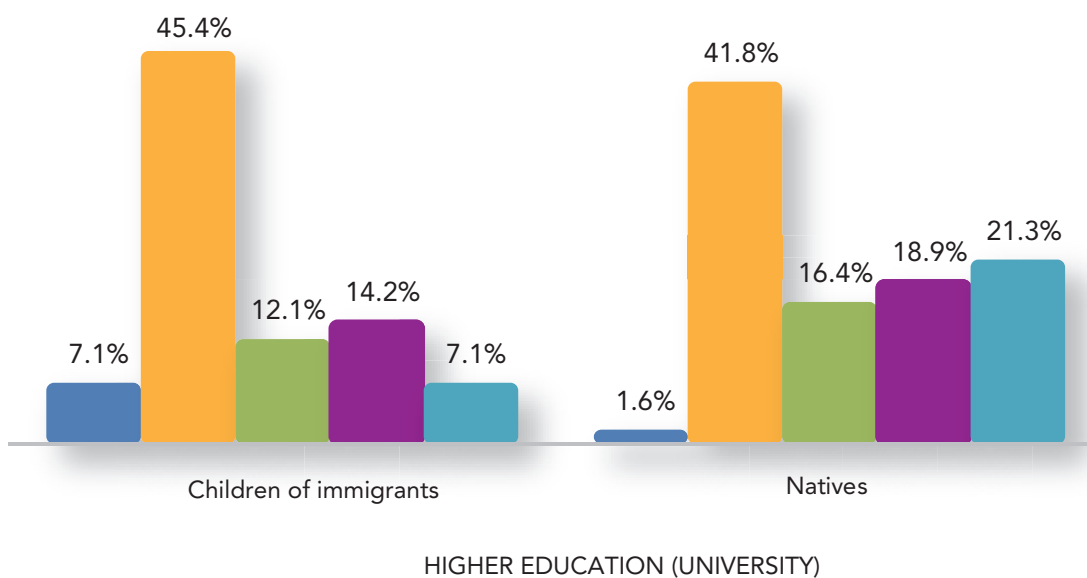


Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

The most logical explanation for the lower proportion of children of immigrants with technical and professional level jobs would be their lower level of education. However, a comparison between the type of work done by the children of immigrants and of natives with the same level of university studies shows that there are other factors involved. With the same level of education, young people of foreign descent are nearly half as likely as those of Spanish origin to find technical or professional work (Figure 6).



Figure 7. Level of employment found by children of immigrants and of natives with university studies (percentage)



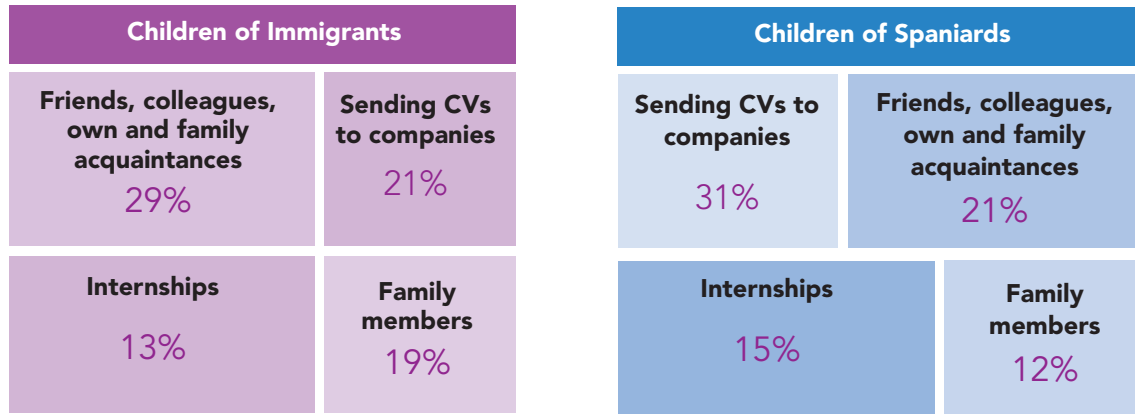
- Non qualified manual workers
- Qualified manual workers
- Administrative workers
- Mid-level Technical and professional workers
- Upper level Technical and professional workers, directors in companies and civil service

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

One possible explanation for the more restricted access that children of immigrants have to higher levels of employment is the different channels through which they found their jobs. Young people of immigrant origin tend to find jobs through their local networks (family members, friends, acquaintances, etc.) while those of native origin are more likely to send out CVs to companies and organizations and search for jobs online (figure 8).



