



Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics

**MIGRATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE:  
ANALYZING GENDER RELATION  
IN INTERMARRIAGE, IN SPAIN**

Clara CORTINA  
Thaís GARCÍA PEREIRO  
Albert ESTEVE

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## **Resum**

En aquest article s'analitzen les relacions de gènere, en les parelles mixtes, a partir de la situació d'ocupació dels dos cònjuges, en el context espanyol. Context espanyol que es caracteritza per l'augment de la immigració estrangera i dels matrimonis entre espanyols i estrangers, així com per la difusió del model de parella igualitària. Les parelles formades per immigrants a Espanya, ja siguin matrimonis o unions consensuals, ens parlen de les oportunitats que aquests han pogut trobar tant en el mercat laboral com en el matrimonial i de les formes d'organització i de distribució de rols dels cònjuges.

Emprant dades molt recents de l'Enquesta de Població Activa 2007, hem dut a terme una anàlisi mitjançant un model de regressió multivariable, de la propensió a formar parelles on ambdós cònjuges estiguin ocupats. Els resultats mostren que aquesta propensió varia significativament segons sigui la combinació d'orígens dels cònjuges i prova, especialment, que per a les dones immigrants, la seva propensió de treballar quan el seu marit també ho fa, canvia segons si aquest és o no espanyol.

**Paraules clau.-** Matrimonis mixtes, migració internacional, mercat laboral, model igualitari de parella, Espanya.

## **Resumen**

En este artículo abordamos el análisis de las relaciones de género en las parejas mixtas, a partir de la situación de ocupación de los dos cónyuges, en el contexto español. Éste se caracteriza por el aumento de la inmigración extranjera y de los matrimonios entre españoles y extranjeros, así como por la difusión del modelo de pareja igualitaria. Las parejas formadas por inmigrantes en España, ya sean matrimonios o uniones consensuales, nos hablan de las oportunidades que éstos han podido encontrar tanto en el mercado laboral como en el matrimonial y de las formas de organización y de distribución de roles de los cónyuges.

Usando datos muy recientes de la Encuesta de Población Activa de 2007 hemos llevado a cabo un análisis mediante un modelo de regresión multivariable de la propensión a formar parejas dónde ambos cónyuges estén empleados. Los resultados muestran que esta propensión varía significativamente según sea la combinación de orígenes de los cónyuges y prueba, especialmente, que para las mujeres inmigrantes, su propensión de trabajar cuando su marido también lo hace, cambia según si el marido es o no español.

**Palabras clave.-** Matrimonios mixtos, migración internacional, mercado laboral, modelo igualitario de pareja, España.

## **Abstract**

In this article, we have analysed employment arrangements between spouses as a way to approach gender relations in the particular case of mixed unions and, in the particular Spanish context of increasing presence of international immigrants, increasing intermarriage and wide spreading of dual-earner model of partnerships. The partnerships formed by foreign-born partners in Spain, either marriages or consensual unions, tell us much about their opportunities in both the labour and the marriage market as well as the arrangements and roles settled within the couples.

Using data from 2007 Spanish Labour Force Survey, which allows a much updated analysis, multivariate regression, is applied to analyse the likelihood of different types of unions to be dual or single earner. Results have shown how the likelihood of being dual-earner depends on the birthplace of the partners and report that to foreign-born women, being in union with a Spaniard or a foreign-born does make a difference in her position within the couple and her likelihood to be employed.

**Keywords.-** Intermarriage, international migration, labour market, dual-earner couples, Spain.

## **Résumé**

Cet article approche l'analyse des rapports de genre au sein des couples mixtes à partir de la situation d'occupation des deux conjoints dans le contexte espagnol, caractérisé par une augmentation de l'immigration étrangère et des mariages entre espagnols et étrangers et aussi par une diffusion du modèle égalitaire de couple. Les couples formés par des immigrés en Espagne, qu'il s'agisse de mariages ou d'unions libres, nous renseignent sur les opportunités que ces immigrés ont trouvées dans le marché du travail et du marché matrimonial, aussi bien que sur les formes d'organisation et de répartition des rôles entre les époux.

Utilisant les données récentes de l'Enquête sur les forces de travail 2007, nous avons utilisé un modèle de régression multi variable de la propension à former des couples où les deux conjoints travaillent. Les résultats montrent que cette propension varie considérablement en fonction de la composition des origines de l'époux et signalent, en particulier, que pour les femmes immigrées, leur propension à travailler lorsque son mari le fait aussi, dépend en bonne mesure du fait que ce mari soit ou pas espagnol.

**Mots clés.-** Mariages mixtes, migration internationale, marché du travail, modèle de couple égalitaire, Espagne.

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**MIGRATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE:  
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**Clara CORTINA<sup>2</sup>**

clara.cortina@cchs.csic.es

**Thaís GARCÍA PEREIRO<sup>3</sup>**

tgarcia@ced.uab.es

**Albert ESTEVE<sup>4</sup>**

aesteve@ced.uab.es

## **1.- Introduction**

The increase of international migration in Spain has influenced the main demographic trends in this country. Its impact on fertility and residential mobility has been outlined by several analyses (Roig Vila, Castro Martín 2007; Recaño 2004). The effects on partnership formation are less clear though. Nuptiality patterns were already undergoing severe changes when the international migration flows intensified in Spain. In a context of always fewer and later marriages and increasing divorce and cohabitation, the entrance of new potential partners -via immigration- might have had a dynamizing effect on the Spanish marriage market. Spanish marriage records reveal the important increase of marriages in which at least one of the spouses has non-Spanish citizenship, which represent 17% of the marriages contracted in Spain in 2007. Among them, 76% corresponds to mixed marriages with a Spanish citizen.

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<sup>2</sup> Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.

<sup>3</sup> Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics

<sup>4</sup> 'Ramon y Cajal' Researcher of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science at the Center for Demographic Studies.

Intermarriage appears therefore to be an interesting field on which to analyze gender relations. Changes in the gender aspects of partnership have been quite accelerated in Spain, where the changes in women's socioeconomic position have favored the formation of dual-earner couples. It would be interesting to examine how international migrants are changing the current union formation patterns and dynamics in Spain, with special regard to gender relations. Exploring gender relations of mixed unions, compared to the new unions currently being formed among young Spaniards, is the main purpose guiding this research.

