

**PAA 2011, Washington**

**Session 156: Immigration in Comparative Perspective**

Chair: Blake Sisk, Vanderbilt University

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## **Naturalisation decisions in Spain. The importance of legal asymmetries**

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### **1. Introduction**

Naturalization is usually seen as one of the strongest indicators of immigrants' integration in their host societies. Acquiring the citizenship of the country of residence is generally associated with stronger identification with the local culture and dominant social values, and it also opens the door to political participation (Bauböck 2006). Besides, naturalization usually implies acquiring additional rights and consolidating structural integration (Yang 1994, Diehl and Blohm 2003, Ersanille and Koopmans 2010). Consequently, naturalization is sometimes portrayed as a marker of full social and political integration, while other times citizenship acquisition is conceived more as a way-station to it (Bloemraad 2008). The extent to which acquisition of the host country nationality constitutes a marker of integration or, alternatively, a way-station to it is expected to substantially vary depending on the immigration and citizenship legal regimes.

Yet, as naturalization laws vary across countries (Howard 2009), the determinants and consequences of naturalization decisions have to be analyzed in specific legal contexts (Logan and Oh 2007, Portes and Curtis 1987). Different legislations create different incentives to naturalize and may also imply varying costs for the potential applicants. Accordingly, it can be argued that the capacity of 'naturalization' to reflect the highest degree of integration is very much dependent on the legal and political context where the naturalization decisions are made.

In this paper we analyze the naturalization decisions of immigrants in Spain. The Spanish legal context offers a unique opportunity to test the role that different naturalization rules may have in promoting the acquisition of the host nationality (or not), and the extent to which those rules might alter the meaning of naturalization as the clearest indicator of integration. On the one

hand, foreigners born in Latin-American countries (plus nationals from Andorra, Philippines and Portugal) enjoy a clearly privileged legal regime: they can apply for the Spanish citizenship after ‘only’ two years of legal and continuous residence in Spain, whereas the rest of foreigners -including all North-Africans and EU citizens- are required to fulfill ten years of legal and continuous residence. Furthermore, the costs of naturalization also differ by country of origin. Once again, Latinos have a privileged status because they are all allowed to keep their previous nationality even after being granted the Spanish one, due to the double nationality bilateral agreements signed by their countries of origin and Spain.

All these relatively soft requirements constitute a clear incentive for Latinos to apply for naturalization as a way to circumvent the immigration law, which only grant permanent residence status after five years of legal and continuous residence in Spain. Utilizing data from the Spanish National Immigrants Survey (2007), we examine the determinants of naturalization and how they vary across legal regimes. Our preliminary results strongly support the hypothesis that

## **2. Literature Review and Previous Evidence**

The previous literature has primarily analyzed naturalization as an individual rational decision that compare the expected cost and benefits derived from acquiring the citizenship of their host country<sup>1</sup>. Both legal and economic potential benefits have been explored. For the immigrant, naturalization represents acquisition of permanent legal status in the host country equal to that of native born. The most evident legal advantages that derive from naturalization are, first, to get rid of the immigration law and, thus, to be allowed to travel back and forth between their origin country and the country of residence with no restriction; and, secondly, to put an end to the need of periodically renew residence permits and, consequently, to the risk of becoming illegal and subjected to deportation.

In addition, the acquisition of the host country nationality in some countries or under some circumstances may also imply a privileged regime concerning family reunification. Yang

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper we use the term ‘naturalization’ as synonymous of citizenship acquisition since in most cases this is the most common procedure for immigrants to acquire the nationality of their country of residence, especially if we consider the acquisition of the host country citizenship through marriage also as a type of naturalization, as it is the case in Spain (foreigners married to a Spanish citizen are required to proof at least 1 year of legal residence since marriage before applying for citizenship). In 2009, 94 percent of granted citizenship were due to residence and marriage; namely, 83 percent and 11 percent respectively (Immigration Yearbook 2010, provisional results). Nationality and citizenship will be also utilized as interchangeable terms.

(1994), for instance, noted that accelerated processing of family reunification was a very strong motivation for immigrants in general to acquire United States citizenship since a foreign permanent resident can only sponsor as immigrants his or her spouse and unmarried children within a numerically limited category, while a citizen can sponsor not only his or her immediate relatives with no numerical restriction, but also their unmarried or married adult children and their siblings. Balistreri and Hook (2004) analyzed the impact of IIRIRA and also concluded that policies that restricted an immigrant's ability to sponsor relatives for legal migration encouraged the propensity to naturalize.

Finally, the most exclusive right which is acquired with naturalization is non-restricted suffrage. Only citizens are able to vote and run as candidates in all elections and, therefore, to influence the policy decisions and outcomes in the places where they live. Although some countries have granted voting rights in sub-national elections to (some) foreigners, only citizenship allows foreign immigrants to achieve full access to the host country politics on equal feet with the native-born. However, the connection between citizenship acquisition and interest in the host politics remains unclear, and so the political determinants of naturalization do. In fact, recent studies in this area have emphasized increasing variation across time and space in naturalized immigrants' voting behavior, which implicitly means variation regarding the link between (positive) political orientations and naturalization. Some authors have illustrated how growing perceived hostility towards immigrants' political and economic interests, on the one hand, and positive political orientations encourage the political participation of naturalized immigrants in the US, beyond the traditional socio-demographic determinants (Pantoja et al. 2001, Pantoja & Allen 2006). Others have found a consistent pattern of declining electoral participation among naturalized immigrants across cohorts of arrival after controlling for national origin and demographic characteristics such as education and income, and interpreted this pattern as reflecting increasing residential segregation of newly arrived immigrants who tend to concentrate more and more in communities with lower levels of social capital than older cohorts (Lafountain & Johnson 2008). Finally, utilizing recent data for ten European cities, González-Ferrer (2011) argues that immigration legislations that assure stronger legal status of immigrants since their very arrival to the host country promote the electoral participation of naturalized citizens, while the toughness of the citizenship acquisition regime remains insignificantly related to the immigrants' voting behavior. As can be noted, in all these studies voting rather than naturalizing was the outcome of interest; however, their findings seem to support the idea that changes in the structure of incentives to naturalize alter the connection between naturalization and political participation.

On the other hand, with regard to the economic rationale behind the naturalization decision, some authors have emphasized that naturalization implies free access to previously restricted jobs as well as signalling mechanisms that help reducing discrimination in job conditions, which would potentially result in economic advancements of naturalized immigrants versus their foreign counterparts. However, it could be argued too that the causality direction runs the other way around; that is, that naturalization rather reveals a previous change in the migrants' time horizons associated with a demand for higher wages or with seeking better jobs. In this case, the potential economic benefits attached to the act of citizenship acquisition are not a real consequence of it but rather its explanation. Leaving aside the economic benefits that might derive from the potential existence of segmented labor markets for naturalized and non-naturalized immigrants, the real debate concerning the economic benefits attached to naturalization has to do with welfare. Borjas (2002) showed that in the US welfare participation rates among households headed by naturalized citizens rose after 1996, at the same time as a decline was observed among households headed by non-citizens. This result led the author to conclude that 'many immigrants will become citizens not because they want to fully participate in the United States' political and social systems, but because naturalization is required to receive welfare benefits'. However, the previous work by Balistreri and Hook (2004) utilizing data from Current Population Survey from 1994/95 to 2000/01, concluded that the 1996 welfare reforms did not changed the social and economic determinants of naturalization among Mexican immigrants. Similarly, Fix et al. (2003) also questioned Borjas' conclusions.

In sum, so far we lack of conclusive evidence regarding to the role that both legal and economic benefits from citizenship acquisition play in shaping immigrants' naturalization decisions, as we do regarding the more general issue of the relation between naturalization and integration. Effectively, some studies have found a positive relation between length of residence (Evans 1988, Liang 1994, Yang 2002, Portes & Rumbaut 2006, Pantoja & Allen 2006, DeVoretz & Pivnenko 2008), education (Portes & Rumbaut 2006, Pantoja & Allen 2006, Bevelander & Veenman 2006), home ownership (Portes & Curtis 1987) and language proficiency (Yang 1994, Pantoja & Allen 2006), supporting the idea that naturalization constitutes a marker of integration, instead of a way-station to it.

Yet others have found no significant effect of years since migration on naturalization propensity, once that the minimum length to qualify for naturalization application has been achieved (Portes & Curtis 1987, Diehl & Blohm 2003, Bevelander & Veenman 2006, Zimmerman et al. 2009). Moreover, some studies report negative effects of education (DeVoretz & Pivnenko 2008) or house ownership (Liang 1994), generally utilized as reliable indicators of structural integration. Accordingly, it could be argued that 'taking roots' in the

hostland rather than structural integration is what furthers naturalization (Portes & Curtis 1987). However, the evidence is far from being conclusive in this direction either (Bevelander & Veenman 2006, Ersanilli & Koopmans 2010). In addition, the lack of retrospective panel data on attitudes, feelings of attachments, etc. seriously hampers the establishment of clear causal relationships (for exceptions see Zimmermann et al. 2009, Diehl & Blohm 2003).

