## Immigrants' labour market outcomes in Italy and Spain: Has the Southern European model disrupted during the crisis?

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#### Abstract

The article explores the effects of the economic crisis on the common pattern of immigrants' insertion into the labour market in Italy and Spain, new destination countries for migration flows only since the late 1980s and experiencing a very similar migration phenomenon. The pattern of immigrants' insertion into the labour market in these two countries is distinctive because it combines a relatively poor risk of unemployment with a huge risk of segregation in low-skilled jobs, just the opposite of what occurs in many other Northern and Continental European countries. Differently from other studies looking at ethnic disadvantages and penalties in the labourma rket which often consider immigrants as a whole, in this article the differences among immigrants from Eastern Europe, North Africa and Latin America—the largest pools of immigrants in both countries— are considered. Results show that, in spite of the many similarities and the minor differences between the two countries, the crisis has differentiated the common and distinctive pattern, due to the different employment adjustments which has divergently affected immigrants' labour market outcomes in Italy and Spain.

Keywords: crisis, ethnic penalty, immigration, Southern Europe, labour market, segmentation

#### 1. Introduction

This article explores the effects of the recent economic crisis on the common and distinctive pattern of immigrants' insertion into the labour market in Italy and Spain. As literature has shown the two countries—new destinations for immigrant inflows only since the late 1980s—experienced a very similar mass migration phenomenon, at least until the outburst of the crisis' effects in late 2008 and even more significantly they have shared a highly distinctive pattern of incorporation of immigrants into the labour market. Indeed, in spite of recent dissenting opinions (Baldwin-Edwards 2012), the similarities have been sufficiently strong to define a 'South-European model of migration' (Baganha 1997, 2009; Reyneri 2003; Baldwin-Edwards and Arango 1999; King 2000; King and Ribas-Mateos 2002; Cangiano and Strozza 2008; Peixoto et al. 2012; King andDebono 2013; Fullin 2014)which is also peculiar as regards immigrants' insertion in the labour market. Nevertheless, the outburst of the crisis seems to have differentiated this pattern, also due the fact that the crisis has impacted with different magnitudes and with different employment adjustments in the two countries, with different consequences not only on the native but also on the immigrant labour force (OECD 2009; Reyneri 2010; Mooi-Reci and Munoz-Comet 2016).

The aim of this article is to understand whether and how the crisis has affected the distinctive pattern of the insertion of immigrants in the Italian and Spanish labour markets or whether, despite the deterioration of the labour market conditions for both immigrants and natives in both countries, that pattern has not been affected. By pattern of insertion of immigrants in the labour market I specifically refer to immigrants' labour market outcomes along two main dimensions: the unemployment risk they run and the qualification of jobs they are likely to find in the destination country, both compared with natives' outcomes. Immigrants' penalization in the destination country is then framed considering not only how many but also which kind of employment chances they meet. Both in Italy and Spain, before the crisis, immigrants were scarcely penalized in comparison to natives as regards

chances in gaining employment, but this was mainly due to their huge penalization in the access to better and qualified occupations, immigrants being hugely segregated into low, unskilled and poor jobs for which they were much more available than the native population (Kogan 2006; Reyneri and Fullin 2008, 2011; Ballarino and Panichella 2013). From a methodological point of view, the article extends further the stream of literature that discusses the South-European model of immigrants' incorporation into the labour market, building on the systematic comparison between immigrants and natives' labour market outcomes. But whereas the majority of these studies usually consider immigrants as a whole, without distinction, by sending country or area of origin, in this article the differences among immigrants from Eastern Europe, North Africa and Latin America—the largest pools of immigrants in both Italy and Spain—are considered: this makes it possible to analyse not only the impact of the crisis on the pattern of immigrants' insertion in the labour market in the two selected countries but also to examine the pattern more closely, exploring whether it holds for immigrants of various origins, or whether significant differences by sending area can be detected.

## 2. Immigration in Italy and Spain from the early 1990s up to the crisis: Many similarities, minor differences

In the past 30 years, both Italy and Spain have become the most important destinations for immigrant inflows to Western Europe. In spite of some national peculiarities, migration shows many similarities in the two countries and presents some features distinct from those of contemporary migration to the North-European countries, the 'old' destinations for immigrants into the European space (Baganha 1997; Arango 2012; Peixoto et al. 2012). First of all, and until the beginning of the crisis, Italy and Spain shared the timing and the size of immigrant inflows. In less than 30 years—and with the contribution of the very strong growth of inflows in the decade preceding the outbreak of the crisis—the two countries caught up in their share of the foreign population with the European countries that have a much longer history of immigration. In the mid-2000s they represented the most important receiving area in Europe. In Italy, the share of foreign-born rose from 1.6 per cent in 1992 to around 6 per cent in 2007; and in Spain it increased even more significantly, from 1 per cent to over 10 per cent in the same period, accounting for over 4 million of foreign-born in both countries just before the outburst of the crisis. Secondly, immigration has been very similar in the two countries as regards the reasons and the modes of entry. One may speak of 'back-door entry' in search of a job, given that both asylum-seekers and immigrants holding stay permits for work reasons before they enter the country have been very few in number (OECD 2014).1 Due to the very large and consolidated underground economy offering numerous work opportunities to immigrants even when they are unauthorized or undocumented, immigrants finding jobs after entering the country have been the great majority (Baldwin-Edwards and Arango 1999; Reyneri and Baganha 2001; Reyneri 2001, 2003; Sole' 2001). Thus, in Italy and Spain, immigrants significantly differ from those in Continental Europe or the English-speaking countries, where they very often find a job before migrating, and also in North-European countries, where the share of refugees is much larger.

The 'pull effect' of the irregular economy has gone along with the increasing incorporation of immigrant workers also into the regular economy and with a settlement process fuelled by family reunifications. The trend has been supported by the intensive use of the same policy tool in both countries, where frequent regularization drives have taken place in a few decades, used as ex post control policy measures (Arango and Finotelli 2011). Despite these major similarities, immigrant inflows have also shown some country specificities regarding the geography of origins for both the overall stock of immigrants and the subsequent waves of inflows. In Spain, until the mid-1980s, the great majority of migrants came from Western European countries, mainly as expatriates, and from Spanishspeaking

Latin America, mainly for political reasons, in a frame of cultural contiguity. In the following period, immigrants coming from North Africa, from East Europe and from Asia so significantly and rapidly increased that in the late 1990s Moroccans already represented the largest immigrant group in the country (accounting for around 20 per cent of the foreign-born) and in 2008 the two premier immigrant groups were Romanians and Moroccans (both over 16 per cent). These trends have reflected the structuring in the period of a demand-driven migration connected with a phase of rapid and intense economic development and social change in the country (Arango 2000; Cacho'n 2002, 2009). As for Italy, if until the beginning of the 1990s around one in five of the foreign-born came from Western-European countries by 2008 the proportion had dropped to less than 6 per cent. Differently from Spain with Latin Americans, in Italy there were no ethnic communities that could act as a connection factor with specific areas. The outcome was a highly fragmented geography of immigrants' origin countries with a striking increase from 2000 onwards of the foreign-born from Eastern Europe (Romania, Ukraine and Poland in particular) and the slowdown of inflows from Africa and Asia. In 2008, Romanians (18 per cent), Moroccans (10 per cent) and Albanians (13 per cent) were the largest groups, followed at some distance by Chinese (5 per cent), Ukrainians (4 per cent) and Philippinos (3 per cent) (Bonifazi 2009).