In this general framework, we focus here in this article on the specific dimension of the employment condition of the spouses in unions of foreigners, considered as one of the basic axis of gender relations within couples. This is considering whether couples are single or dual earner, taking into account the eventual relation with the levels of homogamy and more specifically of the origin and citizenship of partners. Several elements suggest that wide-spreading of dual-earning type of partnerships might not necessarily be applicable to mixed partnerships. These elements, which will be developed in the following section of this article, include, among others, the singularities of the activity and employment patterns of foreign men and women; the particular composition in terms of age and educational attainment of mixed partnerships; and finally the eventual differences in expectations towards partnership between Spaniards and immigrants. All of them might clearly have an influence on the resulting nature of unions of immigrants in Spain.

Using data drawn from the Spanish Labor Force Survey (II Trimester of 2007) we analyze, in a preliminary stage of our research, assortative patterns by age and educational attainment. After that, we approach gender relations within partnerships focusing on the arrangements that take place between partners to distribute between them the household and labor market activities. As a result of these arrangements, and for the purpose of this research, couples are classified regarding their dual or single earner character and a logistic multivariate regression is applied to analyses the likelihood of different types of unions to be dual or single earner.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first the empirical and theoretical background on gender relations within unions and intermarriage in Spain are presented in order to sustain our hypothesis; second the recent and current trends in international migration and intermarriage in Spain are described to give the proper context for our analysis; third the section of data and methods presents the details of the Spanish Labor Force Survey,



especially when used to analyse couples; fourth the results of the analysis are presented in two separate sections, the first one devoted to the assortative mating of unions and second to gender relations; finally, some lines are reserved for the discussion of the main findings.

## **2.- Background and hypothesis**

Over the past 40 years, union formation patterns have experienced significant changes in Spain. Age at marriage has been delayed, nuptial intensity has decreased considerably and there has been an increase in cohabitation, remarriage and divorce rates (Castro 1994; Miret 1997; Alberdi 1999; Cabré 2007). We are referring here to those changes in union formation that have been deeply described and discussed by the Second Demographic Transition Theory (Van de Kaa 1987; Lesthaeghe 1991). Together with this transformation, there has also been a movement to more balanced gender roles arrangements within couples: females have adopted new roles thanks to their increasing levels of schooling and their massive entrance into the labor market (Luxán, Miret, Treviño 1999; Domínguez Folgueras, Castro Martín 2008).

Theoretical models of marriage have explained the decrease in the number of marriages and its postponement by the changing position and increasing independence of women in the society and the labour market which would make them less willing to enter into a union (Becker 1981; Oppenheimer 1988; Solsona 1998). This changing position would not only have reduced the likelihood of forming unions, but would have changed the nature of the unions formed as well. In this particular context, the male bread-winner model associated to a trading (complementary) couple, or gender-specialized marriage has been replaced by a dual-earner model, in which the sense of the partnership has a more egalitarian distribution among partners (Luxán, Miret, Treviño 1999). Besides, as Oppenheimer (1997) states, “dual earner strategy” is the winning one in a new labour market context where stability is limited.

Until the late twentieth century, Spanish marriages fitted into a complementary model in which each member had a distinct and previously defined action-field to specialize in (the labor market or the household). Just in cohabitations the seed of a more egalitarian distribution of labor within couples was slightly present (Domingo 1997). In this respect, Cabré (1995) refers to transition of the family based on a series of non linear

transformations leading from a gender differentiated pattern of union to a less traditional and equitable one. According to Cabré, this transition was particularly fast in Spain.

The transformation of gender relations within couples is somewhat related to the changes in assortative mating patterns in Spain. The tendency to form heterogamous unions, in which men marry older and form unions with younger and less-educated women, fits into the trading couple's framework that has been traditionally observed in Spain. From an equity perspective, however, males and females mate selection will change in order to search for certain attributes in their potential matches that guarantee a less asymmetrical gender relationship. Less differentiated gender roles will foster a reduction in gender gaps.

As reported in the study of homogamy in Spain by Esteve and Cortina (2007), there is a trend in which age and educational attainment differentials between partners (in both marriages and cohabitations) have been reduced. The closure of this gap illustrates the lost of significance of classical patterns in union formation. That is to say, couples in which the woman has a lower educational level than the man are now less frequent than twenty years ago. Furthermore, the classical marriage between a female with a low educational level and a high earning potential man is not longer the dominant one. On the contrary, the matching behavior of the youngest and highly educated women denotes a change towards the establishment of more egalitarian partnerships (González 2001).

In this paper we examine the particular situation, regarding both assortative mating patterns and gender relations, of unions involving foreign partners. As it will be presented in the following section, foreign population and, consequently, intermarriage have increased in Spain in the last decade. Unions involving foreign partners, either one (mixed unions) or two, require therefore specific analysis, especially when gender issues are being explored because the immigrant and/or foreign condition might influence the position in both the labor and the marriage market.

First, composition of unions depends highly on the opportunities offered by the marriage market and the particular position of the candidates in that market. Being a foreigner, either man or woman, might influence both that position and those opportunities and therefore the composition of their unions could turn to be more heterogamous. It is usually assumed that higher heterogamy in terms of age and education implies less gender equal distribution of roles (especially for the most educated).

Second, activity and employment patterns of immigrants, particularly of immigrant women, present important singularities regarding those of the Spanish, which might have a direct effect on the likelihood of forming dual earner couples. Indeed, the literature has increasingly given importance to the family dimension to explain the labour market experiences of immigrant spouses (Baker, Benjamin 1997; Cobb-Clark, Connolly 2001). Researchers have particularly tried to explain immigrant female employment patterns in the context of migration processes and family strategies. From this point of view, a clear distinction has been made between women coming on their own and women following their husbands. We here introduce an additional dimension, which is the distinction between immigrant females in unions with Spaniards or in union with an immigrant partner.

Third, gender relations within couples are related to social models and individual needs and expectations, which might be both determined by the foreign status. Therefore, when analyzing gender relations in mixed unions, together with their particular position in the Spanish marriage and labour market, we should take into account gender relations in the countries of origin of the immigrants.