As Bloemraad has suggested, perhaps part of the problem lies in seeing the citizenship decision as one of individual choice rather than as one nested in social networks involving family, friends and others in the community (2006, 2008). In fact, the legal benefits from naturalization extend to a considerable number of family members, as the symbolic and social costs of 'changing flags' are clearly shaped at the community level (Fernández 1984). Immigrant couples might view citizenship as a family strategy, where one spouse keeps the country of origin citizenship while the other takes on the host citizenship, ensuring that the family has two options, as suggested about Chinese families in Canada by DeVoretz & Pivnenko (2008). Similarly, if children born in the country of residence acquire that country's citizenship at birth, parents might use their children as 'insurance' and not naturalize themselves (Akbari 2008). In contrast, if acquisition of host citizenship by birth at destination is not available or if all children were born in the country of origin and reunified later on, parents who qualify may choose to naturalize in order to protect their children from potential instabilities deriving from their foreign status, as Portes & Curtis (1987) suggested.

If family strategies are at work, both patterns of citizenship homophily and citizenship splitting are easier to explain. The former would be expected among 'pure' immigrant couples whose children are not citizens, while the latter would be more common among mixed couples. In fact, this hypothesis seems supported by the results obtained in both France and the US where, despite easiness of naturalization by marriage, Rallu (2011) found that a significant proportion of people who marry a citizen had not naturalized several years after marriage, whereas immigrants married to a naturalized migrant are much more likely to naturalize themselves. In other words, the presence of one citizen in the household (the spouse or one child) may weaken the incentives to naturalize among others household members as long as they can somehow benefit from the stronger legal status of her relative and if they not intend to frequently travel back and forth between the origin and the host country.

Finally, the co-ethnic community at large (and not only the nuclear family) should be taken into account to the extent that the social sanctions (positive and negative) potentially attached to the decision to change one's nationality are likely to come from it. First of all, all immigrants who are nationals from the same country of origin share the same rules with regard the possibility of

double citizenship, which is expected to lower the material and symbolic costs of naturalization at both the individual and group level (Jones-Correa 2001, Mazzolari 2009).

On the other hand, ethnic and national membership involves different meanings and status for different groups, as a result not only of different nationhood narratives but also of the relative position assigned to different ethnic groups in the social ladder of the host society. Accordingly, the symbolic costs but also the perceived benefits derived from naturalization changes across national origin groups. This is precisely the argument that Diehl & Blohm (2003) put forward to explain the larger propensity to naturalize among Turkish immigrants in Germany, in spite of their lower levels of structural integration in comparison to other groups like immigrants from the former Yugoslavia. According to these authors, it is not legal advantages what renders Turks more willing to naturalize than members of other ethnic groups, but their greater difficulties to accessing the status systems and social networks of German society due to their marked social identity as migrants. In other words, it is not the measurable and material immediate benefits from citizenship acquisition what furthers Turks' naturalization in Germany but rather their will of transferring formal allegiance to a group with higher social status, especially for those who have achieved a high level of individual assimilation. If this is the case, immigrants' propensity to naturalize is expected to be strongly influenced by the naturalization decisions of their co-nationals, as the more common the decision to change flags, the lower the symbolic social costs attached to it (Yang 1994, 2002).

Finally, and most important for the argument of this paper, the strength of the legal and economic incentives to naturalize may vary across groups, especially if not all foreigners enjoy exactly the same legal and social status in the country of residence due to bilateral agreements, supra-national integration processes, or privileges acknowledged to particular nationalities on the basis of previous colonial links with their home countries. In fact, not only entry and residence rules governing the daily life of foreign immigrants vary across national groups but also requirements to apply for the host citizenship, which obviously will alter the relative strength of the existing incentives and, as a result, rates and timing of naturalization among different groups (Bevelander & Veenman 2006).

We still know little about which conditions in the host country may be relevant to naturalization and the direction in which they would influence the immigrants' choices in this regard. However, it seems easy to accept that the exclusion of these kinds of important social contexts could result in biased or inaccurate estimates of the effects of individual characteristics on naturalization. Bearing all this in mind, in the remainder of this paper we will explore precisely whether and how the determinants of the naturalization decision among foreign immigrants

change depending on the different immigration and citizenship regimes that apply to them within the same national context.

### **3. The Spanish context. Massive immigration and sharp legal asymmetries**

#### *3.1. Immigration to Spain*

Spanish immigration experience has called the attention of many scholars and policy-makers because of its sharp increase in a very short time; but also because of the large amount of undocumented immigrants who have periodically been regularised. The foreign-born population increased from 1,2 in 1998 to 6,6 million in 2010, representing 14 percent of the total population (INE 2010)<sup>2</sup>. Most of the foreign-born are economic migrants from Latin America, the Maghreb and Eastern Europe, who have concentrated in cities where the demand for cheap labour in (mostly) low-skilled services expanded over the last decade.

The three largest groups are Romanians (783,834), Moroccans (760,238) and Ecuadorians (484,623), with Moroccans being the oldest community in Spain and Romanians one of the newest ones (INE 2010). Not only length of settlement but also sex composition, labour performance, household structure and geographical distribution vary across these three communities that can be considered as fair representatives of the three largest regional groups we mentioned above (Eastern Europeans, North-Africans and Latin-Americans). Except for the immigrants from the EU, the rest present the typical demographic structure of economic migrants: young age structure and unbalanced sex composition. Moroccans present the most unbalanced sex ratio, of 1.5 men for each woman; Ecuadorians maintain in 2010 a feminized composition of 0.9 men for each woman (this pattern being typical of immigrants from Central America). Rumanians have reduced their unbalance passing from a sex ratio of 1.4 in 2001 to 1.1 in 2010, thanks to family reunification mainly<sup>3</sup>. Households of immigrants are in average larger than households of Spanish population, over 3.4 persons per household. The bigger households correspond to the Africans 3.6, while for Europeans the size is below 2 persons per household (Reher and Requena, 2009).

Regarding their geographical distribution, non European migrants concentrate in Madrid, Catalonia and the Mediterranean coast. While Moroccans can be found mainly in Catalonia and the south-east region of the country, Latin-Americans are located mainly in Madrid. Eastern-

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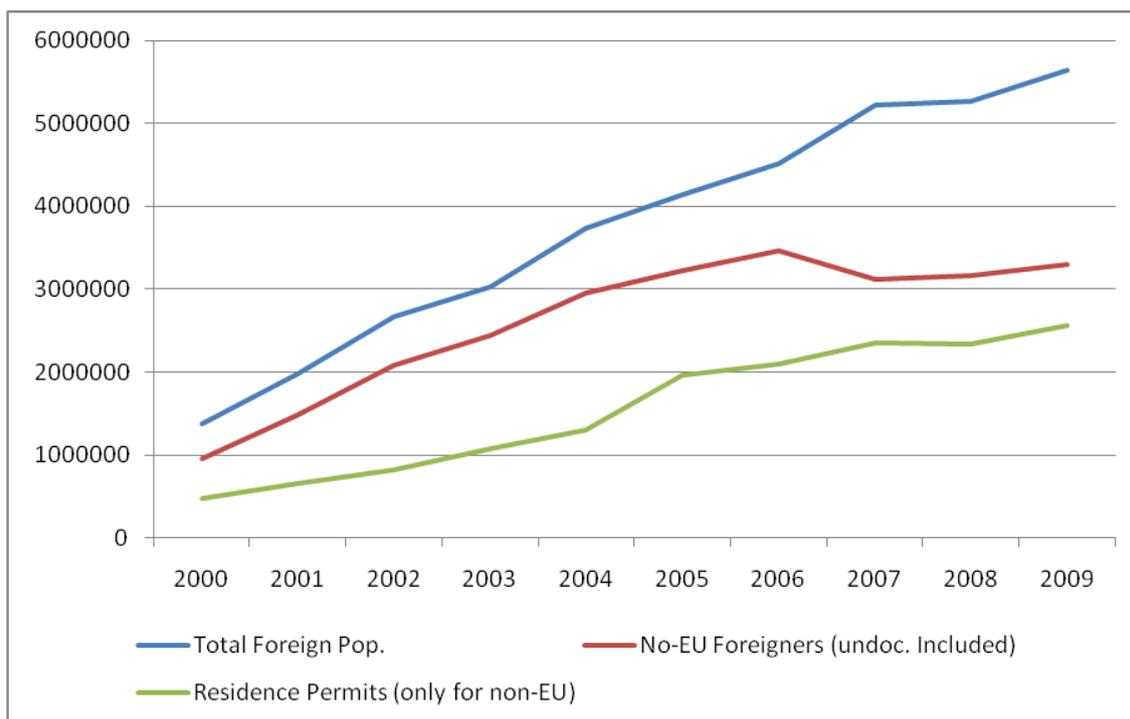
<sup>2</sup> The source is the municipal population register. Most undocumented immigrants are also included in these numbers since their legal status is irrelevant for registration, and registration is required to gain access to the public health system and public schools, and used as proof of length of residence in Spain in regularisation processes. The police and immigration authorities have, as yet, never used this register for detecting and deporting unlawful residents.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed description of the socio-demographic profile of different origin groups in Spain see Cortina, Esteve & Domingo, 2008.