#### 3. A common and distinctive pattern of incorporation of immigrants into the labour market

Until the crisis, Italy and Spain have also shared a distinctive pattern of incorporation of immigrants into the labour market. The two countries 'new' destinations for immigrants, combine a somewhat low disadvantage and penalization for immigrants—with respect to natives—as regards the risk of unemployment, with a high disadvantage and penalization as regards access to high-skilled jobs (Bernardi, Garrido and Miyar 2011; Fullin and Reyneri 2011; Fullin 2011). Conversely, the European 'old' receiving countries are more likely to combine a higher penalization regarding the risk of unemployment with a much lower penalization regarding occupational segregation in low-skilled jobs, even for new immigrants (Kogan 2006; Reyneri and Fullin 2008, 2011; Ballarino and Panichella 2013). For the Western European countries, one can think of a trade-off between, on the one hand, immigrants' risk of unemployment and, on the other, immigrants' chances of accessing highly-skilled occupations: in countries where immigrants run the same unemployment risk as the natives, they are forced much more than natives into low skilled and bad jobs; in countries where immigrants are much more at risk of unemployment than natives, they are not so significantly segregated in the low-skilled and poorer occupations (Reyneri and Fullin 2008). One could argue that in the Southern European countries, the low quality of the occupations that immigrants hold is the 'other side of the coin' of the relatively easy access to employment. The trade-off hypothesis is obviously consistent with the fact that in Southern-European countries immigrants are more likely to be unemployed than in other European countries, as immigrants are found to be more often unemployed in countries where natives have higher unemployment rates (Fleischmann and Dronkers 2010). Immigrants' low risk of unemployment combined with their exceptional occupational segregation both in Italy and Spain is connected with two main common structural aspects of the labour market which interact one with the other. On the one hand, immigrants' outcomes depend on the dual structure of both the Italian and the Spanish labour market; in both countries the divide between the different segments of the labour market runs along the high fragmentation of the productive asset which makes employment and working conditions in the many small and micro-size firms less protected and guaranteed, more often irregular and/or informal and difficult with respect to what happens in the few larger ones. Moreover, especially in the case of Spain, the labour market segmentation has adopted the form of temporary contracts, widely used in all economic sectors (Garcia-Serrano and Malo 2013). On the other hand, immigrants' outcomes in both the Italian and

the Spanish labour market depend on the characteristics of the labour demand and shortages in the two countries. Up to the crisis, job opportunities for immigrants were concentrated among the unsatisfied occupational needs for the ever relevant demand of lowskilled and unskilled labour, coming from both the fragmented and poorly innovative productive systems and, especially for Italy, from households' unmet social and care needs. As for the first aspect, the native labour force is less and less willing to enter manual and low-skilled occupations due to increasing educational attainment, especially among the youngest (Ambrosini 2001; Cacho'n 2009). As for the second aspect, and above all in Italy, a large and increasing demand for domestic and care work in households, was fuelled by growing demographic imbalances along with the increasing female activity in the frame of a poorly developed welfare system and poor social services support (Sciortino 2004). In both countries, then, structural labour shortages have promoted the insertion of immigrants in specific employment segments of the secondary labour market. In addition, both in Italy and Spain the institutional framework—which usually has opted for ex-post management of immigrant inflows through regularization drives working as an 'implicit' policy to control migration flows—has contributed to strengthening the labour market segmentation along the ethnic divide (Kogan 2014).

To appraise more in depth the Southern-European model of immigrants' insertion in the labour market, the differences across and within countries as regards different areas of origin are of special interest, although less debated and relying on scarcer empirical evidence. 2 As literature on immigrants' assimilation in the destination countries points out (Chiswick 1978, 1979; Chiswick et al. 2005), differences in labour market outcomes among immigrant groups could depend on the imperfect transferability of human capital across countries, e.g. immigrants' weak language proficiency, cultural distance, difficult recognition of educational credentials, etc. The lower transferability of the human capital for immigrants coming from given countries or areas could disadvantage them in comparison with others, both in the chances of finding a job and those of avoiding an under-qualified job. Nevertheless, in the case of Southern-European countries, the segmentation of the labour market is likely to play a decisive role and differences across groups of different ethnic origin could depend on the actual penalization of some groups. Studies on Italy have shown that immigrants' areas of origin matter, with immigrants from North Africa more penalized than those from Asia or China, especially in terms of unemployment risks, and that the penalization of Eastern Europeans is almost exclusively due to their more recent settlement in Italy; although, the segregation of immigrants in manual jobs and their relatively low probability of being unemployed do not depend on their personal characteristics and origin, but rather on the mismatch between labour demand and native labour supply, as well as on a labour-market segmentation (Fullin 2011). As for Spain, studies focusing on the assimilation process over time has shown similarly that African immigrants continue to lag behind the natives even several years after arrival, while Eastern Europeans tend to converge faster to natives' labour market outcomes as regards the participation, unemployment and over-education risk (Ferna'ndez and Ortega 2008) but the risk of entrapment in the secondary labour market is huge for all of them (Aysa-Lastra and Cacho'n 2013).

# 4. Divergent trends in the crisis: Has the Southern European model of immigrants' labour market incorporation disrupted?

In spite of the significant similarities, some divergent trends seem to have emerged with the crisis in the two countries as regards both the dynamic of immigration and the pattern of incorporation of immigrants into the labour market.