Under this particular framework, we basically analyze the dual-earner nature of mixed unions, compared to that of the new unions currently being formed in Spain among young Spaniards (which are increasingly dual-earning). The dual-earner condition of the partnership reflects the productive and reproductive roles adopted by the partners within the couple and is therefore taken as a proxies measure of the gender relations (Becker 1981; Oppenheimer 1997; Luxán, Miret, Treviño 1999; Pinelli 1999). The likelihood of being dual-earner for a couple is not the mere combination but rather an interaction of the likelihood of being employed of each one of the partner's. To put it easier, the risk of being employed depends in a certain degree on the employment status of the partner and on the type of partnership decided by both partners. When partnerships of immigrants are analyzed, the immigrant condition and the citizenship of the two partners, and its combination, are supposed to have an important effect, together with that of the rest of the individual characteristics classically influencing the employment status. Therefore, in our analysis we expect that the likelihood of being dual-earner for mixed couples will be somehow related to this combination of conditions and characteristics.

We expect that the effect of the factors influencing the gender arrangements within mixed partnerships might apply differently in Spanish man/foreign-born women unions than in

Spanish woman/ foreign-born man one. Taking into account the differences in activity and employment patterns across origins and sexes that will be shown in the next section, the major singularities are expected to be found in unions involving either a Latin-American, and African or a Eastern-European, while in unions involving Western-Europeans more similar patterns to Spanish-Spanish couples are expected.

### **3.- International migration in Spain: immigrants' participation in labour and marriage markets**

In addition to the reported changes in partnerships, for the Spanish case we should always have in mind as well the dramatic growth of the foreign born population in Spain during the last decades. The recent arrival of immigrants to Spain is modifying current union formation patterns by introducing new marriageable partners into the marriage market. As a result, intermarriage rates are growing and socio-demographic characteristics of the resulting couples are changing. Previous research has examined marriage patterns of the foreign population in Spain, by looking at the age at marriage, the order of marriage and the degree of intermarriage (Cortina, Esteve, Domingo 2006). Results have reported marked disparities in the out-marriage rates regarding to national origin and gender in Spain. The existence of these disparities is consistent with the findings obtained by scholars interested in intermarriage trends in other countries (McCaa 1993; Muñoz-Pérez, Tribalat 1996; Kalmijn, 1998; Lievens 1999).

Until 1990s, immigration flows to Spain were not very important, but since then Spanish immigration records have been constantly fed by the arrival of foreign nationals. Recent data from the Spanish Population Register, counted by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 already 5,220,557 foreigners, which represented 11.3% of the total population and multiplied by 25 the same amount in 1990. Before this noticeable growth, there was not enough statistical support for the quantitative analysis of international migration impact in the Spanish demographic dynamics, but recently it has been subject of a growing interest within the academic agenda.

The entrance of new marriageable partners into the Spanish marriage market pool is reflected in the increase of marriages in which at least one of the spouses has non-Spanish citizenship. In view of this context of notable changes, intermarriage has become a potentially important aspect of contemporary nuptiality patterns in Spain. The marriage

records show that the percentage of marriages in which at least one of the spouses is foreign has risen from 4.6% in 1997 to 16.9% in 2007, an increase of approximately twelve points in ten years (see Table 1).

**Table 1.- Percentage of marriages by citizenship combination of both spouses. Spain 1989-2006**

	<b>Both Spaniards</b>	<b>Spanish men / Foreign women</b>	<b>Spanish women / Foreign men</b>	<b>Both foreign</b>	<b>Total</b>
1989	96,0	1,4	1,8	0,8	221470
1990	96,1	1,5	2,0	0,3	220533
1991	95,8	1,7	2,1	0,4	218121
1992	95,8	1,8	2,0	0,5	217512
1993	95,1	2,0	2,3	0,5	201463
1994	95,2	1,9	2,4	0,5	199731
1995	95,5	1,8	2,3	0,5	200688
1996	95,3	1,8	2,3	0,6	194084
1997	95,4	1,9	2,3	0,5	196499
1998	95,0	2,2	2,3	0,6	207041
1999	94,6	2,5	2,4	0,6	208129
2000	94,6	2,5	2,3	0,7	216451
2001	93,2	3,1	2,5	1,1	208057
2002	91,3	3,9	2,9	1,9	211522
2003	87,7	5,3	3,6	3,3	212300
2004	85,7	6,3	4,2	3,8	216149
2005	85,8	6,6	4,2	3,5	208146
2006	84,3	7,1	4,6	3,9	203453
2007	83,1	7,6	5,3	4,0	200447

Source: Marriage records, 1989-2007, Spanish Statistical Institute.  
 Since 2005 same-sex marriages, which were legalized by then, are excluded. 2007 data are still provisional.

Moreover, for the last year 76% of them were mixed (referred to Spanish-foreigners unions). As shown in Table 1, since 1989 intermarriage rates have been growing systematically in Spain either for men and women although at a different pace. Marriages between Spanish men and foreign national women are now more frequent than marriages between Spanish women and foreign national men. There is also a growing trend in remarriage, which is highly significant for Spanish men marrying foreign national women. Regarding the countries of origin of the foreign partners, we find differences by sex and we observe how the bigger national groups are not necessarily the main providers of spouses.

For the 2002-2006 period, the five more frequent countries of foreign-born males married to Spanish women were Morocco, Argentina, Colombia, Great Britain and Italy, all of them with percentages which represented between 5% and 12% of total mixed marriages. Instead, the five more frequent countries of origin for foreign-born females were Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Romania and Argentina.

Age and sex structure of foreign-born population in Spain corresponds to the classical profile of working immigrant populations. The bigger age groups are concentrated in young-adult ages and we observe an unbalanced sex-ratio indicating that there are more men than women. Those global indicators vary by origin and we can therefore find some origins which are far from fitting into the general profile; this is the case of some Latin-American countries which have clearly feminized populations, or Western-European countries which present old age structures. Nevertheless, the general youth and unbalanced-sex ratios are important when nuptiality patterns are analyzed. Moreover, they translate the working condition of the majority of this immigration.