Europeans combine Madrid and more rural locations in the coast. This distribution is strongly associated with the labour activity they are enrolled in. Eastern-European and African men are mostly employed in the building industry and agriculture, while Latin-American men and especially women have specialized in the service sector (tourism and domestic service and care). It is worth underlying that non European immigrants, both men and women, have higher activity rates than Spanish, 80% against 56% in 2005, as a result of both a youngest age structure and the mainly economic nature of their migration (Cebolla, González-Ferrer 2008). Nevertheless, since 2009, unemployment rates in low-skilled employment sectors, and very especially in the building industry, have radically increased due to the economic crisis, touching immigrants in the first place and enlarging the traditional gap with unemployment levels of Spaniards.

However, in spite of these differences, they all share a common trait: a large rate of irregularity, mostly due to the absence of efficient and reliable doors of legal-entry to Spain, the frequently soft enforcement of both external and internal controls, and the requirement to prove legal employment to renew temporary residence permits. As can be seen in Figure 1, the number of non-EU foreigners living in Spain increased from about 1 million in 2000 to 3.5 million in 2006. Most newcomers entered the country legally as tourists but became irregular immigrants when their visas expired and they overstayed (see the difference between the line with squares and the line with crosses). The overall percentage of immigrants living in Spain without the proper residence permit was estimated to represent up to the 70 percent of the total foreign population in 2002, 40 percent in 2005 and 24 percent in 2007 (Cebolla & González-Ferrer 2008).

**Figure 1. Total foreign population by origin (EU & non-EU) and legal status, 2000-2009**



Source: INE. Padrón Municipal, several years.

Obviously, the incidence of irregularity has changed over time and across groups reflecting periodical implementation of regularization programmes, the average length of each group settlement in Spain (in general the more recent the flow, the larger the irregularity rate), and the different immigration regimes applicable to EU citizens and the rest of foreigners. Entry, residence, work and family reunification of EU citizens are ruled by specific norms, which entail noticeable privileges in comparison to the immigration law. First of all, EU citizens can never be considered illegal since EU regulations allow EU citizens to freely circulate and reside within the EU territory. Secondly, EU citizens enjoy their own family reunification regime, which suppress the general requirement to prove more than one year of legal residence in Spain before applying<sup>4</sup>.

In this context, non-EU immigrants have been frequently accused of strategic family behaviour in order to get out of their undocumented status. Public concerns about marriage of convenience between foreigners and Spaniards or naturalized immigrants recurrently appear in the media, especially taking into account that foreigners married to a Spanish citizen may apply for naturalization only one year after marriage. For obvious reasons, EU citizens are free from such suspicion because they are never 'irregular' and they are socially not viewed as immigrants.

<sup>4</sup> Romania and Bulgaria became members of the EU in January 2007. As a result, the large number of immigrants from these two countries who had entered Spain since 2003 became all of the sudden EU citizens and, consequently, legal residents regardless of their previous legal status.

### *3.2. Immigration and citizenship legal regimes*

As we have previously mentioned, there exist two different immigration regimes: the one applicable to the EU citizens and their closest relatives (known as the EU regime), and the one applicable to the rest of foreigners (known as the general immigration regime). The main differences between these two legal regimes have to do with the fact that EU citizens have the right to enter, reside and remain in Spain for a period of up to three months simply by presenting a valid passport or national identity card: no other formality is required. And if they intend to remain for a period exceeding three months, they just need to register in the Central Alien Register. Thus, there is no need of visa or residence permit for EU citizens, while non-EU foreigners usually need to apply for a visa to be allowed to enter Spain for periods longer than 3 months<sup>5</sup> and hold a residence permit that needs to be periodically renewed (every one or two years) until they obtain a permanent residence permit, which is valid for five years<sup>6</sup>. The procedure to renew these permits is far from automatic since, with the only exception of residence permits granted on the basis of family reunification, it requires to demonstrate legal and relatively stable employment, which is particular difficult to achieve for low-skilled foreigners in the Spanish labour market. In contrast, EU citizens and their close relatives (spouse and children younger than 21) have the right to work in any other member state like Spain with need of a work permit and no application of the ‘national preference clause’ when looking for a job; in addition, they have the same rights as Spanish nationals in working conditions, pay and social security matters.

In sum, it is apparent that EU citizens (and their close relatives even if they are non-EU citizens) enjoy a much stronger legal status than the rest of foreigners residing in Spain, which is expected to strongly influence their incentives to naturalize. However, variation in the incentives for citizenship acquisition varies not only between EU citizens and non-EU foreigners, but also within the non-EU due to the different naturalization procedures available to them, as we will explain next.

Most comparative studies in the field of citizenship acquisition tend to include Spain within the group of most restrictive countries, as it imposes quite demanding requirements to allow

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<sup>5</sup> However, this has not always been the case, or at least, not for all the non-EU countries. Just to mention a couple of examples, citizens from Morocco are required visa to enter Spain since 1991, citizens from Colombia since 2001, citizens from Ecuador since 2002 and citizens from Bolivia since 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Non-EU citizens who are close relatives (spouse or children, mostly) of EU citizens (including Spaniards) are required to obtain a EU Residence Card (known as Tarjeta de Comunitario) which is almost automatically granted once the family link has been proved and it is valid for five years.

foreigners to apply and obtain the Spanish citizenship (Howard 2009). In effect, qualifying for naturalization in Spain requires foreigners, as a general rule, to be able to prove 10 years of previous legal residence in the country, which is a much more demanding condition than the one applicable in countries like Belgium and United Kingdom (3), France, the Netherlands and Sweden (5). In fact, within the EU only Italy, Portugal and Austria require such a long period of previous residence for naturalization, and Switzerland remains as the only one requiring an even longer period of 12 years, although years spent in the country between the ages of 10 and 20 count double. Indeed, as can be seen in Table 1, naturalization rates in Spain are rather low comparing to those of other European countries, and only similar to those of Germany and Switzerland (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Naturalization rates in different European Countries, 1996-2004**

|                  | Holland | Sweden | France | Belgium | UK   | Austria | Switzerland | Germany | Spain |
|------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|------|---------|-------------|---------|-------|
| <b>1996</b>      | 11,4    | 4,8    | 3,3    | 2,7     | 2,2  | 2,2     | 1,4         | 1,2     |       |
| <b>1997</b>      | 8,8     | 5,5    | 3,5    | 3,5     | 1,9  | 2,2     | 1,4         | 1,1     | 1,9   |
| <b>1998</b>      | 8,7     | 8,9    | 3,8    | 3,8     | 2,6  | 2,4     | 1,5         | 1,4     | 2,2   |
| <b>1999</b>      | 9,4     | 7,6    | 4,5    | 2,7     | 2,5  | 3,3     | 1,5         | 2       | 2,3   |
| <b>2000</b>      | 7,6     | 8,9    | 4,7    | 6,9     | 3,7  | 3,2     | 2           | 2,5     | 1,5   |
| <b>2001</b>      | 7       | 7,6    | NA     | 7,3     | 3,9  | 4,6     | 2           | 2,4     | 1,9   |
| <b>2002</b>      | 6,6     | 7,9    | NA     | 5,5     | 4,6  | 5,1     | 2,6         | 2,1     | 2,0   |
| <b>2003</b>      | 4,1     | 7      | NA     | 4       | 4,9  | 6,1     | 2,4         | 1,9     | 2,0   |
| <b>2004</b>      | NA      | 5,9    | NA     | 4       | 5,1  | 5,5     | 2,4         | 1,9     | 2,3   |
|                  |         |        |        |         |      |         |             |         |       |
| <b>1996-2000</b> | 9,18    | 7,14   | 3,96   | 3,92    | 2,58 | 2,66    | 1,56        | 1,64    | 1,96  |
| <b>2001-2004</b> | 5,89    | 7,09   |        | 5,18    | 4,62 | 5,3     | 2,35        | 2,09    | 2,04  |

Sources: SOPEMI 2006, Spanish Immigration Yearbook, several years. Own elaboration.

\*Naturalization rate computed as number acquisitions of citizenship over total permits the previous year.

However, leaving aside the roads to citizenship available to persons born in Spain to foreign parents, the general rule of 10-years of previous residence for naturalization co-exists with a second and privileged regime that lowers the length of the legal residence requirement from 10 to only 2 years. This regime applies only to nationals from Latin-American countries, Philippines, Portugal and Sephardic people, and it is clearly reflected in the variation of the naturalization rate across groups of origin in recent years, as can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Naturalisation rates by groups of origin, Spain 2004-2008**

|                  | <b>Total</b> | <b>EU</b> | <b>Other Europeans</b> | <b>Africa</b> | <b>America</b> | <b>Asia</b> | <b>Oceania</b> | <b>Stateless + unknown</b> |
|------------------|--------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>2003</b>      | 2.33         | 0.28      | 0.89                   | 2.31          | 4.59           | 1.70        | 0.00           | 3.73                       |
| <b>2004</b>      | 2.17         | 0.19      | 0.80                   | 1.48          | 4.78           | 1.41        | 0.00           | 4.08                       |
| <b>2005</b>      | 2.28         | 0.13      | 0.70                   | 1.17          | 5.08           | 1.16        | 0.00           | 0.00                       |
| <b>2006</b>      | 2.38         | 0.12      | 0.67                   | 1.46          | 5.30           | 1.12        | 0.00           | 0.00                       |
| <b>2007</b>      | 2.12         | 0.09      | 0.66                   | 1.33          | 5.54           | 0.99        | 0.00           | 0.00                       |
| <b>2004-2008</b> | 2.24         | 0.14      | 0.72                   | 1.49          | 5.16           | 1.22        | 0.00           | 1.49                       |

Source: Spanish Immigration Yearbook, several years. Own elaboration.

