

Who are the Spaniards and Swedes that marry foreign born people?

Joana Serret Sanahuja (jserret@ced.uab.es)

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED)

Abstract

Intermarriage has been analyzed by demographers. It has been mainly studied from two points of view: migration and union formation. Most studies of migration focused on intermarriage because it is considered a key component of immigrant's integration and the literature of union formation is interested in the profile of the immigrants who marry native people. Very modest attention has been paid to the native people that intermarry. This study aims to close this gap by focusing on the native people in mixed couples.

This paper offers a comparative descriptive of the native people that marry foreign born partners in two European countries: Sweden and Spain.

Motivation

Intermarriage between natives and international migrants has always been a study topic in immigration countries. International migration has different effects in the host societies, and one of them is on the marriage market.

Most research on intermarriage has focused on the societal, structural and individual factors that make immigrant population to marry out of their group (Pagnini & Morgan 1990; Qian & Lichter 2001; Jacobs & Labov 2002). Intermarriage has been considered a basic indicator of integration where high rates of intermarriage mean assimilation or social openness. Most of this research has focused on immigrants and few attentions have been paid to the societal, structural and individual factors that make non – immigrants to marry out of their group (Glowsky 2007). Do native born play also an active role explaining the intermarriage or if they are passive receivers? In this study, we propose to analyze the natives: the characteristics of the Swedes and Spaniards who marry foreign born people.

We want to know if the natives who marry foreign born people share the same profile in both countries. The objective of this study is twofold: (i) to observe if the natives who marry

foreign born people have the same characteristics that those who marry native people; and (ii) to check if the patterns of natives who marry exogamous are the same for men and women.

We compare the Spanish and Swedish experiences in intermarriage. They represent two countries with different characteristics: one from the North of Europe (Scandinavian country) and the other from the South of Europe (Mediterranean country) and with different cultures, values, welfare states and policies. Furthermore marriage does not have the same importance in these countries. Non marital cohabitation is more institutionalized in Sweden than in Spain. Finally, they have two different migration processes considering the period of movement and the origin of the immigrants.

Specific research questions

There are four main research questions in this analysis:

- (i) The importance of intermarriage. We explore the number of the intermarriage and its growth over the last decades, comparing trends for men and women.
- (ii) The national / country of origin of the partners. The origin of the spouses will be different between Spain and Sweden due to their different origin of their migratory inflows. Nevertheless, we examine differences between men and women in both countries.
- (iii) Age of marriage. We want to know if natives who marry foreign born partners do it at the same age that those who marry natives. We expect that natives will marry at later ages if they marry foreign born people, in Spain and Sweden. We investigate if this happens for men and women.
- (iv) Age differences between the spouses. We want to see if the age differences between spouses are similar for mixed marriages and endogamous marriages.

Data and methods

The data contain records from the population register held by Statistics Sweden and the marriages register held by the Spanish Institute of Statistics. The data include couples which got married in 2003.

To study the characteristics of natives who marry foreign born people we select two types of marriages: homogenous marriages (composed by two native partners) and heterogeneous marriages (composed by one native partner and one foreign born partner). The marriages

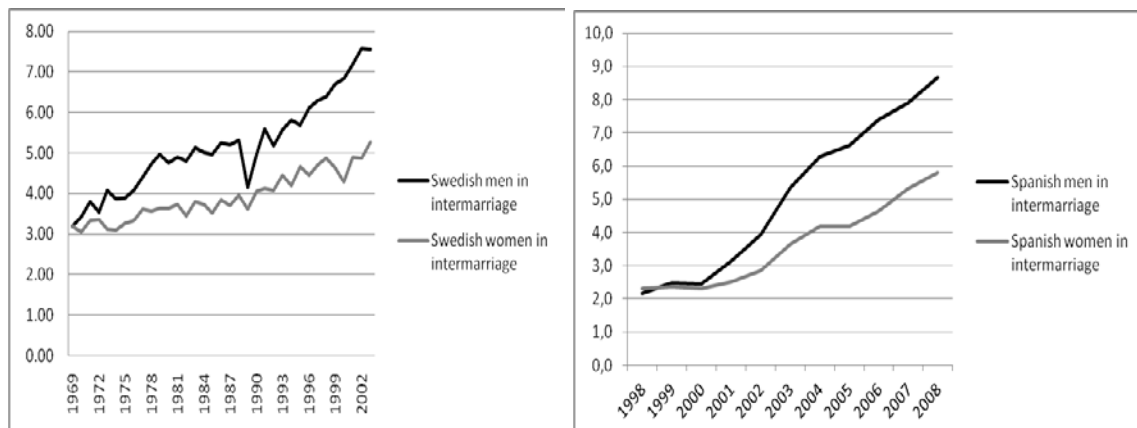
between immigrants (with the same or different nationalities) are not included because the interest is in the behaviour of the native partner. The main goal is to describe the profile of the natives who marry foreign born people using the descriptive analysis, considering the variables of age and origin of the partner. This profile will be compared to the natives who married native partners to check if there are differences.