Indeed, activity rates of foreigners are higher than those of Spaniards, both for men and for women. As shown in Table 2, an important variation by sex and origin can be observed.

**Table 2.- Activity and unemployment rates by sex and country of birth (regions), 30-39 years, Spain 2007**

	Spain	Latin-America	Western Euro	Eastern Euro	Africa
<i>Activity rate</i>					
Men	94,4	95	94,4	96,9	91,3
Women	74,8	82,8	74,5	77,9	48,9
<i>Unemployment rate</i>					
Men	4,5	6,6	6,4	5,9	12,4
Women	9,1	11,9	12,5	13,	26,4

Source: Spanish Labour Force Survey 2007, Spanish National Statistical Institute

Even if male activity rates are higher than female rates for each region of origin, the differences by sex are, regarding the Spanish ones, much lower in some cases, Latin-America, and much higher in others, Africa. This is the result of a much higher variation of female's activity rates across origins than male's. Finally, the description of the labour

market participation of foreign population in Spain indicates that foreigners do have higher unemployment rates (see Table 2), higher instability and temporality. These differences go together with a particular distribution of employment by activity sector of foreign women (CES 2004). Several studies have explored the working condition of immigration in Spain, finding that immigrant women are more likely employed in non qualified jobs (especially household and care tasks) than immigrant men without presenting a lower educational structure. This difference is related to the segmented character of the Spanish labour market, where jobs offered to immigrant female are clearly restricted to non qualified sectors (Parella 2003; Vidal, Gil, Domingo 2007).

### **3.1.- Data and methods**

The research is based on data drawn from the II Trimester 2007 of the Spanish Labor Force Survey (from now on “EPA”). Other stock sources could be used for the examination of assortative mating between Spanish and foreigners, like the 2001 Population Census, but the EPA is chosen because it has up-dated information regarding the foreign and foreign-born population. Also, it considers both marital and consensual unions and includes information about activity and occupational attributes of both members of the couple, which is an advantage compared to the information collected by the Spanish Marriage Records, where this information is not really reliable. In this respect, and because it is stock data, it is considered an appropriated data source for the study of mate selection and gender relations in Spanish intermarriage.

The Spanish Labor Force Survey is a periodical survey that interviews each trimester more than 200,000 individuals in, approximately, 65,000 households. The first EPA round was in 1964 and was designed to collect specific data about the labor force in Spain. In the sample of the II Trimester of 2007 140,488 individuals and 42,785 couples were included. In order to answer to the significant demographic changes occurred in Spain during the last decades, mostly related to international immigration, the estimations that the EPA needs to weight the information collected were updated in 2005. The sample data frame was unaltered, but the weights of each register changed according to new data derived from the 2001 Census and the consecutives updates of the Spanish Population Register<sup>5</sup>. Afterwards, there was an

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<sup>5</sup> Until the 4<sup>th</sup> trimester of 2004 the EPA matrix of weights was based on a 1991 Census population base revised in 2002.

increase on the population base due to the introduction of different weights, among them, the ones referred to the foreign-born and foreign population residing in Spain, introduction that reflects the arrival of immigrant flows during the last years (García 2005). Thanks to this revision, data drawn from the EPA are now more representative of the current socio-demographic dynamics and answer better to the selection of population groups for analytical purposes, especially when foreigners or foreign-born are considered.

EPA sample includes both regular and irregular immigrants because the sampling is based on the Spanish Population Register, which indeed makes no distinction between ones and the others. At the same time, EPA registers both regular and irregular employment. Both elements are crucial when analyzing participation of female immigrants in the labor market, because the incidence of irregular employment is higher both for women and for immigrants.

In EPA microdata, unions can be identified using the variable of relationship among household members. Thanks to that, the attributes the partners can be attached to each other creating a new file that contains all the couples' information available in a single row. The EPA records include both birth place and citizenship but do not have information about the marital history; for instance, do not collect previous marital status or marriage date. Usually, in intermarriage studies birth place is selected over citizenship because it avoids the exclusion of mixed marriages where both partners have the same citizenship but different places of birth (the assimilation of the same citizenship in original mixed marriages is clearly reinforced by the easy conditions of nationalization for foreigners married to Spaniards). Nevertheless, when the analysis focuses on labor activity, citizenship appears as a crucial variable because it determines working opportunities and conditions. Therefore in this analysis we use a combination of birth place and citizenship, only for females, when we classify unions according to the combination of origins of the spouses<sup>6</sup>. The purpose of the analysis justifies the major detail in female condition than in males'.

A logistic multivariate regression is used for the analysis of the single or dual earner character of the couples (dependent variable refers to the risk of a union of being dual-earner instead of male single-earner) obtained as a result of the combination of employment

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<sup>6</sup> The variable combination of origins has 6 categories: both partners Spanish; Spanish woman and Foreign man; Spanish man and Foreign woman; Spanish man and Spanish foreign-born woman; Foreign man and Foreign woman; Foreign man and Spanish foreign-born woman.



status of both partners. When both have a paid work the couple is dual earner, while when only one of them has it, the couple is single earner, distinguishing the single earners according to the sex of the working partner. The use of the employment condition instead of the activity condition is important because it takes into account the real opportunities faced by the spouses and it gives a more direct portrait of the couple arrangements.

Control variables in the models include the combination of origins of the spouses, the age and educational attainment<sup>7</sup> of female spouses, together with some basic couple and household characteristics (type of union, age difference between partners, birth place combination of the partners and number of children under 16 years old). Only female individual characteristics are considered because trying to add male characteristics as well did not modify the results obtained. Regarding couple characteristics, age difference is included as a continuous variable instead of as a categorical one. Table 3 (and Table annexed) indicates the size of the samples which are 10,382 unions in total, going from the largest group of unions, the one involving Latin-Americans, 8,846, to the shortest group, the one involving North-Africans, 301 unions. The table also presents the distribution of each group of unions in employment combination categories. It clearly appears that dual-earner is the main combination for all groups except for North-Africans. The distribution of unions and spouses across the several control variables, allow having a clear picture of the differences in socio-demographic and household characteristics which will be controlled for in the following regression models. For example, the fact that some foreign women present a lower educational structure than others or that cohabitation is more or less widespread among origins will be taken into account.