\*Naturalization rate computed as number acquisitions of citizenship over total permits the previous year.

Clearly, in the period between 2004 and 2008, the naturalization rate of Latin-Americans was more than double the average naturalization rate in Spain, five times more than EU citizens, about four times more than Asians and approximately three times more than Africans, in spite of the longer settlement of the latest group in Spain in comparison to most immigrants from Latin American countries.

These differences are hardly surprising if one takes into account not only the enormous privilege that the 2-years rule implies, but also the fact that such a privileged regime is additionally reinforced by the recognition of the possibility of double citizenship to nationals from most Latin American countries. In fact, Spain has signed so far 11 double citizenship agreements, and all of them are with Latin American countries: Argentina (1969), Bolivia (1961), Chile (1958), Colombia (1980), Costa Rica (1964), Ecuador (1964), Honduras (1966), Nicaragua (1961), Paraguay (1959), Peru (1959) and Dominican Republic (1968). Thus, even when these countries do not allow for double citizenship as a general rule, they make an exception if the new citizenship applied for is the Spanish one. On the other hand, even though Spain has not signed a specific bilateral agreement with either Portugal or the Philippines for the recognition of the double citizenship possibility, both countries recognize double citizenship to their nationals since 1981 and 2003, respectively, which is the most relevant situation in this regard<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, in addition to these the 2-years privileged regime, there are also two other important exceptions to the general rule of 10-years of residence: naturalization by marriage with a Spanish citizen, which requires only 1 year of residence in Spain after the marriage, and naturalization of foreigners with refugee status, who are required only 5 years of legal

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<sup>7</sup> There many receiving countries that require foreigners who want to naturalize to renounce to their other(s) nationality. However, we know that there are virtually no means to avoid for these new citizens to keep the passport of their country of origin and to use it when they go back to their countries of birth, as indeed many do.

residence<sup>8</sup>. The actual effects of all these exceptions are reflected in Table 3, which summarizes the procedure for citizenship acquisition followed by foreigners who were granted the Spanish nationality in 2009.

**Table 3. Citizenship acquisition by region of origin & procedure, 2009 (row percentages)**

|                      | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>2 years</b> | <b>10 years</b> | <b>Born in Spain</b> | <b>Married to a Spaniard</b> | <b>Spanish descendant</b> | <b>Others</b> |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>EU</b>            | 1,062        | 33.7           | 15.6            | 15.8                 | 33.3                         | 0.8                       | 0.7           |
| <b>Rest Europe</b>   | 648          | 0.8            | 28.4            | 11.3                 | 55.0                         | 0.3                       | 4.2           |
| <b>África</b>        | 8,816        | 3.5            | 48.0            | 33.2                 | 14.5                         | 0.2                       | 0.6           |
| <b>Latin America</b> | 67,243       | 88.3           | 0.2             | 0.3                  | 10.0                         | 1.0                       | 0.1           |
| <b>North America</b> | 77           | 5.2            | 31.2            | 5.2                  | 55.8                         | 2.6                       | 0.0           |
| <b>Asia</b>          | 1,692        | 22.5           | 37.8            | 21.2                 | 16.4                         | 0.3                       | 1.7           |
| <b>Oceania</b>       | 15           | 20.0           | 26.7            | 0.0                  | 53.3                         | 0.0                       | 0.0           |
| <b>Stateless/NA</b>  | 25           | 5.9            | 17.6            | 52.9                 | 5.9                          | 0.0                       | 17.6          |
| <b>Total</b>         | 79,597       | 76.0           | 6.8             | 4.7                  | 11.4                         | 0.9                       | 0.3           |

Source: Immigration Yearbook, 2010.

Most of naturalized African migrants applied for citizenship after having completed their 10 years of previous legal residence in Spain (48 percent) or as people born in Spain (33 percent), which clearly reflects the longer settlement of this group (mainly Moroccans rather than the newer Sub-Saharan flows) in comparison to the rest. In contrast, most of the EU citizens who acquired Spanish nationality in 2009 did so on the basis of either marriage with a Spanish citizen (33 percent) or through the shortened procedure of 2-years of previous residence (34 percent), which implies they were Portuguese immigrants, the only ones within the EU group that can benefit from the privileged regime, as we mentioned before (the same exceptionality explains the 22 percent among Asians in the column ‘2 years’, who are Philippines). Finally, most Latin-Americans naturalized through the shortened procedure of 2-years of residence (88 percent), as expected, and only a residual 10 percent in this group naturalized by marriage, in spite of the high numbers of mixed marriages between Spanish and Latin American spouses (much larger than for any other origin group)<sup>9</sup>.

All in all, it is apparent that both Spanish immigration and citizenship laws substantially alter the set of incentives that naturalization entails for different groups of origin. This is even more the case due to the absence of a regulated integration test in the naturalization procedure, which

<sup>8</sup> In addition, since 2008, Memoria Histórica Law granted the possibility to apply for Spanish citizenship to first and second generation of descendants of Spaniards. However, since our analyses will restrict to people who were in Spain in 2007, this possibility was not still available to them.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Spanish Vital Statistics (INE), since 2000, approximately 2/3 of the total number of mixed marriages (i.e. between a Spanish-born and a foreigner) celebrated in Spain involved a Latin-American spouse (75 percent among Spanish men and 53 percent among Spanish women).

in many occasions boils down to a matter of proving the previous length of legal residence, the availability of resources and the lack of criminal record. Indeed, the Spanish Citizenship Law establishes that the applicant must prove good civic behaviour and sufficient integration into the Spanish society. However, the decision about whether the applicant fulfils or not these additional requirements is taken by each particular judge on a case-by-case basis and it seems that the investigation commonly limit to a non-standard test of Spanish speaking fluency<sup>1011</sup>.

#### **4. Hypotheses**

Given the legal asymmetries described in the previous sections, we expect the highest naturalization propensity among foreigners who enjoy the privileged citizenship regime (PRIVI), since naturalization entails in their case substantial benefits such as shortening the period of time they are at risk of becoming irregular (or at least bothered by the periodical need of renewing their permits), without having to face the additional costs that would derive from losing their nationality of origin, as it happens to most of foreigners under the 10-years general rule (NON-PRIVI) due to the existence of double citizenship agreements with their home countries. In contrast, EU citizens are expected to show the lowest risk of naturalizing since acquisition of the Spanish citizenship will make a very marginal difference in their life chances, either in legal or economic terms. In fact, the decision to naturalize of EU citizens in Spain is difficult to be understood away from emotional reasons. On the one hand, the Spanish citizenship will only add the possibility to vote in national and regional elections (EU citizens are recognized the right to vote in local and European elections) as a visible right that directly derives from becoming a Spanish citizen. On the other, most EU citizens in Spain with the exception of Romanians and Bulgarians recently and, to some extent, Portugueses in the past, are generally perceived as ‘rich immigrants’ and, therefore, they rarely suffer from the social stigma frequently attached to the status of immigrant, which in some cases has been hypothesized as a powerful trigger for naturalization.

Obviously, differences across these three groups should be observed not only on their propensity to naturalize but also on the pace of naturalization, with PRIVI immigrants acquiring the Spanish citizenship earlier than the rest, as long as naturalization by marriage does not

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<sup>10</sup> The Supreme Court stated that ‘not being able to either write or read Spanish’ (Judgment 12th May 2005 - Rec.7211/2001) does not prevent the possibility that someone is sufficiently integrated into the Spanish society, but only ‘an absolute lack of knowledge of Spanish’ (Judgments 29th October 2004 and 9th April 2007).

<sup>11</sup> The media recently echoed some complaints about the abuses that some judges who took a Spanish History exam to some applicants (not all of them), which most native-born Spanish will not ever pass.

distort the overall distribution (remind that foreigners who marry a Spanish citizens are allowed to apply for naturalization only year after marriage).

**H1.** PRIVI immigrants are expected to naturalize more and quicker than NON-PRIVI (ref. group) and especially than EU citizens, due to the different set of cost and benefits at work for each of them.

Apart from these variations in the level and pace of naturalization across the three groups (EU, PRIVI and NON-PRIVI), we also expect that such a different set of incentives affect the determinants of naturalization at the individual, family and community level.

The extraordinarily short time of residence that PRIVI foreigners need to prove to apply for naturalization leads us to expect a weaker selectivity in terms of structural integration among the naturalized PRIVI than among the naturalized NON-PRIVI<sup>12</sup>. Accordingly, we expect that the positive effect from education (obtained either at origin or in Spain), house ownership, labour and residential stability on the propensity to naturalize to be significantly weaker for PRIVI and, to some extent, also for EU citizens, in comparison to the NON-PRIVI immigrants.