As for the former aspect and according to the most recent comparative figures, since 2008 both in Italy and Spain the pace of growth of inflows of foreign citizens has been progressively slowing down, as has happened to migration inflows to wealthier destination countries hit by the economic downturn (Tilly 2011; OECD 2015). The slowdown of

foreign citizens' inflows has been much more significant in Spain than in Italy, however, halving from 2008 to 2012 and the reduction has kept growing in the following years. The trend went along with a significant increased outflow of foreigners, much stronger in Spain where it had already started to grow before the crisis; but if in Italy it seems to be persisting, in the case of Spain it seems to have reversed the direction since 2014 (Figure 1). As a result, the share of foreign-born among the total population has remained stable in Spain at around 13.5 per cent over the crisis period, but decreased to 12.7 per cent between 2011 and 2015, while in Italy the slowdown has gone along with a substantial stability in the share of foreign-born, who accounted for around 9.5 per cent of the population in 2015.3 One could argue that in Italy, the crisis has not affected the settlement process of immigrants already living in the country, and that the pace of growth of the foreign-born on the total population has diminished because of the slowdown of inflows. In Spain, the settlement process has been more significantly affected by the crisis as some immigrants already living in the country are likely to have left, thus contributing to the decrease in the share of foreign-born on the total population, albeit to a lesser extent than expected due to the severity of the crisis4 (Ponzo et al. 2015).

The figure for the Romanian citizens (Table 1) show that in Italy the boom of their inflows had peaked just before the crisis and correspondingly with the EU enlargement and has significantly dropped by 2013 but was not negligible over the crisis spell. The trend was similar in Spain where after the boom in 2007, the inflow of Romanian citizens dropped in 2009 and actually halved by 2013. Outflows of Romanian citizens were significant only in Spain. Inflows of Moroccan citizens in Italy halved from 2008 to 2012, but the outflows were very limited. The reduction was stronger in Spain where Moroccans citizens' inflows dropped to one third in the same period and outflows doubled. As for Latin Americans the inflows reduced in both countries and due to their larger size the reduction was more significant in Spain, as were the outflows.

As regards the pattern of incorporation of immigrants into the labour market, the effects of the crisis on employment rates and on occupational segregation are shown in Table 2. As other analyses have highlighted (OECD 2011; Bonifazi and Marini 2014; Ponzo et al. 2015), the crisis has worsened the labour market conditions for both immigrants and natives, as the sharp rise in unemployment rates from 2007 to 2012 showed in both countries. But the magnitude of the employment crisis has been much greater in Spain, where the unemployment rate in 2012 was more than three times that of 2008. Overall, and consistent with their higher responsiveness to economic cycles, immigrants have been more affected by the crisis because their risk of unemployment increased more than that of natives in both countries, with the significant exception of immigrant women in Italy. Nevertheless, in Spain the gap between immigrants' and natives' unemployment rates has notably widened for both men and women, while in Italy it has only slightly increased for immigrant men, being overall as stable as it was before the crisis. In spite of some differences in the intensity of the impact of the crisis on the different groups of immigrants, the sorting of the more disadvantaged groups as regards the risk of unemployment has not substantially changed with the crisis, both for men and women.

Figure 1. Indices of inflows and outflows of foreign citizens (base 2004=100) (left axis) and % of foreign-born on total population (right axis).

The crisis seems to have differently affected also the concentration of immigrants in the less skilled and poorer occupations in the two countries: in Italy both immigrants and natives, men and women, are affected by an occupational downgrading process apparently harder for immigrants, who are increasingly excluded from high-skilled occupations. The opposite seems to have happened in Spain—with the only exception of foreign-born from Latin America and holding Spanish citizenship—where immigrant

men seem to have undergone an overall occupational upgrading process, as opposed to immigrant women, who seem to experience an even stronger concentration in low skilled jobs as in Italy.

The highlighted divergent trends have taken place in the frame of relevant institutional and policy reforms in both countries which might contribute to account for some differences, more likely of the overall employment trends than of immigrants' outcomes. Drastic attempts to contain public deficits through severe budgetary cuts and restrictive social policy reforms since the late 2011 were approved in both countries; in Spain, the size of cuts involved over the period 2010–13 was tremendous and the connected policy reforms represented a dramatic change in comparison to welfare policies promoted in the previous decade (Pavolini et al. 2015). In Italy, the austerity measures taken in 2011–12 were comparatively less severe in terms of cuts but followed a reform path similar to the pre-existent one, started in the 1990s. Even though austerity measures and policy reforms went in the direction of (explicit or implicit) retrenchment in both countries (ibidem), it is quite difficult to assess their connection with immigrants' position in the labour market, being immigrants dramatically under-represented in the sectors most affected by budgetary cuts as the public sector. However, budgetary cuts and retrenchment in education and health care, in social assistance and care are likely to have even worsened the imbalance between

Table 1. Inflows and outflows of foreign citizens by nationality (absolute values in thousands) and % of foreign-born by country of origin on foreign-born population – selected nationalities and country of origin

Table 2. Unemployment rates and share of employed in non-manual highly skilled jobs social needs and welfare responses that in Southern European countries has structured a relevant demand for foreign labour.

But do the divergent trends over the crisis period account for the creaking of the common pattern of insertion of immigrants in the labour market in the two countries discussed in Section 2? Although the question cannot be fully answered because comparison with trends after the crisis would be necessary, it is possible to explore whether, during the crisis and apart from the deterioration of labour market conditions for immigrants in both countries, the pattern combining a low unemployment risk with high segregation with low skilled jobs, typical of Southern Europe, has evolved the same way in the two countries.

#### 4.1 Method and data

To understand whether the trends identified actually mean a divergence in the common pattern of insertion of immigrants in the labour market in Italy and Spain, it is useful to shift from assessment of the 'ethnic disadvantage' that the descriptive data have implicitly considered so far to that of the 'ethnic penalty'. The ethnic disadvantage measures the difference between immigrants and natives in labour market outcomes as regards, for instance, the unemployment rate as shown in Table 1. The ethnic penalty instead measures the gap between immigrants and natives which remains once the different personal characteristics of immigrants with respect to natives are taken into account. The ethnic penalty can tell us, for instance, whether immigrants from a particular country run a higher risk of unemployment or poorer chances of holding higher-level jobs than natives of the same gender, age, education, and other observable characteristics (Reyneri and Fullin 2011). The ethnic penalty is therefore the immigrants' disadvantage that remains after controlling for as many variables as possible: that is to say, after controlling for the composition effect due to the different characteristics of the two groups. Recent research, in fact, has emphasized the importance of the different socio-demographic profiles of immigrants and natives to assess their actual ethnic penalization (Heath and McMahon 1997; Berthoud 2000; Heath and Cheung 2007).