It is important to point out that models take into account only couples in which the woman is between 30 and 39 years old. The selection of this sample is chosen to focus the analyses in recent couples, in order to guarantee the comparability of the several combinations of partners' birth place, considering that couples that involve foreign-born are generally more recent than the ones between Spanish (the greatest percentage of mixed unions is concentrated in this range of ages). Moreover, this reduces sample attrition due to union dissolution.

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<sup>7</sup> Educational level is classified in 4 basic categories, which are easy to translate in years of schooling and do not cause significant problems when working with foreigners declaring their educational attainment level according to the educational system in their country of origin.

**Table 3.- Descriptive figures (% distribution) of independent and dependent variables in the dual-earning regression model. (Unions involving a 30-39 years old woman)**

	All unions	Spanish-Spanish unions	Unions with Latin American(s)	Unions with Western-European(s)	Unions with Eastern-European(s)	Unions with North-African(s)
<b>Independent variable</b>						
Dual-earner	52,3	52,5	54,6	51,4	54,9	23,0
Female single-earner	5,3	4,9	9,2	7,4	4,3	6,7
Male single-earner	37	37,3	30,8	36,4	37,6	55,2
No partners works	5,4	5,3	5,5	4,7	3,1	15,1
<b>Dependent variable</b>						
Combination of origins						
Both Spaniards	75,8	88,9	-	-	-	-
Spanish woman-Foreign man	4,1	4,8	10,3	39,5	4,1	14,4
Spanish man- Foreign woman	3,1	3,6	14,6	13,3	10,3	5,5
Spanish man- Spanish fb woman	2,2	-	7,1	23,5	0,0	2,7
Foreign man-foreign woman	13,7	-	60,6	19,4	85,3	73,6
Foreign man-Spanish fb woman	1,1	2,6	7,4	4,3	0,2	3,8
Type of union						
Marriage	83,7	84,8	68,6	70,8	79,8	90,7
Consensual union	16,3	15,2	31,4	29,2	20,2	9,3
Female educational level						
Non primary completed	2,0	1,0	1,7	1,3	1,9	25,2
Primary completed	8,2	7,6	11,0	7,3	7,2	23,3
Secondary	50,5	49,1	59,4	47,3	68,1	37,8
University	39,3	42,3	27,9	44,2	22,8	13,6
Male educational level						
Non primary completed	2,4	1,6	1,8	2,1	1,4	21,1
Primary completed	11,1	10,2	13,7	7,5	11,4	26,2
Secondary	55,3	54,7	63,4	49,6	64,5	41,6
University	31,2	33,4	21,1	40,7	22,7	11,1
Age combination						
Man<Woman	10,6	11,2	5,8	8,4	8,8	9,7
Man>Woman	33,4	31,7	45,1	32,7	39,5	53,9
Same age	55,9	57,1	49,0	58,9	51,7	36,5
Educational combination						
Same educational level	61,9	61,7	63,1	63,0	61,9	47,8
Man<Woman	24,0	24,7	22,4	19,9	18,5	23,6
Man>Woman	14,1	13,6	14,6	17,0	19,6	28,6
Num of children below 16 in the household						
No children	22,2	22,4	23,7	25,8	31,6	17,8
1	36,1	36,5	36,4	32,8	45,8	26,1
2	35,2	35,9	30,4	34,0	18,6	33,8
3	6,4	5,2	9,6	7,4	4,0	22,2
<b>n</b>	10382	8846	1126	578	396	301

The models are run first considering all foreigners involved in a union and second separately for each one of the four main continental regions of origin. For Western-Europe the main countries are Great Britain and France, Eastern-Europe refers basically to Rumania and Bulgaria, Latin-American countries with more immigrants in Spain are Colombia and Ecuador while African region is restricted only to North-African countries (which in Spain applies mainly to Moroccans) because it avoids confusing their patterns with those of Sub-Saharians (they are less important in figures and they family structures are different from those of Moroccans).

### **3.2.- Results**

#### ***3.2.1.- Assortative mating patterns of mixed unions: higher or lower heterogamy?***

Before dealing with the main purpose of the analysis, employment arrangements and dual-earner nature of couples of different compositions, assortative mating patterns by combination of partners' origins are explored. First, we examine assortative mating patterns by age. The main interest is to identify particularities in the relation between the age of the partners according to the mixed nature of the marriages. We check whether the usual pattern of a positive mean age difference<sup>8</sup> between husband and wife is also observed for mixed unions.