**H2.** Selection into naturalization is expected to be stronger among the NON-PRIVI immigrants than for immigrants in the two other groups.

In addition, in line with previous studies in this area, we expect for immigrants who came to Spain as refugees and, especially, those who came for family reasons to be more likely to naturalize than economic migrants, in accordance with their more permanent stay intentions. However, and regardless of their reasons to migrate, the pioneers within each group (i.e. those who come first, not following their contacts with other migrants who preceded them in migration to Spain) are expected to be more likely to naturalize, which would mirror their more intense selectivity on risk attitudes, ambition and other unobservable characteristics.

**H3.** Immigrants who came to for family reasons are more likely to naturalize than those who came for exclusively for economic reasons, since they probably had a stronger intention to stay permanently in Spain and, to some extent, also better integrated into the host society through their family and social networks. Refugees

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<sup>12</sup> Note that our data do not inform us about who applies but only who is granted Spanish citizenship. However, to the extent the idea that judges have generally not been very demanding when judging the sufficient degree of integration of applicants into the Spanish society (beyond a basic fluency in Spanish, which is anyhow not a problem for Latin Americans) beyond the residence requirement, selection into the pool of applicants and the group of finally naturalized citizens should not differ substantially.

Although previous studies in the field have hypothesized that a married immigrant is more likely to naturalize than a single person because such a person lives in a more stable environment and also because families have more extensive contacts with host country institutions, thereby making it easier to integrate (Yang 1994), we argue that the effect of marriage are mostly conditional on the timing of marriage and the characteristics of the spouse. Namely, we expect that marrying another foreign immigrant will probably lower the likelihood to naturalize, whereas marrying a Spaniard will increase it, in comparison to those who remain single. Marrying a Spaniard is expected to particularly increase the likelihood of naturalization among the NON-PRIVI group, since in their case the 10-years residence requirement for naturalization would be substantially shortened but not that much for the PRIVI group (only one year shorter than using the rule of 2-years of legal residence).

On the other hand, we expect a strong effect of one spouse's naturalization on the risk to naturalize of the other spouse. First of all, in most cases spouses in immigrant couples are from the same country of origin and arrived to Spain almost simultaneously<sup>13</sup>, which implies they will both qualify for naturalization on the basis of the length of their previous residence in the country approximately at the same time. Since the whole procedure takes approximately two years since application was filed, and applicants need to meet not only the residence requirement but also to prove sufficient economic resources, both at the time of application and at the moment when the application is dealt with by the judge, it makes sense to expect that immigrant couples interested in obtaining the Spanish citizenship for at least one of the spouses try to maximize their chances by submitting two applications, one for each spouse, as long as both meet the legal requirements to do it. By doing so, they assure they would have not wasted their waiting time if, for instance, one of the applications is rejected because by the time it is being processed the applicant was unemployed and could not demonstrate enough economic resources. In addition, the fact that both spouses generally share the same nationality implies that they will both face the same structure of cost and incentives to naturalize, and once that one has decided to apply for the Spanish citizenship, the other will have exactly the same reasons to do it.

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<sup>13</sup> On the one hand, for couples formed in the countries of origin, the process of spouses' reunification in Spain has been extraordinarily rapid. As González-Ferrer (2011a, 2011b) has demonstrated, approximately 2/3 of these couples have reunified in Spain in less than two years since the first-mover's arrival (in most cases practicing 'de fact' reunification). On the other, couples where the spouses met and married during their stay in Spain, the spousal difference in years since migration is also small as a result of the still relatively small size of the second generation and the also small spousal age differential, in most cases.

**H4.** Marriage with another immigrant, who has not naturalized yet, is expected to decrease the own risk to naturalize, in comparison to those who remain single. In contrast, marriage with a Spaniard, especially in the case of NON-PRIVI, and naturalization of the spouse is expected to have a strong and positive effect on the propensity to naturalize.

In the Spanish context, it is not easy to formulate a clear hypothesis about the potential effect of children on their parents' decisions to naturalize. First of all, the family reunification procedure has been so far much easier and quicker than any of the available naturalization procedures, especially due to the possibility to reunify de facto and legalise the situation ex-post. As a result, the presence of children in Spain does not necessarily means a more definitive intention to stay or, at least, not as much as in other immigration contexts. And for the same reasons, a large number of children in the home country would not necessarily enhance the incentives to naturalize as a way of bringing them to Spain, since there are cheaper alternative routes to achieve the same goal, as we already mentioned.

In any case, once whatever the effect of children's reunification is controlled for, we expect that more frequent contacts with relatives and acquaintances left behind will indicate a less permanent orientation towards the host country and, consequently, a lower propensity to naturalize.

**H5.** The more contacts immigrants have with their relatives and acquaintances in their home country, the less likely for them to naturalize.

Finally, immigrants from the same origin are expected to face some shared costs in their decision to naturalize. First of all, immigrants from the same nationality share the same possibilities with regard to the recognition of dual citizenship in their country of origin, which is expected to be positively related naturalization at destination. Moreover, they are likely to share similar feelings regarding the symbolic cost of naturalizing Spanish, depending on how nationalistic they are as a group. Accordingly, what the similar others do in this domain is likely to strongly influence the naturalization individual behaviour. The larger the number of co-nationals who have already naturalized, the smaller the potential social punishment coming for one's own community of origin and the smaller also the informational cost about the requirements and the bureaucratic procedure to apply. This diffusion effect is however expected to be weaker among the PRIVI group and the EU citizens to the extent that both the informational and the symbolic cost of acquiring Spanish nationality is likely to be lower for them compared to the immigrants in the NON-PRIVI group.

**H6.** Immigrants whose country of origin allows dual citizenship are expected to naturalize more than others, especially if they are NON-PRIVI since the most difficult naturalization is, the more costly to lose one's nationality of origin, at least in symbolic terms.

**H7.** The larger the number of co-nationals who have previously naturalized in Spain, the lower the informational and symbolic cost of doing it, especially for the NON-PRIVI people.

## **5. Data and Method**

### **5.1. National Immigrants Survey**

The National Immigrants Survey (NIS2007) is a representative survey that collects information about the migration and settlement experience of nearly 15,500 foreign-born people, aged 16 or more, who lived in Spain in 2007, regardless of their legal status. Apart from its large sample size and representativeness, NIS has the advantage of also including a considerable amount of retrospective information on the interviewees and their closest relatives. This information is highly valuable because it allows us to reconstruct the naturalization process in some detail.

Furthermore we can measure the time between arrival and naturalisation and apply duration analyses. But the dataset has also some important limitations to study the naturalization decisions of foreigners in Spain. First, we cannot reconstruct the complete legal trajectories of individuals because we only know the date when naturalized migrants obtained the Spanish citizenship (but not the date of application); and because the questionnaire only collected information on legal status at the time of the survey, but not in previous years. These two limitations prevent us to precisely measure the relationship between eligibility and propensity to apply for naturalisation, the actual procedure chosen to naturalize, and the time between arrival and application. In addition, we cannot completely avoid some biases that may derive from utilising current characteristics of the individuals instead of their characteristics at the time of application.

Secondly, unfortunately we lack of the variable 'nationality at the time of arrival in Spain'. As a result, for those who are were not Spanish at birth, we have to assume that their nationality at birth was: i) the current one if they have not naturalized or ii) the citizenship of their country of birth if they have obtained the Spanish citizenship and do not keep any other nationality, or iii) the any other nationality they declare to hold besides the Spanish one at the time of the survey. Furthermore, NIS2007 includes no info available on actual motivations to naturalise and, finally, it lacks of any indicators on more subjective or identificational integration (attachment to the host/origin country, ethnic self-identification, political orientations, etc.)

By combining the information on date of migration, current citizenship(s), date of acquisition of Spanish citizenship, date of marriage, citizenship of the spouse and, eventually, the date of acquisition of it, we have classified foreign-born according to the following typology: non-naturalized, Spanish at birth and naturalized. Additionally, the naturalized group has been divided into three further groups according to their parents' place of birth (Spain or other) and the moment when they naturalized (before or after migrating to Spain).

After eliminating from the original sample of NIS2007 (15,465 individuals), all those cases with missing information about their year of birth, date of arrival to Spain, Spanish citizenship or date of acquisition of Spanish citizenship, we were left with 14,717 foreign-born individuals. As Table 4 summarizes, 10 percent of them were Spanish at birth, an additional 1 percent had naturalized before coming to Spain and 3 percent naturalized after but were children of at least one parent born in Spain. We eliminated from our analyses all these three categories of foreign-born people since the process of Spanish citizenship acquisition in these cases cannot be considered as equivalent to that of the rest of foreign-born immigrants. Our final sample for the analysis is of 12,589 individuals.