In order to assess whether and to what extent the crisis has affected immigrants' labour market outcomes in Italy and Spain along the two dimensions of the risk of unemployment and the chances to access highly-skilled jobs, it has to be determined whether the trends detected in Tables 1 depend on compositional effects or on actual changes in the penalization of immigrants in the Italian and Spanish labour markets. The empirical strategy requires estimating, through multivariate analysis, the different risks of unemployment and the different chances of accessing skilled jobs for natives and for the groups of immigrants, taking their different personal characteristics into account. For this purpose, the multivariate models estimating immigrants' probability of being unemployed and of holding nonmanual skilled occupations with reference to natives' probability were run using the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) datasets of microdata for Italy and Spain, anonymized by Eurostat, securing the sample size. Labour Force Survey data are based on large household sample survey providing information on the labour market position of people aged 15 and over and allow distinguishing the native population from the foreign-born and comparing their labour market outcomes. Even though EU-LFS data provide satisfactory estimation of the stocks of non-nationals or born abroad, but are less adequate to seize migration flows (Marti' and Ro' denas 2007), they have proved to be a sound source of data to study ethnic penalties in the labour market (Heath, McMahno and Roberts 2000; Fullin and Reyneri 2011; Bernardi, Garrido and Miyar 2011; Cebolla-Boado and Finotelli 2015), also from a comparative perspective (Kogan 2006; Reyneri and Fullin 2011; Ballarino and Panichella 2013). Nevertheless, it is worth recalling some important differences between the Italian and the Spanish samples, both built on population registers, as far as the immigrant population is concerned: while in Italy, the population registers (Anagrafe) do not include unauthorized, seasonal and a residual share of the authorized (Fullin 2011) in Spain, since 2000, irregular immigrants have to register in population registers (Padro'n) to have access to state-paid health and free education at the pre-school, primary and secondary (Gonzalez-Enriquez 2009). Differently from Spain then, in Italy, the sample is slightly biased towards the most settled immigrant population.

#### 4.2 Independent variables: ethnic origin of the labour forces

The main independent variable was the ethnic origin of the labour forces built on the basis of the 15 broad areas of origin intra and extra-EU provided by the EU-LFS.6 More specifically, three groups of immigrants were compared to natives. They were: (1) East Europeans who entered the European Union in 2007, namely from Romania and Bulgaria; (2) North Africans, and (3) Latin Americans.7 Two other groups were defined in order to assess the labour market outcomes of the three target groups in comparison with natives: a group of foreign-born in all the other sending countries and a group of people from the so-called 'more developed countries' (i.e. USA, Canada, Japan, etc.).8

Even though broad areas of origin are considered, a strong country-specificity can be detected among at least two of them. According to available data on foreign-born population stocks covering the 2000s (OECD 2013) and independently from the evolution over time of the share of foreign-born from the different areas and countries, in both Italy and Spain the group of East Europeans consists mostly of Romanians, and only of a few Bulgarians in Spain. In both countries, the group of North Africans comprises mostly Moroccans, even though in Italy there are also some Tunisians and Egyptians. In Spain, among people from Central and South America, Ecuadoreans, Colombians, Argentineans (followed by Peruvians, Bolivians and Venezuelans) are the most representative, while in Italy, Ecuadoreans and Peruvians dominate the group. In the group from other sending countries, Chinese immigrants, people from Philippines, India or other non-EU countries (i.e. Ukraine and Moldova in Italy) are the most representative.

As regards Latin Americans, it is useful to distinguish people with citizenship of the destination country from others, due to the very large numbers for this group. Indeed, the colonial past of Spain makes migrant flows from Spanish-speaking countries to Spain not

only particularly large but also quite distinctive (Peixoto 2009). In Spain, many Latin Americans hold citizenship and are well integrated into the country; and, unlike what happens in Italy, where immigrants from Latin America do not speak the language of the natives (except for a few Argentineans), Latin Americans are Spanish-speakers. But also in Italy, they represent a special group of immigrants because they have relatively easier access to the spoken language and some of them hold Italian citizenship. According to own elaboration on EU-LFS data for 2012, East Europeans (Romanians), North Africans (Moroccans) and Latin Americans represent a significant share of the working-age population in both Italy and Spain. Immigration from Latin America (7 per cent of the working-age population) and North Africa (2.8 per cent) is especially notable in Spain, due the country's colonial past, but Romanians too are important (2.4 per cent). In Italy, although migrants from Eastern Europe represent an important share of the working-age population (2.6 per cent), the sending areas are more differentiated, with groups from other areas accounting for 5.5 per cent of the population. Moroccans nevertheless account for a significant 1.3 per cent, while Latin Americans account for another 1.3 per cent. The groups of foreign-born people have socio-demographic features distinct from those of the native population. Differences are especially significant as far as age and family status are concerned, because in all the foreign-born groups the share of young adults and the share of people living with a partner and children are much larger than for natives. The groups of foreign-born show distinctive features also from each other. Among Romanians, women are somewhat more numerous than men and young adults prevail in comparison with natives and the other groups of foreign-born. Moroccans are the least feminized and the lowest educated group in both Italy and Spain. Foreign-born from Latin America without citizenship are the most feminized group in both countries, and their educational attainment is intermediate. In both countries, foreign-born from Latin America with citizenship show notable differences from those without citizenship, being more similar to the natives. They are more educated than Latin Americans without citizenship and much more often live with their parents (Fellini and Fullin 2016).

It is worth noticing that the overall composition of the immigrant labour force by area of origin has registered some changes between 2007 and 2012. In Spain both the absolute values and the share of foreign-born from East-European countries and North Africa have increased, while both the absolute values and the share of the foreign-born from Latin America not holding the Spanish citizenship have significantly decreased. In Italy, in spite of the increase in absolute values of all foreign-born groups, the only remarkable change in the relative composition is the very significant increase of immigrants from East-European countries. As a consequence, and even though the multivariate analysis controls for these differences, data might be biased by changes in unobservable characteristics of immigrants induced by the underlying changes in the characteristics of inflows and outflows as for instance, the self-selection of those who return home, an issue that has become especially relevant in Spain over the crisis period.9

#### 4.3 Dependent variables and model specification

The empirical strategy for the multivariate analysis was based on two main dependent variables:

- (1) The probability of avoiding unemployment, designed as the probability of not being unemployed for those in the labour force. This probability is a measure of the unemployment risk transposed in negative terms in order to make the results more immediate and intelligible: negative coefficients mean an 'ethnic penalty', while positive coefficients stand for an 'ethnic premium'.
- (2) The probability of accessing medium and highly-skilled non-manual jobs, designed as the probability of being in medium and highly-skilled jobs. In particular, medium and highly skilled jobs include managers, professionals and technicians, i.e. the first three groups of the ISCO classification (International Standard Classification of

#### Occupations).

Both dependent variables were estimated through logit models. In the specification of the models, both the effect of the sending area (ethnic origin), the effect of the crisis—i.e. the effect of 2012 versus 2007—and the interaction effect between the sending area and the crisis were considered. The sample considered for the first dependent variable was that of the labour forces, while the sample considered for the second one was that of the employed. The model was specified with a set of control variables for individual characteristics such as age, education, family status, and living in the same region. As regards age the working age of the labour force (15-64) was considered and divided into five 10-year age brackets; for education four levels (no schooling or primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, tertiary) were considered; for family status five situations (living alone, living with a partner with children, living with partner with no children, youth living with parents, single parent, other cohabitation) were considered; as for the regions, regions were differentiated according to a within-country ranking of high, medium and low presence of migrants. The logit models for both the independent variables were estimated under two different specifications. In the first one, both immigrants and natives were included, using the natives as the reference group. In the second model, natives were excluded, and the foreignborn from other developed countries were used as the reference group in order to include the years since migration in the country as an additional control variable; that is to say, to add a proxy for settlement and for the period of migration. Separated models by gender were estimated due to the marked gender segmentation of employment among immigrants as well. The analysis compared data for 2007 with data for 2012.