Figure 8. Main channels used by children of immigrants and of Spaniards to find work



Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

According to information gathered from in-depth interviews of young people of Moroccan, Dominican and Peruvian descent, turning mainly to local networks when seeking employment was not a first-choice option. These young people, irrespective of their level of education, were initially inclined to look for work through Internet platforms or by sending out CVs just as their native peers. However, due to lack of response, most are forced to resort to family or friends who can only offer them low-level jobs similar to the ones they themselves hold.

Multiple regression analysis of the global sample to detect the variables responsible for differences in labour market integration confirmed how important the level of education was for finding higher-level jobs. However, national origin was equally important. Gender also had an impact while other variables, including having children at an early age, made very little difference. In other words, having a higher level of education, being a native Spaniard and being a man are all advantages when it comes to finding a better and more prestigious job.



4 Experiences and perception of discrimination from the ILSEG survey

The data presented point to inequalities in gaining access to the labour market for children of immigrant origin versus children of Spaniards. There are objective reasons, such as level of education, for these differences, but these do not account for the entire difference. Discrimination based on national origin could also be a cause. While such discrimination is suspected based on the differences in the type of work that the children of immigrants are able to find, our data are not able to prove that this discrimination exists. The ILSEG 2017 survey can, however, establish the extent to which children of immigrant descent have felt discriminated against.



Experiences and perception of discrimination in general and in the workplace

Data from the ILSEG survey show that relatively few people **feel they have been discriminated against in a general sense**, and the numbers are not significantly different between the two groups. While almost a quarter of the children of immigrants say they have felt discriminated against in the last three years, only 15% of the natives make the same claim. However, this difference is offset by the greater frequency with which natives claim to have been discriminated against as shown in Table 3. It should also be noted that more women of immigrant origin claim to have suffered discrimination, but fewer said that this occurred somewhat or very frequently.

Table 3. Perception of having been discriminated against and frequency (percentage)

	Children of immigrants			Children of Spaniards		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Yes	22.8	18.6	26.3	15.2	15.8	14.6
No	75.3	79.9	71.4	81.8	81.9	81.7
Dit not answer	1.9	1.5	2.3	3.0	2.3	3.7
Frequency of discrimination						
Rarely	70.4	65.7	73.2	59.2	54.3	63.9
Several times	22.7	23.4	22.4	26.8	25.7	27.8
Regularly	6-8	10.9	4.4	14.1	20.0	8.3

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed



The proportion of children of immigrants is somewhat higher in practically all of **the occasions** or **situations** in which they say they have felt discriminated against, everyday encounters on the street being the situation in which the difference is the greatest compared to the children of Spaniards. The exception is work-related situations where the numbers coincide for children of immigrants and those of Spanish descent (28% when looking for work). The difference between the two groups is also minimal in the workplace itself (20.5% and 18.3% respectively) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Situations in which children of immigrant and those of Spanish origin have felt discriminated against* (percentage)

	Children of immigrants			Children of Spaniards		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
When looking for a job	28.2	30.7	26.8	28.2	25.7	30.6
When looking for housing	9.3	13.1	7.0	2.8	5.7	0.0
Everyday street encounters	43.3	45.3	42.1	28.2	31.4	25.0
When shopping	18.1	19.7	17.1	11.3	11.4	11.1
At work (job performance)	20.5	20.4	20.6	18.3	17.1	19.4
At school or university	26.3	26.3	26.3	22.5	14.3	30.6
In other situations	26.3	33.6	21.9	22.5	31.4	13.9

**The percentages add up to more than 100 as there may be more than one response to the question*

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

The relatively high proportion of children of immigrant and Spanish origin who responded that they had felt discriminated against (practically 1 in 5) in the workplace is probably due to the fact that they also considered the jobs they had in the past, as that figure decreased considerably when they were **asked whether they felt discriminated against by their bosses and/or workmates in their current job post**. In this latter case, 92% of the children of immigrant origin and 90% of those of Spanish origin answered that they had not. And most of those that did respond in the affirmative said that this happened “rarely”.