Considering the different legal regimes and naturalisation rules we have classified our sample in 3 different groups for which we will run separated regressions. We distinguish EU citizens (EU27), including Romanians and Bulgarians who had become EU members in January 2007<sup>14</sup>, from immigrants who only need 2 years of residence to be eligible for citizenship excluding the Portuguese (PRIVI) and from nationals from countries ruled by the 10 years of residence criteria (NON-PRIVI). To classify the immigrants we have considered their current citizenship when they have not naturalised, or their country of birth when they have naturalised and do not declare any additional citizenship (or this additional citizenship if there is one)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> It could be argued that these two groups were not EU citizens and could not benefit from the legal privileges derived from such status up to 2007, that is our whole period of observation. However, it has been repeatedly shown that most Romanians conceived their migration plan from a quite sure expectation of becoming EU citizens rather sooner than later.

<sup>15</sup> Note that for some groups like immigrants from Argentina is relatively common to hold an EU citizenship (Italian one in the case of most Argentineans), apart from the citizenship of their country of birth. It is then necessary to classify people according to their citizenship instead of their country of birth in order to correctly determine the legal regime applicable to them and that shapes the actual strength of the general incentives for naturalization.

**Table.3. Sample description by applicable legal regime (row percentages & sample size)**

|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>EU27</b>  | <b>PRIVI&amp;<br/>NO EU27</b> | <b>NO PRIVI<br/>&amp; NO<br/>EU27</b> |
|---|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| N° of individuals                           | 100<br>14,717 | 38<br>5,640  | 35<br>5,190                   | 26<br>3,887                           |
| N° of selected individuals for the analysis | 100<br>12,589 | 36<br>4,513  | 37<br>4,656                   | 27<br>3,420                           |
| N° of person-years for the analysis         | 100<br>73,686 | 33<br>23,957 | 37<br>26,962                  | 31<br>22,767                          |

Source: NIS2007. Non weighted.

## 5.2. Methods

As we mentioned earlier, the primary aim is to study the process of naturalizing in time, not just changes in citizenship status from one point in time to another, and to be able to establish reliable causal relationships between the selected covariates and the outcome of interest, which clearly requires duration models. Accordingly, in order to examine the pace of the citizenship acquisition process in Spain and its variations by legal regime, the dataset was expanded into person-year format, immigrants who were still foreigners at the time of the survey (2007) are treated as censored, and pseudo-survival functions were computed (Blossfeld and Rohwer 1995). Next, we performed a multivariate discrete time event history model, in which again we model the process of Spanish nationality acquisition as a function of a set of explanatory variables. These event history analyses were specified as a logistic regression (Yamaguchi 1991):

$$\ln[P_{ij} / (1-P_{ij})] = \alpha + \beta' X_{ij}$$

In which P is the probability of individual i to acquire the Spanish nationality by observation (year) j.  $\alpha$  is a constant term,  $X_{ij}$  is a vector of explanatory variables and  $\beta$  denotes the value of the estimated coefficients of the model for each variable. In addition, we estimated robust standard errors by clustering by individuals' nationality of origin. We decided not to run a multilevel model because we are not intrinsically interested in the conditional effects by nationality of origin (group of origin) but just want to take into account the correlation between random effects (error terms) and correct it in a way that it does not affect the reliability of our estimated coefficients of the determinants of the individuals' decision to naturalize, and the potential differences in these determinants across the three defined groups for which we will run separated models.

A large set of variables are used to test the main hypotheses formulated in the previous section, including both time varying and time constant individual characteristics as well as some characteristic of the co-national community in Spain and the information about whether the country of origin allows double citizenship to their nationals or not. See Table 4 for a detailed description of the variables included in the models and how they have been computed.

**Table 4. Covariates included in the discrete-time event history models for naturalization**

| Variables                             | Type | Response Categories   | Explanations  |
|---------------------------------------|------|---|---|
| <b>LEGAL REGIMES</b>                  |      |   |   |
| <b>EU citizen</b>                     |      | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   | Defined according to the current/previous citizenship instead of country of birth <sup>16</sup> .   |
| <b>Privileged</b>                     |      | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   | Defined according to the current/previous citizenship instead of country of birth   |
| <b>TIME CONTROLS</b>                  |      |   |   |
| <b>Time of residence</b>              | Tv   | 0-5 years of residence (ref. categ.)<br>6-10 years of residence<br>11-15 years of residence<br>>15 years of residence | It measures total time of residence, without distinguishing whether the immig. was documented or not  |
| <b>Migration arrival cohort</b>       |      | Before 1992 (ref. categ.)<br>1992-1999<br>2000-2007   |   |
| <b>Age at migration</b>               |      |   |   |
| <b>FAMILY STATUS</b>                  |      |   |   |
| <b>Sex</b>                            |      | Men (ref. categ.)<br>Woman  |   |
| <b>Marriage</b>                       | Tv   | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   | It refers to legal marriage, not cohabitation   |
| <b>Marriage to a Spanish-born*</b>    | Tv   | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes (since 2 years after marriage)  | Marriage with a Spaniard is expected to have a observable effect on the foreign spouse's naturalization only 1.5/2 years after because law requires to prove at least 1 year of residence in Spain since date of marriage   |
| <b>Naturalization of the partner*</b> | Tv   | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes (since 2 years after spouse's naturalization)   | Naturalization of the spouse is expected to have a observable effect on the other spouse's naturalization only 1.5/2 years after because law requires to prove at least 1 year of residence in Spain since date of marriage |
| <b>Nº of children in Spain</b>        | Tv   |   | Includes children of all ages   |

<sup>16</sup> Note that for some groups like immigrants from Argentina, for example, is relatively common to hold an EU citizenship (Italian one in the case of most Argentinians) apart from the citizenship of their country of birth. It is then necessary to classify people according to their citizenship instead of their country of birth in order to correctly determine the legal regime applicable to them and that shapes the actual strength of the general incentives for naturalization.

|  |    |   |  |
|--|----|---|--|
| <b>N° of children living abroad</b>  | Tv |   | Includes children of all ages  |
| <b>MIGRATION TRAJECTORY</b>  |    |   |  |
| <b>Reason for migration</b>  |    | Economic (ref. categ.)<br>Family<br>Ec. & Family<br>Others  |  |
| <b>Pioneer</b>   |    | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   | Q: 'Did an acquaintance from your country of birth who had already emigrated to Spain influence your decision to come to Spain?' |
| <b>STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION</b>  |    |   |  |
| <b>Education</b>   |    | Illiterate (ref. categ)<br>Without studies<br>Primary<br>More than Primary<br>More than secondary |  |
| <b>Ever studied in Spain</b>   |    | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   |  |
| <b>Type of first job contract in Spain</b>   | Tc | Temporary (ref. categ.)<br>Permanent<br>Not working   |  |
| <b>Housing ownership</b>   | Tv | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   |  |
| <b>N° of municipalities where the individual has lived in since arrival in Spain</b> | Tv |   |  |
| <b>CO-ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN SPAIN</b>  |    |   |  |
| <b>Contact with country of origin</b>  |    | Less (ref. categ.)<br>Once every 2 weeks or more  | Frequency of contact with family and friends in country of origin  |
| <b>Dual citizenship</b>  |    | No (ref. categ.)<br>Yes   | Refers to dual citizenship allowed in the country where the immigrant was national from before naturalizing                      |
| <b>% co-nationals naturalized (squared)</b>  | Tv | N° of co-nationals in Spain who had already naturalized   | Constructed with NIS2007 data  |

## 6. Results & Discussion

The rate of naturalization significantly varies by legal regime. On average, the rate of naturalization among foreign-born immigrants with no parent born in Spain was 14 percent in 2007. In line with our expectations, this rate substantially varies across the three groups we previously defined: while foreign-born with nationality from one of the EU27 rarely naturalized (only 9 percent of total), the rate increases up to 14 percent among the non-privileged immigrants, who are also subjected to the general rule of 10 years of legal residence but suffer from a much more demanding immigration regime than EU citizens, and to 20 percent among the privileged ones (mostly Latinos) (see Table 5).