#### 5. Results and discussion

The results are presented in terms of average marginal effects based on the estimated logit models because their effects are more immediately intelligible than regression coefficients (or odds ratios) and can be compared for similar models across different groups or samples (Mood 2010). The average marginal effect expresses the average of the variation induced in the probability of interest by a marginal change in an independent variable for each individual. In our case, marginal effects assess the variation induced by belonging to different sending areas before and after the crisis on the probabilities under analysis. In the following figures (Figures 2 to 4) the average marginal effects and their confidence intervals resulting from logit estimates which control for the aforementioned socio-demographic factors are graphed. More specifically, the figures show the average marginal effect that belonging to a foreign-born group exerts on the target probability (i.e. of avoiding unemployment, of accessing skilled jobs) in 2007 and in 2012 in Italy and Spain, using the situation of natives in 2007 (light grey line at the zero point by definition) and 2012 (dark grey line) as references. Negative marginal effects associated with the groups of foreignborn can be considered as the sizes of the 'ethnic penalty', while positive marginal effects can be considered as the sizes of the 'ethnic premiums' experienced by those groups compared to natives with the same personal characteristics (age, education, family status, region of residence).

5.1 The risk of unemployment and the access to qualified occupations before and after the crisis Before the crisis, the average marginal effect of being foreign-born on the probability of avoiding unemployment was relatively small in both Italy and Spain (Figure 2). In Italy, in 2007, the ethnic penalty was null for male immigrants from other areas and from developed countries, while male North Africans showed the highest penalty because they had 3.4 per cent less probability than natives of avoiding unemployment. Romanians/East Europeans and Latin Americans had an ethnic penalty of only 1.8–2 per cent. By contrast, women showed more significant penalties, because the gap with natives was wider than that of males. North African women were especially penalized (10.5 per cent), while for the other groups the ethnic penalty ranged from 4.5 per cent to 6 per cent. In Spain, the ethnic

penalties for the different groups of foreign-born males were stronger than in Italy, but they were weaker for females. Nonetheless, the penalization of the different groups was overall limited and the quite similar to that in Italy, although with the aforementioned country specifics. Latin Americans—both men and women and independently from holding citizenship—were the least penalized because their probability of avoiding unemployment was not significantly different from that of the natives, while males from other areas were quite penalized (10 per cent). Male Romanians were somewhat penalized (7.6 per cent) while females were not; male North Africans were relatively less penalized (6 per cent) while females were the most penalised (12 per cent).

The picture changes with the crisis, which has worsened the situation for both natives and immigrants. When controlling for the socio-demographic composition, in Italy the probability of avoiding unemployment significantly diminishes both for natives (5 per cent) and for all the groups of foreign-born, but the ethnic penalty of the different groups of male foreign-born registers only a slightly increase in all groups, and a minimum for Romanians. The probability of avoiding unemployment diminishes significantly also for women (4.5 per cent), but the ethnic penalty in 2012 is more stable than for men. This is especially the case of female Romanians and Latin Americans whose ethnic penalty even diminishes despite the increase in the risk of unemployment since 2007. In Italy, the pattern of the penalization seems to be similar, with male North Africans showing the highest penalization, followed by Latin Americans and then Romanians. We can therefore say that, overall, the low immigrants' penalization as regards the unemployment risk has persisted during the crisis, despite the worsening of immigrants' labour market outcomes and the slight increase in penalization.

Different is the case of Spain, where the risk of unemployment has become dramatic both for natives (18 per cent for men and 15 per cent for women) and for the different groups of immigrants, and where the ethnic penalty has significantly increased for many groups of foreign-born. North Africans (Moroccans) are now the most penalized, ceteris paribus, but the gap with natives has significantly increased only for women (around 12-13 per cent before and after the crisis). Moroccan men, Romanian men and women, Latin-American men and women have instead registered a notably stronger penalty with the crisis, making it rather difficult to depict a situation of low penalization as regards the unemployment risk. In Figure 3, which graphs the average marginal effects for the probability of accessing medium and high-skilled non-manual occupations, other relevant differences between Italy and Spain emerge as regards the effect of the crisis. In both countries, before the crisis, male Romanians had a much lower probability than the natives of being in a skilled job (54 per cent in Spain, 45 per cent in Italy) and so did females (42 per cent and 37 per cent respectively). As for North African men and women, the risk of segregation in lowskilled jobs was also very high but slightly less strong than for Romanians. The penalisation of Latin Americans with citizenship, both men and women, was the lowest in both countries, suggesting that citizenship has a significant relation with the jobs held by the foreignborn even though nothing can be said about the underlying casual mechanism. Among men, Latin Americans without citizenship were instead as much penalised as North Africans, or even more so, and females were heavily penalized in both countries, suggesting that command of the language is less important in reducing penalization in the unemployment risk than in the kind of job held. The dual labour markets of Italy and Spain push immigrant labour into specific sectors and occupations—those less appealing to the native labour force—where language proficiency is not at all important for finding a job. General labourers in construction and agriculture, manual workers in personal or social services do not need good knowledge of the language to find a job; rather, language skills become important in the chances of accessing a non-manual semi-skilled or skilled occupation. Citizenship seems instead to play a role, because the penalization of Latin Americans with citizenship as regards access to skilled jobs is lower in both countries, especially when compared to the penalization of Latin Americans without citizenship. It is not possible to

detect the casual mechanism behind this outcome. Even though the literature suggests that citizenship is important per se because it impacts on job search behaviours and intertwines with the legal status of immigrants (Corluy, Marx and Verbist 2011), we do not know whether foreign-born with citizenship are more likely to access high-skilled jobs, or conversely whether foreign-born who have accessed high-skilled jobs are more likely to aspire to and obtain citizenship. There may be other unobservable variables affecting citizenship that we cannot control for.