Perceived grounds for discrimination

While there do not appear to be significant differences in the degree or frequency with which children of immigrants and those of Spanish origin say they felt discriminated against, there were important differences in what they perceived to be the underlying motives for that discrimination.

In general, young people of immigrant origin mentioned motives linked to their foreign national origin: 48.2% stated that the discrimination they faced was based on their national origin while only 6.3% mentioned a type of discrimination unrelated to ethnic/racial/cultural origin. The latter percentage claimed to have suffered discrimination based on gender. In contrast, young people of Spanish origin gave much more varied reasons for the discrimination they endured which included situations typically reported in Western societies, such as exclusion based on gender, age, social class, disability, etc.. Only 5.6% claimed to have felt discriminated against for reasons linked to their phenotype. Table 5 summarizes the five most frequently mentioned reasons for each group.



Table 5. Main grounds for discrimination claimed by children of immigrants and those of Spanish origin (percentage)

	Children of immigrants*		Children of Spaniards**	
	Grounds for discrimination	%	Grounds for discrimination	%
1	Being of foreign origin / not being from here / because of my nationality	48.2	Being a woman / gender reasons / sexism	11.3
			Being young / age	11.3
			Identifying as or being Catalan	11.3
2	Racism / my phenotype (appearance / colour, physical features, etc.)	36.7	Reasons of class or economic level.	7.0
			Favouritism in the workplace / inequality / envy / cronyism	7.0
3	Islamophobia (being Moroccan, of Arab origin, wearing a veil / hijab, having an Arabic name, etc.)	6.6	Racism / my phenotype (appearance / colour, physical features, etc.).	5.6
			Por infravaloración en el trabajo/me dejan de lado a la hora de dar ideas.	
			Not appreciated in the workplace / ideas not listened to Sexual orientation	
4	Being a woman / gender reasons / sexism	6.3	Not speaking Catalan / feeling Spanish in Catalonia	4.2
			Being Spanish in another European country	
5	Cultural / language differences	6.0	Disability / illness	2.8

Fuente: ILSEG 2017 – sub-sample of individuals who are working or unemployed

*The percentages may add up to more than 100 as there may be more than one response to the question

** Only the main reasons are included



A breakdown by gender shows that the men of immigrant origin have a somewhat greater tendency to attribute discrimination to reasons of racism associated with phenotype while women more frequently refer to their foreign origin. Naturally, only the women surveyed claimed being a woman as a reason for discrimination. However, while the daughters of immigrants associated discrimination with their ethnic origin, women of Spanish origin most frequently claimed gender-based discrimination. Indeed, approximately a quarter of the latter claim to have been discriminated against due to their gender (22%) while that reason was only claimed by 9.6% of young women of immigrant origin.

The reasons given by the groups were virtually identical when they were specifically asked about **discrimination perceived in the workplace**. A significantly high percentage of those of immigrant origin gave reasons related to their foreign origin. Nearly half (48.8%) of those who claimed to have suffered discrimination associate the latter with characteristics of their condition as immigrants (including racism and unequal treatment owing to cultural practices, customs and ways of expressing themselves which diverge from the local norms, or due to Islamophobia in the case of young people of Moroccan origin). Other reasons have to do with workplace dynamics (21.8%) and are linked to favouritism and inequality in the way work tasks are assigned. Gender-based discrimination was considered the reason for 7.7% of those affected by these workplace experiences.

There is a striking difference here between these replies and those of young people of Spanish origin affected by experiences of discrimination, just over a quarter of whom (26.7%) claimed it was because they are young. However, a similar percentage of each group (10.0%) felt that this discrimination was based on gender. Here, the difference between the two groups is 2.3 percentage points (see table 6).