Preliminary results

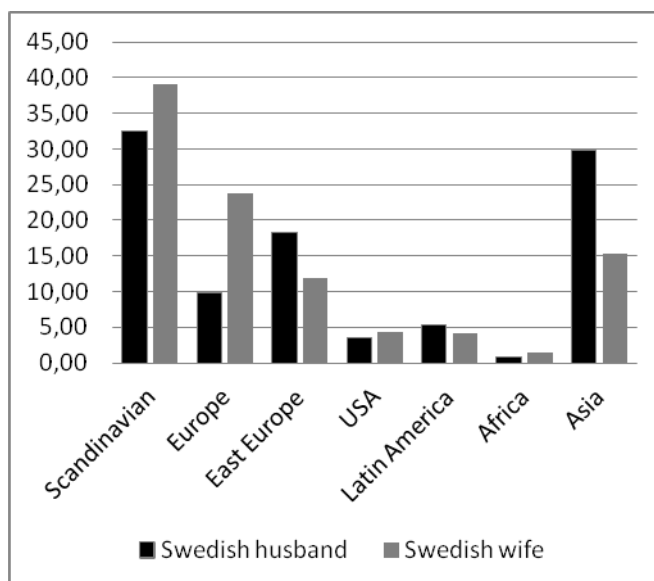
The first results show that there are some common characteristics in the natives who marry foreign born partners. WE can also observe that there is a similar trend in Sweden and Spain. Moreover, there are some differences between men and women.

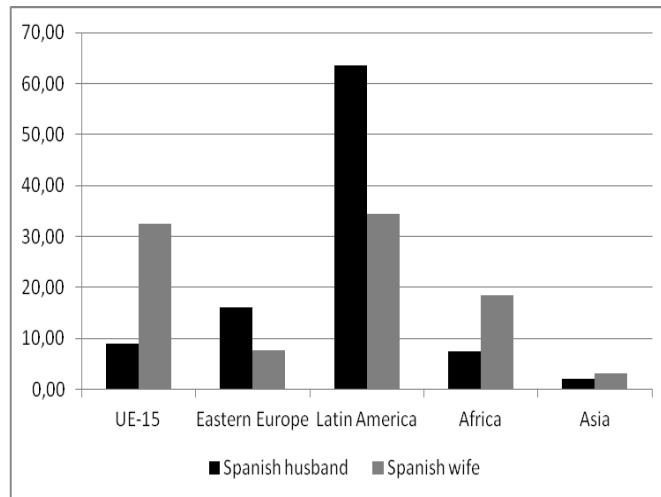
The main results are:

- (i) Intermarriages have increased in both countries in the last years.



- (ii) The origin of the spouses is different in Sweden than in Spain. In Sweden there is a high presence of partners from Asia and in Spain from Latin America.





- (iii) Native men marry later if they marry foreign born wives. Native women marry at similar age independently of the nationality of the partner.

References

- Behtoui, Alireza (2010): "Marriage pattern of immigrants in Sweden", *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 41(3): 415-436.
- Cabré, Anna (1994): "Tensiones inminentes en los mercados matrimoniales", en J. Nadal (ed), *El mundo que viene*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 37-62.
- Cortina, Clara; Esteve, Albert & Cabré, Anna (2009): "¿Con quién se unen los latinoamericanos en España? Respuestas a partir de tres fuentes estadísticas", *Notas de Población*, 86: 19-38.
- Cretser, Gary A. (1999): "Cross-National Marriage in Sweden: Immigration and Assimilation 1971-1993", *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 30(3): 363-380.
- Esteve, Albert & Cortina, Clara (2006): "Changes in educational assortative mating in contemporary Spain", *Demographic Research*, 14(18):429-452.
- Jacobs, J.A. & Labov, T.G. (2002): "Gender differentials in intermarriage among sixteen race and ethnic groups", *Sociological Forum*, 17(4): 621-646.
- Pagnini, D. L. & Morgan, S. P. (1990): "Intermarriage and social distance among U.S. immigrants at the turn of the century", *American Sociological Review*, 96: 405-432.
- Qian, Z. & Lichter, D. T. (2001): "Measuring Marital Assimilation: Intermarriage among Natives and Immigrants", *Social Science Research*. 30: 289-312.