Also along the dimension of occupational segregation, the picture partially changes with the crisis. In Italy, the chances of accessing high-skilled jobs have further diminished for East Europeans and North Africans, both men and women, in a frame where outcomes have significantly worsened also for the natives, whose probability of accessing more skilled jobs has diminished by around 6 per cent for men and 7 per cent for women. In terms of ethnic penalties, the gap with the natives in 2012 has increased for all the groups with the only, and significant, exception of female Latin Americans. This is not the case of Spain, where no group of foreign-born shows a statistically significant lower chance of accessing skilled jobs in 2012 compared with 2007, with the exception of Latin American women with Spanish citizenship.

After controlling for individual characteristics, therefore, the distinctive pattern of incorporation of immigrants into the Italian and Spanish labour markets highlights, on the one hand, some differences by immigrants' area of origin, albeit similar in both countries, and, on the other, a divergent evolution in that the pattern seems to persist and even intensify only in Italy, while it seems to weaken in Spain.

To explain these differentiated outcomes, different labour market trends in the two countries have to be invoked. Firstly, the impact of the crisis on employment has not been the same in the two countries: after years of exceptional growth, between 2007 and 2012 in Spain employment fell by over 15 per cent, with a peak of over 20 per cent among men. By contrast, in Italy the employment reduction did not exceed 1.4 per cent and affected only men (4.4 per cent), whereas female employment even increased (+3.2 per cent). Moreover, job losses were not uniform across the ethnic groups. In Spain, all groups of foreign-born were severely affected, with the exception of female Moroccans and Latin Americans with host country citizenship, whose employment even increased. Quite the opposite occurred in Italy, where the crisis affected mainly native men and native women to only a partial extent, while for all the groups of foreign-born—and especially for females the trend in employment was positive, with a marked increase for Romanians. Secondly, it should be considered that the employment structure is not the same in the two countries and that they did not react to the crisis with the same employment adjustment (European Commission 2012, Eurofound 2014). Job losses in construction and manufacturing were dramatic in Spain, followed by negative trends in the tourism sector and in transport and communications. These, in fact, are the sectors where foreign-born workers are highly concentrated, mainly in low-skilled jobs, and this is the likely reason why, with the crisis, the penalization of Romanians and Latin Americans has worsened as regards the risk of unemployment but has not changed as regards occupational segregation: many of them lost their low-skilled jobs and only very few of them in more skilled occupations could avoid unemployment. In Italy, job losses were significant in manufacturing and construction, but what was impressive and distinctive was the countertrend of employment growth in social and personal services over the crisis period, which explains the important increase in the number of Romanian and Latin American female workers (Fellini 2015). Contrary to what occurred in Spain, the demand for unskilled labour in Italy did not diminish with the crisis, but increased because of the unsatisfied domestic and care needs of households. Thus, immigrants—especially Romanian and Latin American women—found numerous job opportunities in the secondary labour market even during the crisis. Contrary to Spain, in Italy the fall in employment was mainly due to job losses among skilled labour in manufacturing, business services, public administration, education and

health, which mainly concerned natives, whereas the trend of the most unskilled labour, which mainly concerned immigrants, remained positive. The different adjustment patterns undergone by the two countries during the crisis entailed different impacts on immigrants due to trends in low-skilled employment.

Figure 2. Average marginal effects, logit model for the probability to avoid unemployment. Reference natives 2007, controlled for individual characteristics (education, family status, age, region of residence).

### Figure 3. Average marginal effects, logit model for the probability to access highly-skilled non manual occupations .

#### 5.2 Do years since migration matter?

In line with the assimilation hypothesis that the disadvantage and the penalization of immigrants reduces over time (Chiswick 1978, 1979), one may question whether an important factor of heterogeneity among immigrants like years since migration matters in differentiating the penalization across different areas of origin and also whether it has any effect on the outcomes in times of crisis. Indeed, as the assimilation hypothesis envisages, one may expect that immigrants who have been living in the country for a longer period run a lower risk of unemployment and benefit from more significant chances of accessing skilled jobs because new immigrants have less country-specific skills and information regarding employers, jobs, and occupations compared with not only natives but also more settled migrants. Moreover, employers may be less willing to hire immigrants because they attribute to them a lower productivity than that of natives due to the country-specificity of their human capital. But as the time spent in the host country extends, immigrants acquire more labour market information, and their skills and human capital become more specific for the host country's labour market, progressively reducing their penalization. In order to take years since migration into account, a second model specification was estimated for independent variables, adding the length of stay in the host country as control variable and excluding, by definition, the native population from estimates. In this second specification of the model, estimates were run using the group of foreign-born from other developed countries as the reference group because it is the one most similar to the natives, in terms of both individual characteristics and labour market outcomes. Estimates of average marginal effects for the probability of avoiding unemployment only for the foreign-born labour forces and controlling also for years since migration (not shown) do not depict a situation different from the one depicted with the model under the first specification. Given that, before the crisis, the ethnic penalization as regards the risk of unemployment was quite limited in both countries for all origin groups, no different picture should in fact be expected. Years since migration are supposed to temper ethnic penalization but, in the case of the risk of unemployment, the ethnic penalization was already limited or nil independent of the length of stay. Indeed, before the crisis, in both Italy and Spain, both for men and women (with the significant exception of North African women), the different groups of foreign-born did not show any notable penalization. The situation has deteriorated with the crisis for all groups of foreign-born, including those from other developed countries; nonetheless, in 2012 the probability of avoiding unemployment for the different groups of foreign-born is still not significantly different from that of the reference group.

More interestingly, Figure 4 shows the average marginal effects for the chances of accessing highly skilled jobs only for the foreign-born labour forces and controlling for years since migration. In this case, according to the assimilation hypothesis and due to the high segregation of immigrant workers, one could expect a picture different from the one provided by the model including the native labour forces because the chances of accessing better jobs may actually increase as the settlement process proceeds. Nonetheless, the empirical

results provide little support for this hypothesis because, before the crisis, nearly all the groups of foreign-born in both Italy and Spain showed a strong ethnic penalization. Latin Americans with citizenship, both men and women, were the only significant exception in both countries. It is true, however, that the penalization magnitude is smaller under this specification of the model than under the one including natives. Furthermore, the pattern of the penalization is similar in the two countries and does not seem to change from the one depicted by the model not controlling for the years since migration: East Europeans run the highest risk of segregation in low-skilled jobs, followed by North Africans and Latin Americans. With the exception of Latin Americans with citizenship, who are only a little penalized, the analysis shows that even if years since migration may temper the penalization as regards access to skilled occupations, in Italy and Spain the penalization as regards segregation in lower-skilled jobs remains notable.