Table 6. Main reasons for discrimination in the workplace claimed by young people of immigrant and Spanish origin (percentage)*

Reason for discrimination in the workplace ranked by importance					
	Children of immigrants		Children of Spaniards		
	Grounds for discrimination	%	Grounds for discrimination	%	
LINKED TO BEING OF IMMIGRANT ORIGIN (48.8%)	1	Being a foreigner / not being Spanish / being an immigrant	26,9	Distrust of young people	26.7
	2	Racism (being black / brown).	21,9	Being a woman	10
		Islamophobia			
		Different culture / customs / way of speaking			
	3	Undervalued at work	9	Undervalued at work	6.7
	4	Being a woman	7.7	Different culture / customs / way of speaking	3.3
				Having different ideas	3.3
				Differences in working conditions and requirements	3.3
	5	Favouritism shown by superiors	6,4		
		Differences in working conditions and requirements	6,4		

*Only the most significant answers are included

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed



Perception of discrimination in general

An aim of the ILSEG survey was to compare the perceived degree of personal discrimination with those same individuals' perception of discrimination in general throughout the Spanish society. The questionnaire asked them if they believed that Spaniards generally discriminate against foreigners and, if so, on what grounds. The responses provided two surprises. The first is that a significantly higher number of children of immigrant origin claimed that Spanish society discriminates against foreigners than the number that felt personally discriminated against (40% versus 23%)⁴. The second is that a nearly identical number of the children of immigrants and of Spanish origin believe Spaniards discriminate against foreigners (40% and 39% respectively).

The young people alluded to a wide range of grounds on which Spanish society allegedly discriminates. Both groups agree on the five most frequently stated grounds. The differences lie in the emphasis made by one or the other group in some response categories. For example, young people of immigrant origin are more categorical in claiming that skin colour is an important ground for discrimination (29% hold this view, nearly double the 15.8% of the Spanish group that believes this to be true). Conversely, Spaniards more than descendants of immigrants point to religion as a ground for discrimination (13.1% versus 6.7%) as shown in table 7.

⁴ In psychology there is a phenomenon called "*optimism bias*" which contends that people believe that certain negative events happen to others but not to them. This could explain the discrepancy observed in the perception of discrimination (Sharot, 2011). Another possible explanation is what social psychologists refer to as "*pluralistic ignorance*" whereby the common stereotype of discrimination does not coincide with the personal experiences of the majority of those who are allegedly discriminated against (Prentice and Miller, 1931).



Table 7. Main grounds for discrimination by Spaniards against foreigners claimed by children of immigrants and those of Spanish origin (percentage)*

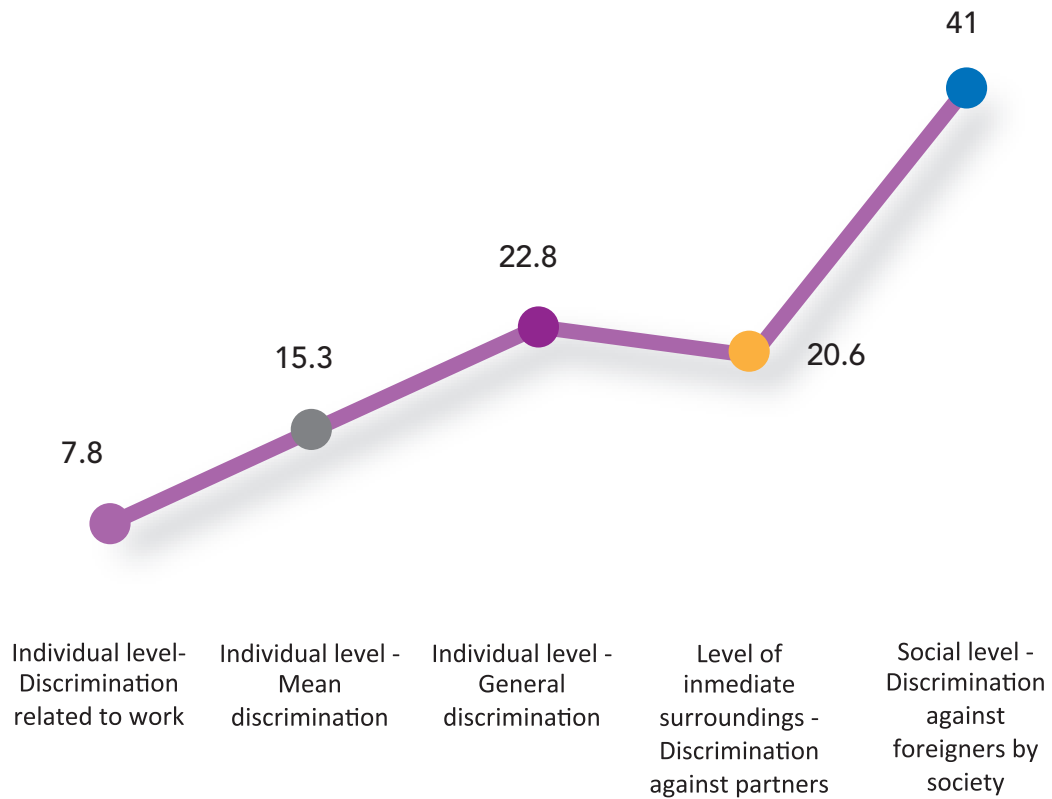
Main grounds for discrimination In rank order of importance				
	Children of immigrants		Children of Spaniards	
	Grounds for discrimination	%	Grounds for discrimination	%
1	Nationality	38.8	Nationality	35.0
2	Physical trait or skin colour	29.0	Language or culture	18.0
3	Language or culture	17.8	Physical trait or skin colour	15.8
4	Religion	6.7	Religion	13.1
5	They believe they take away their jobs / economic reasons	2.6	They believe they take away their jobs / economic reasons	6.0

Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed

Lastly, it is worth comparing the discrimination perceived by the group of immigrant origin at each of the levels mentioned: individual (in general and specifically in the workplace), in their immediate surroundings (discrimination impacting their partners / spouses) and on the part of the Spanish society as a whole. We found that less discrimination was perceived when the focus was on the individual respondent. Only 7.8% of respondents claim to have felt discriminated against in the workplace. This percentage contrasts with the 15.3% that perceived discrimination in environments other than the workplace. This percentage rises to 20.6% when it comes to perceived discriminatory events affecting one's partner. However, Spanish society as a whole is considered discriminatory by 41% of those surveyed. It would appear that the further the focus is from the individual surveyed, the higher the degree of perceived discrimination. Discrimination, recognised as a pervasive social practice, is apparently perceived less when the focus is directly on the respondent (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Responses concerning perceived discrimination according to level / focus of interest (percentage)



Source: ILSEG 2017 - sub-sample of employed and unemployed



5 Experiences and perception of discrimination: the qualitative perspective

This study also includes a qualitative section for which in-depth interviews of the children of Moroccan, Dominican and Peruvian immigrants were conducted. The quantitative survey directly asked those in the sample about their perception of being on the receiving end of discrimination in general and in the workplace. In contrast, qualitative interviews were conducted where those surveyed were asked to talk about the jobs they have held and their experiences during that necessarily short period of time. The aim was to hear how they spontaneously identified and interpreted the difficulties they might have encountered when seeking a job, in the selection process, in hiring and in the workplace itself if indeed they had managed to find a job.

The young people interviewed confirmed the labour difficulties already identified in the quantitative survey described above. Nearly everyone began their search like any other young person, i.e. by consulting job offers on specialised Internet pages or by sending their CVs directly to companies. Most, regardless of their level of studies, received few responses through these channels and most of those that did get a response were not offered the job post.

As seen in the quantitative survey, and owing to the overriding need to find work, most turned to their network of family, friends and acquaintances for help. Nearly all of those interviewed managed to get jobs through these networks, but practically all (with only one exception) were low-skilled jobs. Women were hired to clean in private homes or in the hostelry industry or as clerks or teleoperators, while men found jobs in more varied low-skilled occupations (warehouse workers, shelf-stockers in hypermarkets, kitchen assistants, waiters, etc.). Only a few managed to find a job through some other channel in line with their skills and preferences. And when they were finally hired, regardless of the channel through which they found the job and the type of work, nearly all mentioned the short duration of the contracts, the very low salaries and the high demands.



How did the young people of Moroccan, Dominican and Peruvian origin in our sample respond to these difficulties? What did they attribute them to? Did they attribute them to discrimination based on their national origin?

The first finding that emerged from the interviews was that they primarily saw themselves as Spaniards and did not feel that their foreign descent made them any different from young people whose parents were Spanish. They were either born in Spain or arrived at a very young age, attended school here and most are undistinguishable from any other Spaniard in terms of their accent, the dress or customs. And because of this identification, they named the economic crisis, the need for more training and the demand for experience by companies, **as the main causes of difficulties in finding employment and contributing to poor working conditions**. These are the same reasons that anyone else would give to explain labour market difficulties and are unrelated to their specific condition as children of immigrants, as they do not perceive themselves, at least initially, as distinct from any other young person born in Spain. Nor do they do perceive their difficulties as being different from those encountered by any other young Spaniard.