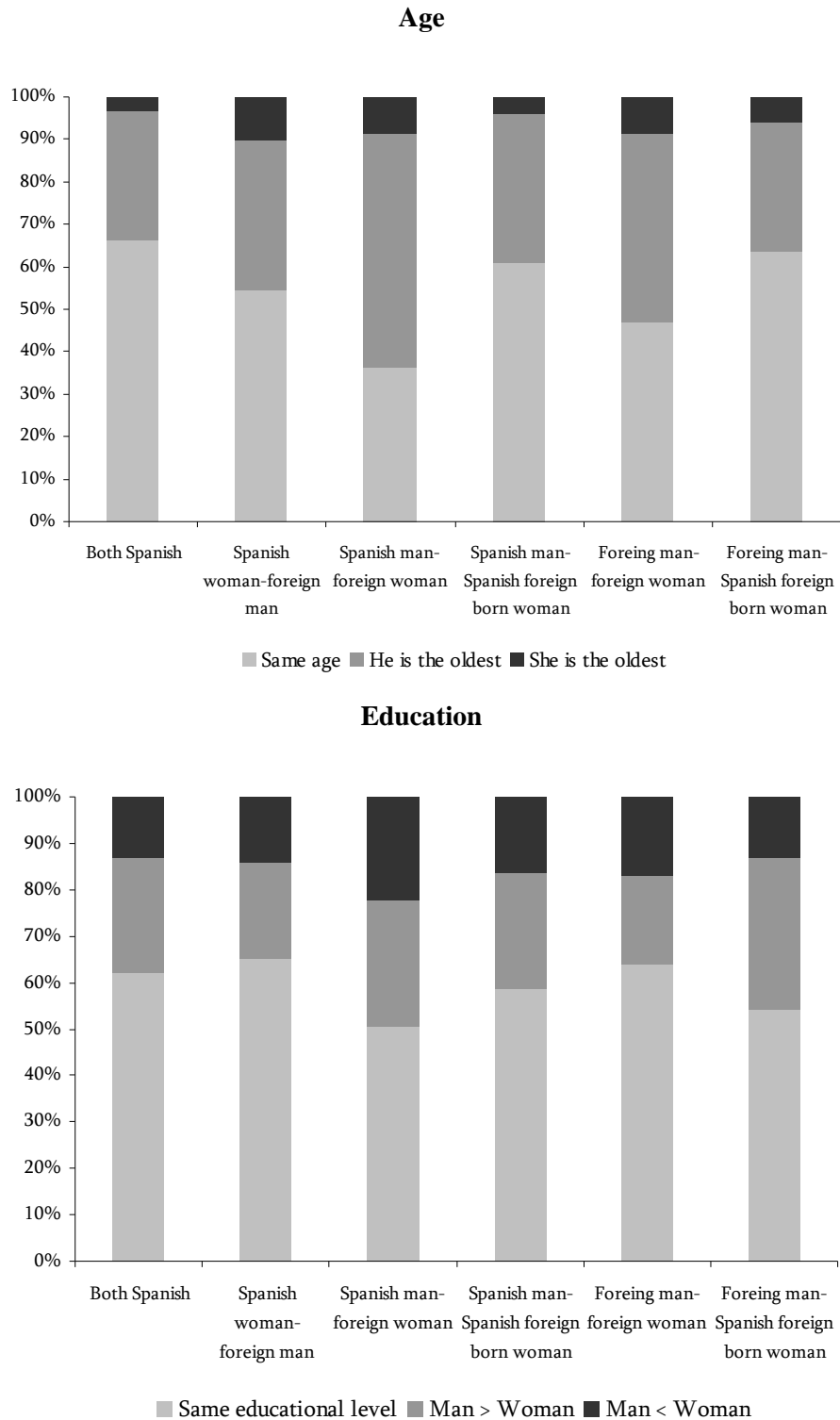
Mean age differences between spouses of unions involving a 30 to 39 years old woman are higher in Spanish male and foreign female marriages (4,2 years) compared to any other birth place combination (both foreigners 3,2 and both Spanish 2,4 years), contrary to what happens in marriages between Spanish women and foreign-citizen men (1,5 years). These mean age differences are the result for the age homogamy distribution of couples. Figure 1 presents this distribution for each of the four birth place combinations of couples involving a 30 to 39 years old woman. Confirming what was suggested before, the greater age homogamy is observed in those marriages in which both spouses are Spanish. Inter-marriage is more age heterogamous. Among these heterogamous marriages, in more than 50% of Spanish male/foreign female unions men are, at least, three years older than women; this greater level of female age hypergamy disappears when the woman is foreign-born but is Spanish citizen. Besides, 12% of women in union with a foreign-born are, at

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<sup>8</sup> A positive age difference refers to those cases where the man is older than his wife.

least, three years older than them, which represents the highest percentage of female age hypogamy of the four combinations of origins.

**Figure 1.- Age and educational homogamy between partners by combination of origins. Spain, 2007 (Unions involving a 30-39 years old woman)**



Source: Spanish Labour Force Survey 2007, Spanish National Statistical Institute

To read these figures, it should be noticed that age homogamy trends have significantly evolved during the last decades in Spain. Indeed, the current age differences between partners are much lower than they used to be in the middle of the XXth century (Esteve and Cortina 2007). The main reasons for this change are related to the new position of women regarding partnership and marriage, which implies bringing together their tempo and selection criteria to those of male's. The increasing age homogamy is one of the results of the change in women position and choices, and therefore it has usually been linked to more gender equal results. Apparently, for Spanish women marrying a Spanish or a foreign-born partner does not make big difference, while for a Spanish man marrying a foreign-born woman seems to broaden mating opportunities.

Second, we analyse assortative mating patterns by educational attainment to identify gender differences across types of marriages based on partners' place of birth. Figure 1 presents the percentage distribution of the educational homogamy/heterogamy of the partners by their place of birth combinations. This figure shows that regardless of the birth place combination of partners, most of the couples are educationally homogamous. The lowest percentage of educational homogamy is found among couples between Spanish men and foreign women (again when the foreign-born woman is Spanish this pattern does not apply). No significant differences are observed for the other combinations. When partners do not share the same educational attainment, women have higher levels of schooling than their partners. It is important to remember here that we are considering only unions involving a 30-39 years old woman.

Compared to previous cohorts, the decrease in educational homogamy and especially the reversal of traditional female hypergamy (women marrying higher educated men) is an unprecedented change. Both processes are related to the change in educational structure and more specifically to the expansion of women's schooling in Spain (Esteve, Cortina 2007). Again, and as it was the case for age homogamy, those patterns can not be separated from the changes in women's position in society and within the couple and, therefore, from the changes in gender relations. In the next section, we will explore those relations taking into account the particular composition observed in mixed unions in Spain.

### ***3.2.2.- Gender arrangements within mixed couples: the likelihood of dual-earning***

Here we analyse gender arrangements in employment within couples by birth-place combination of partners. As it has been stated in the background and hypothesis section, we expect employment arrangements to be affected by the origin and citizenship of the spouses and the mixed nature of the couples. The description of assortative mating patterns of those unions, presented in the previous section, has indeed revealed some significant points supporting such hypothesis. At the same time, the differences in composition observed suggest that those should be controlled when analysing the single or dual earner nature of the unions. Therefore, we run multivariate models to estimate the likelihood of unions of being dual-earners after controlling by individual and couple characteristics. The independent variable here is being dual-earner instead of male-single earner; therefore, when we refer to the likelihood of being dual-earner we are basically referring to the likelihood of the women of working when his husband does so. We consider, as it has been justified in the data and methods section, only recent unions by selecting those of 30-39 women. The results are of course determined by this selection choice.