Figure 4. Average marginal effects, logit model for the probability to access highly-skilled non manual occupations (only foreign-born).

#### 6. Main findings and conclusions

In this article, we have explored the Southern-European model of insertion of immigrants in the labour market through comparison of the Italian and Spanish cases before and after the crisis. Differently from many studies on immigrants' disadvantage and penalization in the destination countries' labour markets, in our analysis different groups of immigrants were considered: East Europeans, almost exclusively Romanians in both host countries, North Africans, mostly Moroccans both in Italy and Spain, and Latin Americans. The three groups are of especial interest because they represent the most important pools of immigrants in both countries, despite some obvious country peculiarities.

The approach adopted has followed the stream of literature which compares immigrants' and natives' labour market outcomes along the two main dimensions of the unemployment risk and chances of accessing a skilled occupation. Contrary to what occurs in Northern Europe countries, Southern European ones are characterized by the combination of a relatively low unemployment risk with extremely limited chances of accessing highly skilled jobs. The analysis has shown that before the crisis Italy and Spain not only shared this overall pattern—albeit with country specificities—but also that they exhibited a similar structure of the penalization for the different origin groups. North Africans were the most penalized owing to the higher unemployment risk, followed by Romanians and Latin Americans without citizenship of the host country. The least penalized were instead, in both countries, Latin Americans with citizenship, especially in Spain and especially because of their much higher probabilities of having a skilled non-manual job. This closer study of immigrants' outcomes in Southern European labour markets thus, on the hand provides further evidence to support the hypothesis of a common underlying pattern, and on the other, invites reconsideration of the importance of the origin countries in structuring the ethnic penalties in the destination countries. Together with the labour market structure and the characteristics of the labour demand in the destination countries, also previous connections between origins and destinations in the broader frame of countries' migratory history play a major role as regards the labour-market inclusion of immigrants. However, with the crisis, some differences have emerged in the context of an overall slowdown of migratory inflows to both countries, although especially significant in Spain. Not surprisingly, both in Italy and Spain, labour-market outcomes have worsened for both natives and immigrants; and immigrants have everywhere been hit harder than natives by the crisis. But the features of the South-European model have weakened only in Spain. Instead, they have been even reinforced in Italy: indeed, the 'low unemployment risk-no access to skilled jobs' pattern seems to be more persistent in Italy than in Spain. In Italy the increase in the penalization of the different groups as regards unemployment rates is only

relatively limited, while the penalization as regards occupational segregation is definitely stronger than it was before the crisis; in Spain, on the contrary, the penalization as regards the unemployment risk has significantly increased, but the segregation in low-skilled jobs has been relatively unaffected, and for some groups it has even slightly weakened. To understand the different trends followed by the penalization pattern in the two countries, it is necessary to consider the different magnitudes of the employment impact of the crisis in Italy and Spain, and the different overall employment adjustment in the two countries. More specifically, with the crisis, the main driver of differentiation between Italy and Spain was the change in the skills composition of the employment structure. In Spain, the dramatic collapse of low-skilled jobs pushed many immigrants into unemployment, significantly increasing their unemployment risk, while leaving the penalization as regards access to the more skilled occupations unchanged. In a situation where employment dramatically fell and unskilled jobs were those most destroyed, a slight apparent upgrading of the employment structure even occurred. This was not the case in Italy, where the employment losses were not as dramatic as in Spain, but where skilled jobs were significantly affected by employment downsizing and, above all, where the demand for unskilled labour addressed to immigrants due to households' domestic and care needs continued to grow significantly even during the crisis. Unexplored remains, of course, the important issue concerning the conjunctural or structural nature of these divergent trends.

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#### Notes

- 1. Both Italy and Spain have no or little connection with many of the countries from which refugees depart, and they both provide them with scant welfare. Moreover, both countries have adopted a strict migratory policy relying on migration quotas dramatically inadequate to meet the actual demand for migrant labour.
- 2. The majority of studies usually take account of different origins as a control variable in the multivariate analyses. It is rarer for the country or area of birth to be framed as an independent variable in the stricter sense and consequently discussed with closer attention.
- 3. Data on inflows and outflows refer to foreigners while data on stocks refer to foreignborn.
- 4. Differently from Italy, with the crisis in Spain, policies to assist and ease return migration addressed to immigrants in especially difficult circumstances have also been promoted (Arango 2013; Parella and Sole´ 2014).
- 5. As regards the development of the institutional context over the period considered, it should be also recalled that in February 2012 the Spanish labour market reform introduced some relevant changes with respect to dismissal legislation, making it more flexible through the widening of the conditions for a fair dismissal and specifying that a redundancy is always justified if the company faces a persistent decline in revenues or ordinary income (OECD 2016). In Italy a similar flexibility of permanent contracts was approved instead in December 2014.
- 6. The EU-LFS variable only gives information on 15 broad areas of intra- and extra-EU origin and not on specific country of birth.
- 7. This group was built by considering people from Central and Southern America. In the text, we use 'Latin Americans' with this particular meaning.
- 8. Countries with a high level of GDP per capita.
- 9. In line with the literature, due to data constraints, we are assuming that unobserved characteristics of migrants do not change over time and that return migration is not a selective process involving more either the 'winners' (i.e. those who have succeeded in finding a good job) or the 'losers' (i.e. those who have remained unemployed for a long time or who were not satisfied with their job and their social position) (Reyneri and Fullin 2011).

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### **Tables and Figures**

**Table 1.** Inflows and outflows of foreign citizens by nationality (absolute values in thousands) and % of foreign-born by country of origin on foreign-born population – selected nationalities and country of origin

	2004	2007	2008	2010	2012	2014*			
Inflows of foreigners b	y nationalii	ty							
Italy									
Romania	66.1	271.4	174.5	92.1	81.7	50.7			
Morocco	34.8	23.5	37.3	30.0	19.6	17.6			
Latin America**	47.5	30.2	40.8	40.8	23.7	15.6			
Spain									
Romania	103.4	197.6	61.3	51.9	27.3	30.0			
Morocco	73.4	85.0	71.8	30.2	22.4	20.2			
Latin America**	171.8	250.9	175.1	67.1	56.2	52.4			
Outflows of foreigners	by nationa	lity							
Italy									
Romania	0.7	3.7	8.3	7.5	9.1	11.0			
Morocco	0.8	1.0	1.0	2.2	2.0	0.2			
Latin America**	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.6	0.3			
Spain									
Romania	3.2	8.0	32.4	49.8	64.4	70.7			
Morocco	5.4	31.6	26.7	37.6	44.4	47.5			
Latin America**	14.2	73.7	76.0	99.9	101.3	116.4			
Per cent foreign-born by country of origin on foreign-born population									
Italy									
Romania			17.6	17.5	17.4				
Morocco			7.2	7.2	7.1				
Latin America**			10.1	10.0	9.9				
Spain									
Romania	7.3	11.7	11.8	12.1	12.1	11.0			
Morocco	12.7	11.3	11.4	11.5	11.7	12.6			
Latin America**	34.5	30.3	29.9	29.3	31.0	30.0			

Source: OECD International Migration Database.