Although different in terms of content, their interpretation of **not being hired** in those cases in which they were granted an interview, was very similar. The interviews showed that they **usually blame themselves** for not being selected for the job. They tended to refer to personal shortcomings such as being withdrawn, not knowing how to sell themselves, not being in good physical condition, etc. There were very few cases in which they attributed not being selected to rejection based on traits related to their foreign origin. This same interpretation was made even in situations where a less qualified person of Spanish origin was selected for the position. The person finally selected for the position, of Spanish origin, was less qualified. While this surprised them, they rarely gave any thought as to why another less qualified person was given the job.

In short, in most cases where the children of immigrant origin in the qualitative sample applied for a job, they did not interpret their rejection by employers as a racist or xenophobic act. However, there were some cases where rejection on these grounds was perceived, sometimes without there being any clear evidence it was based on discrimination linked to ethnic traits, and others where it was clear that that was the reason they were not offered the job.

The former occurs when the person of immigrant origin is particularly sensitive to his or her phenotypic traits and therefore concludes that this could be the reason for rejection. This is what sometimes happens with the children of Dominicans or Peruvians who often tend to wonder whether their failure to secure the job might have more to do with the colour of their skin than any other reason. Analogously, some children of Moroccan immigrants feel their names reveal their origin. The following quotes illustrate these two cases:



"We Latinos have more difficulties ... maybe sometimes because of the colour of our skin ..." (Man, Dominican parents, age 27, poulterer)

"I spent over a year sending my CV out to pharmacies but was never called ... I started to wonder if it was me or if it was because my name is Mohammed." (Man, Moroccan parents, age 26, pharmacy technician)

Nearly all the cases where the person asserted that the rejection was due to ethnic grounds involved women of Moroccan descent who wear a veil. This apparently occurs frequently since it was not only mentioned by the young women in the sample who wear a veil, but also by young men of Moroccan descent referring to their sisters or cousins. This leads some to stop wearing the veil, at least while at work. In cases where they do get a job despite using the veil, they are usually relegated to positions where they have no direct contact with customers.

"The girls who wear a veil have many problems. My sister studied administration and finance at the university and ended up being a hairdresser. If they wear a veil, people call them immigrants, oppressed, ignorant..." (Man, Moroccan parents, age 26, pharmacy technician)

So far we have been discussing how the children of immigrant parents interpret negative experiences when searching for a job and how most are unaware that these negative experiences may be due to their condition as the children of foreign nationals, except in some cases where there are visible features that make them stand out as non-Spanish. In other words, in their daily activities they tend to push aside those traits that could identify them as different from Spaniards. This makes them feel just like everyone else and they therefore do not interpret their negative experiences as owing to possible racism or xenophobia.

However, this opinion shifts, just as in the quantitative survey, when they talk about how immigrants in general are treated. When asked about whether or not there are differences in terms of treatment and opportunities between children of immigrant and of Spanish descent, they seem to be more aware that such differences do indeed exist and affects them. Children of immigrant descent are also proud that people recognise them as hard workers who are willing to do jobs that others reject. This could be considered an advantage for them, at least for certain types of jobs, but could also relegate them to the same social and labour status as their parents.

They also feel that people associate them with negative stereotypes such as being poor, ignorant, etc. They therefore believe that they will always have to work much harder than the children of Spanish origin to prove their worth and show people who they truly are to be able to achieve their goals. They also recognise that some immigrants, with whom they do not identify at all, are responsible for perpetuating these stereotypes.



In short, this part of the study helps to explain why the survey shows that young people of immigrant descent do not particularly perceive that they are discriminated against. And, although they admit that discrimination against immigrants exists in general, their perception varies when it concerns them personally, where they interpret situations just like any other youngster. In certain cases, they attribute rejection to shortcomings in their training, personal defects, etc. In fact, discrimination is not recognized unless there are clear signs of it, as in the case of Moroccan girls wearing veils.