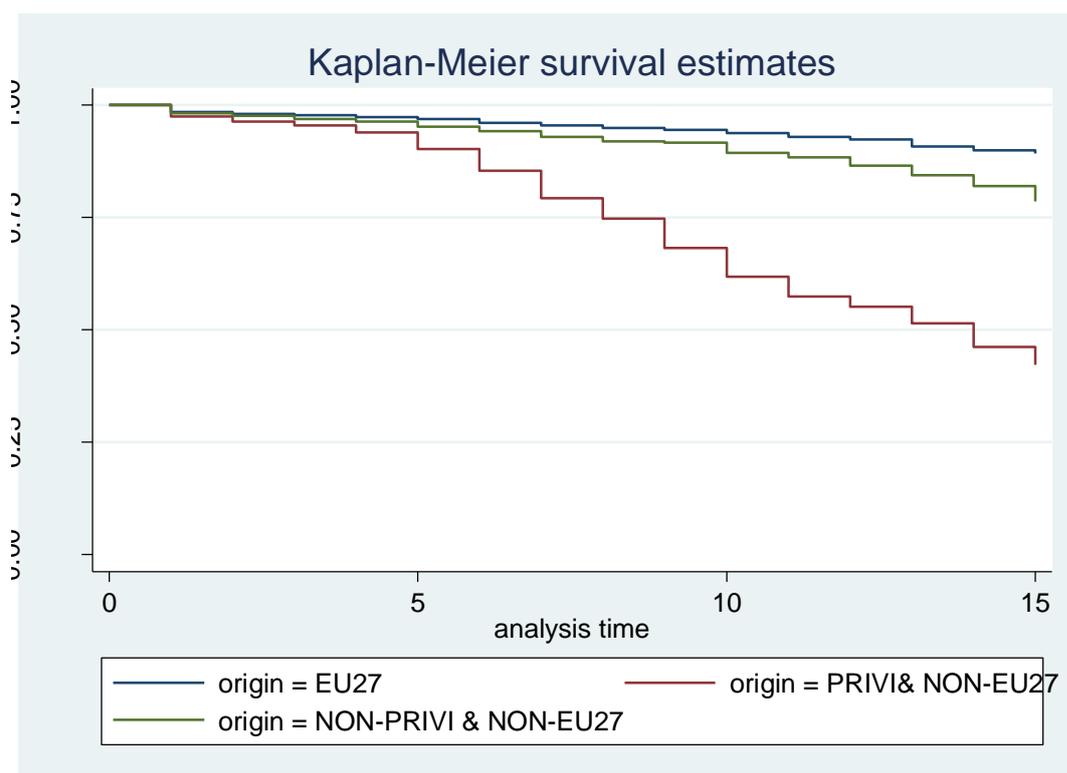
**Table 5. Rate of Naturalisation by legal regime (column percentages).**

|  | <b>Total</b> | <b>EU27</b> | <b>PRIVI<br/>&amp; NO EU27</b> | <b>NO PRIVI<br/>&amp; NO EU27</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>(1) Non naturalized</b>   | 73<br>10781  | 73<br>4113  | 72<br>3731                     | 76<br>2937                        |
| <b>(2) Spanish at birth</b>  | 10<br>1507   | 15<br>859   | 6<br>301                       | 9<br>347                          |
| <b>(3) Naturalized before arrival to Spain</b>                             | 1<br>165     | 1<br>32     | 2<br>83                        | 1<br>50                           |
| <b>(4) Naturalized after arrival but at least one parent born in Spain</b> | 3<br>456     | 4<br>236    | 3<br>150                       | 2<br>70                           |
| <b>(5) Naturalized after arrival with two foreign-born parents</b>         | 12<br>1808   | 7<br>400    | 18<br>925                      | 12<br>483                         |
| <b>(6) Total</b>   | 100<br>14717 | 100<br>5640 | 100<br>5190                    | 100<br>3887                       |
| <b>Rate of Naturalization [5/(1+5)]</b>                                    | 14 %         | 9 %         | 20 %                           | 14 %                              |

Source: NIS2007. Non weighted.

However, these rates are calculated without taking into account the length of time that individuals have been at risk of naturalizing, which may result in serious underestimation of the actual differences in naturalization incidence since, as we have previously said, the largest national group among the NON-PRIVI –Moroccans- is one of the oldest immigrant communities in Spain, whereas the large majority of the PRIVI immigrants have arrived quite recently to the country. In fact, once the time dimension is also considered, the differences across groups remain and become reinforced, as survival curves in Figure 2 show. While approximately 30 percent of the immigrants in the PRIVI group (Latinos plus Philippines, mainly) had already naturalized after 10 years of residence (not necessarily legal), virtually nobody (approximately 5 percent) had naturalized in both the NON-PRIVI and the UE groups by that time.

**Figure 2. Pace of naturalisation by legal regime (survival functions)**



Note: risk time starts one year after arrival in Spain.

It seems, therefore, that our first hypothesis is strongly supported by our data (PRIVI immigrants do naturalize more and quicker than NON-PRIVI and especially than EU citizens). However, we cannot discard yet the possibility that the observed differences in the incidence of naturalization across the three groups are due to composition effects. In order to examine this possibility further, and to examine potential differences in the determinants of naturalization related to the existence of different legal regimes, we run discrete time logistic regression for the whole sample and for each of the three groups, whose results are summarized in Table 6.

As the coefficients for the variable PRIVI and EU27 clearly suggest, the differences observed in the survival functions in Figure 2 are not due to differences in socio-economic characteristics and integration levels across the three groups, but they remain large and significant even after controlling for differences in many other individual and group dimensions. In fact, the positive effect of the PRIVI regime does not disappear even after controlling for individual, family and community characteristics, among which we included also whether the country of origin allows double citizenship for their nationals or not. To put it differently, it seems from our results that the main reason why Latinos in Spain naturalize more and quicker than the rest of foreigners has to do with the very privileged regime that the Spanish legislation offers them in this regard, rather than with the fact that they are all generally allowed to hold double citizenship.

**Table 6. Determinants of immigrants' naturalization in Spain (discrete time logistic regression). Coefficients and t-statistic**

|  | ALL   | EU27                            | PRIVI<br>& NO EU27               | NO PRIVI<br>& NO EU27           |
|--|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Ref. 0-5 ysm</b>                      |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>6-10 ysm</b>                          | 1.483 <sup>***</sup><br>(12.31)               | 0.644 <sup>***</sup><br>(6.89)  | 1.708 <sup>***</sup><br>(13.65)  | 1.422 <sup>***</sup><br>(7.79)  |
| <b>11-15 ysm</b>                         | 2.271 <sup>***</sup><br>(12.94)               | 1.098 <sup>***</sup><br>(5.96)  | 2.597 <sup>***</sup><br>(14.72)  | 2.762 <sup>***</sup><br>(7.71)  |
| <b>+ 15 ysm</b>                          | 2.653 <sup>***</sup><br>(8.99)                | 1.351 <sup>***</sup><br>(7.15)  | 3.022 <sup>***</sup><br>(13.90)  | 3.459 <sup>***</sup><br>(5.28)  |
| <b>EU27</b>                              | <b>-1.871<sup>***</sup></b><br><b>(-5.34)</b> |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>PRIVILEGED</b>                        | <b>0.742<sup>*</sup></b><br><b>(2.24)</b>     | <b>0.383</b><br><b>(1.09)</b>   |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Ref. no</b>                           |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Dual Citizenship allowed</b>          | 0.364<br>(0.86)                               | -0.137<br>(-0.37)               | -0.102<br>(-0.41)                | 1.481<br>(1.10)                 |
| <b>% naturalized co-ethnics</b>          | 4.880 <sup>***</sup><br>(3.04)                | -0.421<br>(-0.18)               | 2.656 <sup>*</sup><br>(2.39)     | 11.61 <sup>**</sup><br>(2.69)   |
| <b>% naturalized co-ethnics squared</b>  | -1.636<br>(-1.04)                             | 4.223<br>(1.58)                 | -0.488<br>(-0.42)                | -5.730<br>(-1.10)               |
| <b>Agemig</b>                            | -0.0868 <sup>***</sup><br>(-4.12)             | -0.0886 <sup>*</sup><br>(-2.06) | -0.110 <sup>***</sup><br>(-5.18) | -0.0685 <sup>*</sup><br>(-2.52) |
| <b>Agemig2</b>                           | 0.00114 <sup>***</sup><br>(4.13)              | 0.000497<br>(1.03)              | 0.00160 <sup>***</sup><br>(7.37) | 0.000776<br>(1.93)              |
| <b>Ref. before 1992</b>                  |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Cohort 1992-99</b>                    | -0.159<br>(-0.88)                             | -0.0667<br>(-0.13)              | -0.311<br>(-1.27)                | 0.160<br>(0.36)                 |
| <b>Cohort 2000-07</b>                    | -0.833 <sup>***</sup><br>(-4.96)              | -0.571<br>(-1.17)               | -1.173 <sup>***</sup><br>(-5.87) | 0.100<br>(0.20)                 |
| <b>Ref. man</b>                          |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Sex</b>                               | 0.122<br>(1.17)                               | -0.446 <sup>*</sup><br>(-2.28)  | 0.204<br>(1.52)                  | 0.0668<br>(0.52)                |
| <b>Ref. single</b>                       |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Marriage with another immig.</b>      | -0.623 <sup>***</sup><br>(-6.22)              | -1.161 <sup>**</sup><br>(-2.77) | -0.473 <sup>**</sup><br>(-2.66)  | -0.383 <sup>**</sup><br>(-3.16) |
| <b>Ref. single</b>                       |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Marriage with a Spanish born</b>      | 0.605 <sup>***</sup><br>(5.13)                | 0.989<br>(1.77)                 | 0.678 <sup>***</sup><br>(6.25)   | 0.351<br>(1.27)                 |
| <b>Ref. spouse not naturalized</b>       |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Naturalization of the spouse</b>      | 1.204 <sup>***</sup><br>(3.88)                | 4.016 <sup>***</sup><br>(6.45)  | 0.789 <sup>*</sup><br>(2.21)     | 1.231 <sup>***</sup><br>(3.50)  |
| <b>N° children in Spain</b>              | -0.00233<br>(-0.04)                           | -0.190 <sup>*</sup><br>(-2.36)  | 0.0306<br>(0.29)                 | 0.0353<br>(0.36)                |
| <b>N° children abroad</b>                | 0.0226<br>(0.38)                              | 0.283<br>(1.87)                 | -0.105 <sup>*</sup><br>(-2.37)   | 0.241 <sup>**</sup><br>(2.62)   |
| <b>Ref. less than once every 2 weeks</b> |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Contact with home country</b>         | -0.112<br>(-1.23)                             | -0.156<br>(-0.39)               | 0.0599<br>(0.51)                 | -0.338 <sup>*</sup><br>(-2.33)  |
| <b>Ref. Illiterate</b>                   |   |                                 |                                  |                                 |
| <b>Without studies</b>                   | 0.900 <sup>*</sup><br>(2.04)                  | 0.730<br>(0.43)                 | -0.551<br>(-0.88)                | 1.021 <sup>***</sup><br>(3.55)  |