<sup>\*2013</sup> for outflows.

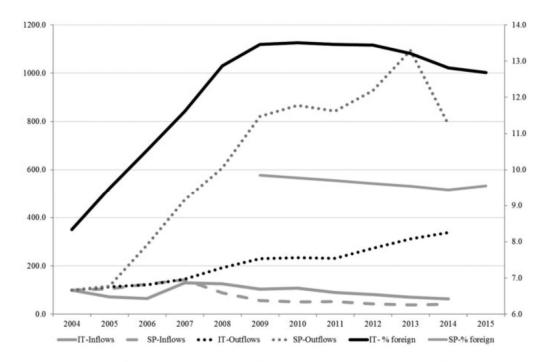
<sup>\*\*</sup>Selected countries according to relevance of stocks (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Venezuela).

Table 2. Unemployment rates and share of employed in non-manual highly skilled jobs\*

	2007		20	2012	
	Italy	Spain	Italy	Spain	
Males					
Unemployment rate					
Natives	4.9	6.0	9.5	22.5	
Foreign-born from immigration countries	5.3	8.3	12.8	39.3	
East Europe	4.4	7.3	12.5	39.8	
North Africa	7.7	9.5	15.7	52.7	
Central-South America (non-nationals)	4.7	7.0	13.6	35.7	
Central-South America (nationals)	6.5	4.4	15.8	32.4	
Per cent in medium and highly skilled non-me	anual occup	pations			
Natives	47.7	39.1	45.8	42.1	
Foreign-born from immigration countries	13.7	13.0	9.4	17.4	
East Europe	9.2	3.1	4.8	7.3	
North Africa	12.3	9.7	8.1	13.9	
Central-South America (non-nationals)	11.3	10.0	12.3	15.7	
Central-South America (nationals)	43.2	35.3	42.6	35.0	
Females					
Unemployment rate					
Natives	7.5	10.5	11.2	23.2	
Foreign-born from immigration countries	12.3	13.1	16.3	36.4	
East Europe	10.8	11.4	14.2	38.0	
North Africa	25.0	33.5	33.7	57.1	
Central-South America (non-nationals)	11.6	11.1	14.5	31.0	
Central-South America (nationals)	8.7	10.0	17.8	32.7	
Per cent in medium and highly skilled non-me	anual occup	pations			
Natives	64.4	55.9	61.2	53.4	
Foreign-born from immigration countries	19.6	20.4	11.0	15.5	
East Europe	20.5	7.1	11.0	12.0	
North Africa	21.9	20.3	10.7	6.1	
Central-South America (non-nationals)	14.3	16.0	9.3	12.3	
Central-South America (nationals)	54.3	46.8	42.2	25.7	

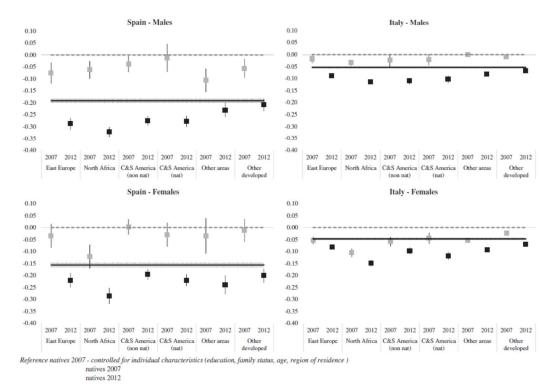
Source: Own calculation on EU-LFS.

<sup>\*</sup>Occupations of the groups 1–3 of the ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations) corresponding to Managers, Professionals and Technicians.



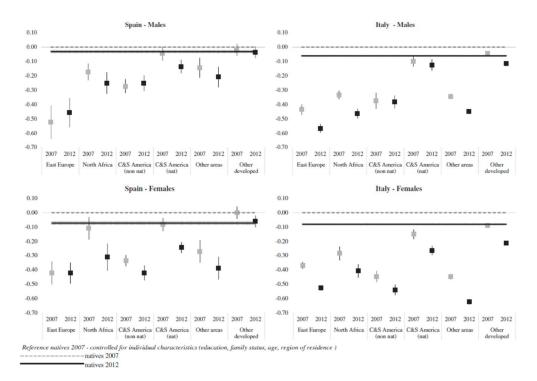
**Figure 1.** Indices of inflows and outflows of foreign citizens (base 2004=100) (left axis) and % of foreign-born on total population (right axis).

*Source*: Own calculation on OECD migration database for inflows and outflows, and on Eurostat for percentage of foreign-born on population.



**Figure 2.** Average marginal effects, logit model for the probability to avoid unemployment. Reference natives 2007, controlled for individual characteristics (education, family status, age, region of residence).

natives 2007.



**Figure 3.** Average marginal effects, logit model for the probability to access highly-skilled non manual occupations\*.

\* Occupations of the groups 1–3 of the ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations) corresponding to Managers, Professionals and Technicians.

Reference natives 2007, controlled for individual characteristics (education, family status, age, region of residence).

———————— natives 2007.

natives 2012.

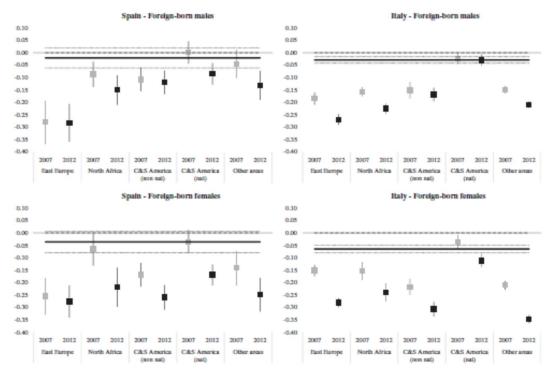


Figure 4. Average marginal effects, logit model for the probability to access highly-skilled non manual occupations\* (only foreign-born).

Reference foreign-born in more developed countries 2007, controlled for individual characteristics (education, family status, age, region of residence, years since migration).

---- foreign-born in more developed countries 2007.

foreign-born in more developed countries 2012.

Occupations of the groups 1–3 of the ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations) corresponding to Managers, Professionals and Technicians.