6 Company recruiting and hiring practices: do they facilitate or hinder the hiring of young people of immigrant origin?

As mentioned above, 25 interviews with human resources managers in companies of different sizes and sectors were conducted to round out the study. The objective was to determine the extent to which company recruiting and hiring practices facilitate or hinder the access of people of immigrant origin to the labour market.

It goes without saying that there are many companies and a wide array of approaches when it comes to hiring practices. These differences partly involve the size of the company, its main activity, its target population, its resources and the context in which it operates. But they also have to do with their different ways of viewing themselves as companies and their understanding of what image they want to project to attract potential candidates.

By analysing these interviews with human resources managers, three basic ways in which these companies recruited and hired new staff could be identified. For the purposes of this report, they have been designated as Models A, B and C of selection and hiring.

Under Model A, companies offer candidates the possibility of joining a cutting-edge, dynamic and innovative firm with highly trained and highly competitive staff and offering training opportunities that give employees the chance to develop their career within the company and be promoted to positions of greater responsibility. Naturally, this model mainly targets candidates for higher-level management type posts. Accordingly, the conditions and procedures for the selection and hiring of personnel at this level are different than for lower level and less qualified positions. Nevertheless, in both cases the selection and hiring



procedures under Model A are very structured and have standard procedures including a multitiered screening process subjecting candidates to a battery of tests. This model is quite rigid and not very open to considering the individual situation and value of candidates. One would expect equal opportunity to be given to men and women and to different national origins to ensure the selection of the best and most suited candidates. However, model A companies prefer young candidates—in some cases the upper age limit is as low as 26—who would subsequently be given the necessary training which would vary depending on the post and perspective for future promotion in the company.

In contrast, Model B, while not neglecting skills, focuses more on the candidate as a person. Less weight is attached to academic degrees and experience and more to candidates' views and attitudes. As one of the interviewees noted, there is also an interest in having staff that "reflects the society" where firms are located. This would indicate, in theory at least, that the company would be open to diverse types of candidates. Therefore, although the selection process varies depending on whether the company is recruiting lower-skilled or technical and managerial staff, candidates' circumstances are taken into consideration (for example, if the candidate is not local, the initial interview would be done by phone so that she or he would not have to travel). Unlike Model A, the selection process is more open and flexible. The drawback is that it can be more subjective. To ensure neutrality, some companies establish set practices such as blind (anonymous) CVs, although this is not common practice.

Lastly, Model C is used by relatively small companies where less skilled workers prevail and there are few technical or managerial posts. These companies mostly recruit locally. Model C companies do not tend to have very standardized procedures for the publication of job offers or for the selection and hiring of candidates. They tend to fill their openings with less qualified personnel, with people recommended by other workers or with candidates who found out about the opening through informal networks. Moreover, candidates are typically hired after just one interview with the human resources director or the person in charge of the department where the job opening occurs.

Of the companies surveyed, only the Director General or members of the Board of Directors appear to be involved in the selection of candidates for managerial positions. They use their contacts to identify people they consider suitable to fill openings at this level.

Clearly, the three models involve very different practices in the hiring of new staff. Under Model A, owing to the weight attached to tests and numerous selection filters, only those who meet the requirements and who are very good at "selling themselves" will be successful. Young people may find it difficult to even pass the first screening in the selection process as schools do not prepare their students for this type of interviews. However, these processes can be even more daunting for the children of immigrants as they do not have the family or



cultural background that might help them. Furthermore, the fact that standardized selection protocols are used does not necessarily rule out societal bias or stereotypes towards people of foreign origin.

In model B and particularly C, the likelihood of presenting oneself in a more positive light is greater because there is a more direct relationship between those responsible for selection and the candidates, or because a trusted person may have put in a good word for the candidate. In these cases, the children of immigrants have a better chance although many are still at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts of Spanish descent in terms of their knowledge of what is required in the selection process. We would also note that, as with model A, this more direct relationship does not rule out bias.

Without exception, the companies interviewed insisted that they are blind to gender and national origin in their selection processes and only intend to make certain that the candidates have the appropriate background for the job, i.e. the skills and possible experience required, along with the right mindset. Most seemed unaware that even in the most systematized processes, social and personal prejudices can come into play. Only in one case did a company mention that it would be a good idea to take possible bias into account and implement preventive measures such as the blind CV.



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