Following again our main hypothesis, we run five different blocs of models: a first one where all unions are included and four more distinguishing for the region of origin of the foreign-born partner (in these cases, the selection applied drops out of the sample any union involving at least one foreign-born partner from another region). For example, in the model called “Unions with Latin-American(s)” and as it is shown in Table 4, only unions between two Latin-Americans, between a Latin-American and a Spanish partner or between two Spanish are considered.

Table 4 presents the odds ratio of unions of being dual earner for these five models. The main interest resides in the results obtained for the first of the independent variables, which is the birth place combination of the partners. These parameters indicate, for each particular origin, the likelihood of mixed unions and unions between foreign-borns to be dual-earner compared to this same likelihood of unions between Spanish partners (which are taken always as the reference group) and regardless of the composition by the other independent variables.

**Table 4.- Odds ratio of unions of being dual-earner, Spain 2007. (Unions involving a 30-39 years old woman)**

Independent variable	All unions		Latin-American selection		Western-European selection		Eastern-European selection		Northafrican selection		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	
	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	exp(B)	
<b>Independent variable</b>											
Both work vs only he does											
<b>Dependent variables</b>											
Combination of origins											
Both Spanish	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Spanish W/Foreign M	1,03	0,89	1,16	1,01	0,97	0,83	2,04	1,38	0,51	0,53	
Spanish M/Foreign W	0,62 **	0,52 **	0,58 **	0,48 **	0,96	0,76	0,41 **	0,34 **	2,09	3,12	
Spanish M/Spanish foreign-born W	0,93	1,00	0,95	1,03	1,14	1,31	-	-	1,34	2,36	
Foreign M/Foreign W	0,98	1,27 **	1,42 **	1,65 **	0,86	1,03	1,21	1,32 *	0,11 **	0,22 **	
Foreign M/Spanish foreign-born W	1,38	1,49 **	1,37	1,40	1,19	1,13	-	-	6,44	21,83	
Type of union (ref. marriage)		1,38 **		1,27 **		1,20		1,26 *		1,26 **	
Female educational level											
Non primary completed		ref		ref		ref		ref		ref	
Primary completed		1,64		0,90		0,76		0,55		0,76	
Secondary		2,87 **		1,58		1,43		1,16		1,50	
University		5,23 **		2,90 **		2,91 **		2,29 *		3,09 **	
Num of children below 16 in the household											
No children		ref		ref		ref		ref		ref	
1		0,56 **		0,55 **		0,51 **		0,55 **		0,51 **	
2		0,43 **		0,42 **		0,37 **		0,40 **		0,39 **	
3		0,32 **		0,33 **		0,26 **		0,29 **		0,26 **	
Constant	1,43	0,47	1,43	0,96	1,43	1,18	1,43	1,20	1,43 **	0,95	
<i>Loglikelihood</i>	12556	11865	11952	11351	10237	9574	10052	9441	9815	9179	

\* p=0,95; \*\*p=0,99. Other control variables for models 2: age difference between partners

In the first bloc of models, it appears that, as expected, when all unions are considered, the likelihood of dual-earning is significantly lower for Spanish man-foreign women ( $\exp(\beta)=0.52$ ) and significantly higher for unions between foreigners ( $\exp(\beta)=1.27$ ) with regard to the Spanish-Spanish reference (no significant differences are found neither for the Spanish woman-foreign-born man nor for the Spanish man-Spanish foreign-born woman). This means that, regardless of her educational level and number of children in the household, foreign women which have no Spanish citizenship, when in a partnership with a Spanish partner are less likely to have a job; but it means as well that this effect of the spouse citizenship is somewhat reduced when they have Spanish citizenship themselves (whether they have obtained citizenship thanks to their marriage or not is out of our knowledge). On the contrary, the likelihood of Spanish women not foreign-born to be employed does not vary according to the origin of their partner.

Let's examine now how this general pattern changes when we analyze separately the unions involving a foreigner in 4 continental origin groups. In the first place, it appears clear that only two of the continental groups, Latin-Americans and Eastern-Europeans, fit the general pattern, presenting indeed even lower likelihoods for Spanish man-foreign women couples and higher for both foreigners unions. We are referring here to the groups of immigrants with the most recent arrival in Spain, with a majority participation in mixed unions. Latin-American and Eastern-European women, as seen in a previous section, present the highest activity rates among the foreign-born, but clearly those rates are not independent from their marital status and the origin of their partners. In the second place, it appears how for unions with or between Western-Europeans no significant differences are observed with regard to unions between Spanish partners. Unlike the case for Latin-American and Eastern-European women, the position and opportunities of Western-European women does not appear no be related to those of their husbands.

Last but not least, unions involving North-African partners deserve particular attention, because the results are quite unexpected and present a completely contrary trend in regard to that of Latin-Americans and Eastern-Europeans. Here we find a lower likelihood of being dual-earner for those unions between two North-African partners ( $\exp(\beta)=0,22$ ). On the contrary a higher likelihood in unions between an North-African woman and a Spanish man is observed, even if this is not a significant parameter, most likely because of the very small number of couples in this particular combination. It would therefore seem like African women living in Spain, which are the less active among the foreigners, clearly



would not very much get the chance to have a job unless they had a Spanish partner. Even if these results are quite meaningful, we should take into account that this specific combination of origins is rather rare and might therefore be submitted to important selection effects. Indeed, only 11% of the African women between 30-39 years of age in union in Spain have an Spanish partner. On the contrary, in this model we find the first significant difference for the combination Spanish woman - foreign-born man. When in union with an African-born, Spanish women are less likely ( $\exp(\beta)=0.53$ ) to be working, even if this relation is not statistically significant. The analysis of unions involving Africans requires of further developments, especially the need of distinguishing between Moroccans, which represent the majority of them, and the rest of Africans.