|                                      |           |          |          |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Primary</b>                       | 0.863*    | -0.470   | -0.433   | 1.286*    |
|                                      | (2.15)    | (-0.33)  | (-0.78)  | (2.51)    |
| <b>More than Primary</b>             | 1.154**   | -0.274   | -0.0374  | 1.253***  |
|                                      | (3.00)    | (-0.18)  | (-0.06)  | (3.65)    |
| <b>More than Secondary</b>           | 1.510***  | 0.00388  | 0.376    | 1.562***  |
|                                      | (3.91)    | (0.00)   | (0.57)   | (3.56)    |
| <b>Ref. no</b>                       |           |          |          |           |
| <b>Study in Spain</b>                | 0.178     | 0.434    | 0.146    | -0.0106   |
|                                      | (1.17)    | (1.68)   | (0.69)   | (-0.04)   |
| <b>Ref. Fixed-term contract</b>      |           |          |          |           |
| <b>Permanent contract</b>            | -0.0239   | -1.136   | 0.0977   | 0.0355    |
|                                      | (-0.18)   | (-1.56)  | (0.65)   | (0.18)    |
| <b>Never worked in Spain</b>         | -0.305    | 0.321    | -0.424*  | -0.0983   |
|                                      | (-1.70)   | (1.44)   | (-2.22)  | (-0.46)   |
| <b>Ref. no</b>                       |           |          |          |           |
| <b>N° municipalities where lived</b> | -0.0365   | 0.00994  | -0.0948  | 0.00323   |
|                                      | (-0.98)   | (0.08)   | (-1.89)  | (0.09)    |
| <b>House ownership</b>               | 0.477***  | 0.186    | 0.760*** | 0.324     |
|                                      | (4.78)    | (0.44)   | (5.91)   | (1.33)    |
| <b>Ref. Economic reasons to mig.</b> |           |          |          |           |
| <b>Family</b>                        | 0.328*    | 1.363*** | 0.113    | 0.213     |
|                                      | (2.28)    | (6.65)   | (0.75)   | (0.89)    |
| <b>Both ec. &amp; family</b>         | -0.0153   | 1.043    | -0.0270  | -0.118    |
|                                      | (-0.08)   | (1.75)   | (-0.12)  | (-0.33)   |
| <b>Others</b>                        | -0.0678   | 0.200    | -0.0263  | -0.135    |
|                                      | (-0.63)   | (0.42)   | (-0.20)  | (-0.53)   |
| <b>Ref. no (pioneer)</b>             |           |          |          |           |
| <b>Influenced by others to mig.</b>  | -0.171*   | 0.160    | -0.222** | -0.396*   |
|                                      | (-2.17)   | (0.73)   | (-2.61)  | (-2.34)   |
| <b>Constant</b>                      | -4.283*** | -2.458   | -1.348   | -6.532*** |
|                                      | (-4.80)   | (-1.06)  | (-1.03)  | (-3.95)   |
| <b>Person-Years</b>                  | 73686     | 23957    | 26962    | 22767     |
| <b>Individuals</b>                   | 12,589    | 4,513    | 4,656    | 3,420     |
| <b>pseudo R<sup>2</sup></b>          | 0.383     | 0.311    | 0.398    | 0.415     |

Legend: *t* statistics in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . NIS 2007

Thus, we can conclude from the obtained result that Hypothesis 1 (positive effect of PRIVI regime and negative effect of EU status) is strongly and clearly supported by the data, whereas this is not the case for Hypothesis 6 (positive effect of dual citizenship). In fact, when the effect of allowed dual citizenship at origin is included in the separated models, one can observe that its effect is far from significant and negative for both EU27 and PRIVI immigrants, although its effect is positive and closer to the significance level for the NON-PRIVI ones, as expected. The reason why we hypothesized a stronger positive effect of dual citizenship on the propensity to naturalize of NON-PRIVI immigrants is the same as to expect a stronger positive effect of the proportion of co-nationals who had previously naturalized Spanish: the more costly the host country makes the naturalization process for some individuals (NON-PRIVI group in the Spanish case), the higher the symbolic cost of renouncing to their nationality of origin for these people and, consequently, the stronger the effect of any measure or circumstance that lower

those costs. In the case of the extent of naturalization among the co-national community in Spain, the effects are in line with our expectations and statistically significant: NON-PRIVI immigrants are positively and substantially influenced by the percentage of people who have already naturalized within their own national community in Spain; while the effect of this variable is still positive and significant for the PRIVI group but much smaller in size, and not even significant for EU citizens (Hypothesis 7 supported), which seems to confirm our idea that legal and social contexts that substantially lower the symbolic cost of acquiring the host country nationality do matter, in particular for those groups that are apparently 'less wanted'.

On the other hand, the idea that selection into naturalization would be stronger among the NON-PRIVI immigrants due to the fact that the applicable naturalization regime is particularly lax is only partially confirmed (Hypothesis 2). First of all, in most cases no significant effect of the variables utilised to measure the individuals' level of integration is observed. Neither having studied in Spain, having a permanent job contract before naturalization or the number of different municipalities where the person has lived in Spain since arrival (taken as a proxy of job and residential stability) have a significant effect on the risk to naturalize for any of the three groups. In contrast, being a house owner in Spain, which may indicate both intentions to stay permanently and better economic position, is significantly and positively related to the acquisition of the Spanish nationality by the Latinos, or more generally the PRIVI group but not for the other two, which runs against our expectations. However, education only increases the propensity to naturalize among the NON-PRIVI group but not for either EU citizens or Latinos, which suggests a more positive selection -at least in terms of skills- into naturalization for those who face more demanding requirements to acquire the Spanish nationality.

Finally, once other controls are included, the reasons to migrate that immigrants declared when they were interviewed revealed largely irrelevant to explain their naturalization decisions, against previous evidence in other countries regarding the effect of different admission categories (which do not necessarily coincide with declared reasons to migrate). In contrast, the more positive selection generally assumed for the pioneers (i.e. those who migrate first, without following others who preceded them) remains and increases their propensity to naturalize.

The obtained results also confirm our expectation of coordination of spouses' naturalization decisions, as well as the opposite effects of marriage depending on the spouse's nativity (Hypothesis 4). Marrying another foreign immigrant clearly and significantly reduces the individual's risk to naturalize in comparison to those who remain single, while marrying a Spanish-born person increases it. However, the latter effect only reaches the significance level among the PRIVI group, which partially contradicts our hypothesis about a smaller expected

effect of mixed marriages for this group given the small difference in years of residence required under the privileged regime (2 years) and the naturalization by marriage (only 1 year).

In any case, naturalization clearly comes in couples. As can be seen, the naturalization of one spouse clearly enhances the risk to naturalize of the other one, and very strongly in the case of both EU citizens and NON-PRIVI (approximately four times more than marrying a Spanish-born person). Moreover, this is the case regardless of the number of children and where they live. Indeed, as we anticipated, the effect of number and location of children on parent's naturalization is not easy to interpret. Having children in Spain (or abroad) does not appear as an easy proxy of stay/return intentions. Indeed, the negative effect of children abroad on parents' naturalization is compatible with the no effect of frequency of contacts with relatives and acquaintances in the country of origin among the Latinos, for instance; whereas the opposite happens to the NON-PRIVI group: a positive effect of having children abroad coexists with a negative effect of keeping strong contacts with family and friends in the home country.

In order to make better sense of these results and, especially, of the differences found across the three legal regimes, future versions of this paper will have to explore further both gender and group-level effects, since it may be the case that the observed differences in the effect of children left behind or contacts with the country of origin reflect more or less transnational patterns of migration and settlement that involve opposite conceptions and strategies concerning citizenship and naturalization.

## **7. Concluding remarks**

Our results clearly support the departing point of this paper: legal regimes designed by receiving countries to regulate their immigrants' residency conditions and their access to citizenship are crucial in shaping foreigners' naturalization decisions. In fact, they appear even more crucial than the potential costs attached to naturalization by countries of origin that do not allow, for instance, double citizenship. On the one hand, laws that provide foreigners with a strong legal status upon arrival strongly discourage naturalization, as the EU example confirms. On the other, immigration systems that hamper legal residence but ease naturalization encourage immigrants to 'change flags', even if their settlement intentions are not clearly defined yet.

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