To conclude, if we now take a look at the parameters obtained for the other independent variables some interesting relations arise. In the first place, the type of union appears to play an important role because consensual unions are significantly more likely to be dual-earner than marriages. This positive relation is consistent across all regional groups (even if for some of them the relation is not significant). This result is consistent with previous research carried on dual-earner diffusion by type of union, proving that consensual unions are more likely to be dual-earner and more likely to be gender equal in a larger sense. In the second place, the likelihood of a union of being dual-earner is positively related to the women's educational attainment level, even if this relation is less clear for some origins, like Eastern-Europeans. This positive effect hides an implicit effect of the male's educational attainment level, because of the high correlation between the levels of the spouses. In the third place, and as it could have been expected, the number of children below 16 years of age living in the same household with the couple has, instead, a negative effect on the likelihood of the women working. It should be stated that, when considering foreign women, it could well be that the importance of the negative effect of having children at home on the likelihood of being employed is related as well to the fact that those not having children at home could be affected by the possibility of having left children in the home country, which would be a strong factor positively influencing their likelihood to be working. Unfortunately, no information on family components outside the household is available in the EPA (and rarely in other statistical sources).

#### **4.- Discussion**

In this article we have analysed employment arrangements between spouses as a way to approach gender relations in the particular case of mixed unions and in the particular Spanish context of increasing presence of international immigrants. This analysis requires to simultaneously considering the position of this immigrant men and women in the labour and in the marriage market. The resulting partnerships, either marriages or consensual unions, in which they are becoming involved, in their majority with Spanish partners, tell us much about their opportunities in both markets and the arrangements and roles settled within the couples. Data from 2007 Spanish Labour Force Survey has allowed to carry out this kind of analyses for very recent dates, which is of main importance when dealing with constantly changing migration trends.

In a context of increasing intermarriage and wide spreading of dual-earner model of partnerships, the main results have pointed out, in the first place, that higher age and educational heterogamy is found in mixed unions. Spanish men in union with foreign-born women are in average much older than them than those in unions with Spanish women. On the contrary, homogamy is higher for unions of the opposite origin combination, which means that Spanish women more usually are in union with a man of the same age or even younger. These results are somewhat related to the gender relations observed for mixed unions. Having used the single or dual-earner nature of the unions as a proxy for these gender relations, results have shown how the likelihood of being dual-earner depends on the birth-place of the partners. That is, that mixed unions are more or less gender equal (depending on the sex and the origin of the foreign-born partner) than the partnership currently being formed by the Spaniards.

The likelihood of unions of being dual-earner is function of the likelihood of women of working with their partner does so. In this sense, results report that to foreign-born women, being in union with a Spaniard or a foreign-born does make a difference in her position within the couple and her likelihood to be active in the labour market. At the same time, the fact of being Spanish or not is crucial for the foreign-born women, because being Spanish clearly reinforces their likelihood of being employed, regardless of their spouse citizenship. On the contrary, no significant difference has been found for Spanish women between being in union with a Spanish or foreign-born partner, except when the partner is African-born. Indeed several differences appear when considering regions of origin of the foreign partners separately. The major group of immigrants, Latin-Americans and Eastern-

Europeans fit the general trend, while Western-Europeans do not show significant differences towards the Spanish and North-Africans appear to be the exception to general trend.

These results come out from an original approach to the interesting field of the gender relations which consists in focusing on mixed unions. At the same time, the analysis constitutes as well an especial approach to the field of intermarriage. In this case, the originality residing in going beyond the likelihood of immigrants of mating locals and analysing the nature and characteristics of the partnerships they are entering to, here focusing on gender issues but it could be done in other aspects such as household structures, income or fertility. Both the gender relations dimension and the immigrant female working condition dimension of this research should be further developed in the future.

Regarding the first dimension, gender relations include a large set of factors and therefore other variables than employment arrangements and age and educational homogamy should be included in the analysis, such as household task distributions. Regarding the second dimension, being or not employed is only a partial information on working conditions of immigrant woman; these information should be completed by considering as well their activity condition and the occupation types and sectors, always keeping in mind the importance of family and partner characteristics, as it has been shown here for the likelihood of being employed.

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**Annex Table.- % of dual-earner couples by independent variables in the model, Spain 2007  
(Unions involving a 30-39 years old woman)**

	All unior	Spanish- Spanish uni	Unions with Lat American(s)	Unions witl Western- European(s)	Unions witl Eastern- European(s)	Unions with North-African
<b>Independent variables</b>						
Combination of origins						
Both Spaniards	58,9	58,9	-	-	-	-
Spanish woman-Foreign man	59,6	59,6	68,1	58,0	75,0	41,7
Spanish man- Foreign woman	47,2	47,2	38,4	57,7	37,5	75,0
Spanish man- Spanish fb woman	57,2	-	49,3	62,0	-	71,4
Foreign man-foreign woman	58,4	-	70,9	54,2	61,4	18,5
Foreign man-Spanish fb woman	66,7	57,2	64,2	63,2	-	77,8
Type of union						
Marriage	56,6	56,9	61,5	56,1	59,9	23,8
Consensual union	69,0	67,9	69,1	64,6	57,7	76,0
Female educational level						
Non primary completed	27,2	40,7	53,8	0,0	80,0	5,3
Primary completed	39,7	33,8	58,6	53,8	23,8	34,6
Secondary	53,8	52,3	66,0	51,5	66,5	34,8
University	69,2	69,6	61,8	68,1	46,7	45,9
Male educational level						
Non primary completed	34,2	45,7	90,9	22,2	50,0	1,9
Primary completed	48,5	46,3	68,1	43,9	35,7	32,1
Secondary	56,6	55,5	62,6	54,0	66,5	36,4
University	66,7	67,1	63,6	68,4	50,6	54,2
Age combination						
Man<Woman	59,3	60,5	58,2	57,1	48,5	25,0
Man>Woman	55,6	55,0	65,2	53,1	57,9	31,5
Same age	60,1	59,9	63,3	61,5	62,4	28,1
Educational combination						
Same educational level	58,6	58,2	66,3	61,9	58,5	34,5
Man<Woman	62,9	63,3	63,8	52,9	60,6	23,6
Man>Woman	50,5	50,6	54,1	51,7	59,7	25,4
Num of children below 16 in the household						
No children	74,0	74,1	67,6	80,8	60,3	41,0
1	59,0	58,9	61,5	58,5	60,1	34,9
2	51,4	50,8	64,0	46,7	54,5	32,5
3	42,8	41,9	64,0	38,5	62,5	9,4