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Article

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Working conditions of immigrant women in household labour market: Murcia city

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Abstract

The massive of immigrant women in recent decades, has resulted in social and labour insertion of these effectively enforced through the domestic sector, but in which conditions? The Purpose of this study is to show the functioning of the domestic work market within Murcia City, through information provided by immigrant women (legal or illegal) and Spanish families, who requested services to various non profit organizations.

Resumen

La llegada masiva de mujeres inmigrantes durante las últimas décadas a España, ha encontrado en el sector de asistencia a domicilio una efectiva forma de inserción laboral, pero... ¿Bajo qué condiciones? El objeto de estudio de este trabajo es mostrar el funcionamiento de una parte del mercado de trabajo de Ayuda a Domicilio a partir de la situación en la de la mujer inmigrante en la ciudad de Murcia. Para ello se ha utilizado la información aportada por mujeres inmigrantes (en situación legal o ilegal) y familias autóctonas que acudieron a los servicios de mediación de diferentes entidades sin ánimo de lucro.

Palabras clave: mujer inmigrante, trabajo doméstico, oferta y demanda, condiciones laborales.

Jel Codes: J Labor and Demographic Economics. J4 Particular Labor Markets: J42 Monopsony; Segmented Labor Market

Keywords: Immigrant women, domestic work, supply and demand, labour conditions.

1. Introduction: Domestic Work

Domestic work, understood as a set of tasks aimed at maintaining and organizing home plus attention and care of people, has suffered significant discrimination in employment and social field. There are several characteristics applicable to this type of activity, but if we try to synthesize, it is possible to summarize it in two: this is a highly feminized activity and it is socially invisible.

One of the main reasons for this phenomenon is that domestic work has been performed and continues to play in the private sector or, in other words, this job did not exceed the limits of home. Unlike others activities such as agriculture or crafts, in that time especially since the industrial revolution, were integrated into the production system and markets, domestic work was anchored to the household and reproductive work (OSO and PARELLA 2012)

Before the industrial revolution no distinction was made between work and employment, since different tasks were performed in the family home (BEL 1998). But with the changes introduced by the new society, the industrial employment shifted others forms of contributing to the industrial employment, employee, male and outside home, the paradigm of all work (PARELLA 2003).

It is true that working from home is discredited, but not less necessary. In fact, in recent decades and Spanish families demand different services in their homes, due to social change about in our society and to the limited Spanish Welfare State (MARTÍNEZ 2010; GARCÍA, SANTOS and VALENCIA, 2012) which cannot cope with the situation. We are referring to two relatively new phenomena for Spanish society: the progressive aging of the population and the incorporation of women into labour market.

If the obligations of the home were covered by women (without any help from the state nor from male counterpart), this new situation generates a new need and Spanish women are now less willing to give coverage. Immigrant women (OSO and PARELLA 2012) now help to cope with the “vacancy” generated in the Spanish homes.

This phenomenon occurs not only in Spain but also in others European countries, such as France (FRESNOZA-FLOT 2009), Poland, Germany and Italy (KINDLER 2011; NÄRE 2013) and recently in Nordics countries, especially in the case of Finland (NÄRE 2012; WREDE and NÄRE 2013). Thus immigrant women replace to women belonging to developed European countries.

For Murcia Region, the massive of immigration, especially of women, has caused social and labour insertion of these, effectively enforced through employment in the household work market, which result in a very high volume of household work performed by immigrant women.

To this we must add that domestic workers have little social and economic recognition, since this type of work is socially invisible, causing domestic workers to be easily discriminated.

1.1 Conditions of Employment applied

As any job, the working conditions of a person employed in home care are established by a legal framework that regulates them. Depending on the nature of employment generated, we apply a kind law or another. The peculiarity of this regimen -that is one way of fraud and precariousness of this job- is established because it varies depending on the legal status of the contractor and the hours worked. For example, if the worker is employed by a public legal person (Social Services belonging to local authorities) or private (home help company), the employment relationship would be governed by the Workers Statute (E.T)¹ and therefore the General Scheme of Social Security is applied, whereas if he is hired by a family (which corresponds to employer) the Labour Relationship Service of Special Character family Home² with its own Social Security Scheme would apply.³

In most cases this latter legislation, is most frequently applied. As any working relationship, these two special laws regulate the components of labour conditions, such as: the employment contract, the tasks to be performed, the working hours, the weekly rest, the holidays and day off, the annual holidays, the wages, the social security obligations and the termination of the contract, dismissal or withdrawal.

This law, designated as “special”, sets significant differences (we are talking about differences that lower the worker conditions of an employee at home) with the Workers Statute (E.T) and also with the type of Social Security Scheme to apply, making this specific work in a second-rate job . For instance working time and rest period laws differ remarkably in both, as reflected in Articles 7 RD 1424/1985 and Articles 34 and 37 E.T. The alter Act the worker has a higher level of protection. Also establish differences in wages and bonuses (Article 6 R.D

¹ Workers Statute translation into Spanish “Estatuto de los Trabajadores” (E.T) and this law in Spanish is: “Ley 8/1980 de 20 de marzo del Estatuto de los Trabajadores”. It is the general labour law in Spain.

² “Real Decreto (R.D 1424/1985), de 1 de Agosto, que regula la Relación Laboral de Carácter Especial del Servicio del Hogar Familiar”. This law was applied between 1985-2011, and was amended by “R.D 1620/2011 de 14 de Noviembre”. The same applies to the applicable Social Security System, but definitely will not apply until the year 2019.

³ Law regulating Social Security Scheme (to household workers) in Spain: “Decreto 2346/1969 de 25 de septiembre que regula el Régimen de Seguridad Social Específico de Empleados de Hogar”. This law is also specific to “special jobs” like household work.

1424/1985 and Articles 26-31 E.T), as well as the obligation to submit payroll (Article 29 E.T), which in the case of R.D 1424/1985 not even contemplated.

As for Social Security System: If you are employed by one employer and only for a home, the employer has to do the processing of household worker (paying the appropriate fee) to the Social Security (Article 6.1.a D. 2346/1968), but if the person contracted provide services to several employers a time less than half the usual time (less than 20 hours in week), membership and registration for social security is for worker, who pay fee in full (Article 6.1.b D. 2346/1968).

The Spanish household work legislation is special though not in others European countries such in the case of Finland. In this Nordic country the general labour legislation Employment Contracts Act (55/2001) is applied to home workers, but that law is completed with Act on the Employment of Household Workers (951/1977), which is the specific law applied to household workers. The last one law regulates those situations which affected to home workers inside home, such as extra hours, horary and working week.

Germany is similar to Spain, because Home Work Act (14/04/1951) is also a specific law⁴, however there are differences with the specific Spanish law, because home workers from Germany enjoy to a large extent the same rights as other employees, which key Acts are The Civil Code (18/08/1896)⁵, Works Constitution Act (23/12/1988)⁶ and The Act on Collective Agreements (25/08/1969)⁷.

2. Migration in Region of Murcia

The strong growth of the foreign population in the Region of Murcia is being stated from the 90's, where the 1991 population census recorded just a few thousands foreigners, mostly to the first half of the decade of the century, which forms a period which has placed the development and consolidation of Murcia immigrant. The region experiences its high increases in the history of immigration since 2000. Proof of this is that in 2006 there were over 30.000 (30.224 according to the INE⁸), however with the beginning of the economic crisis in 2007, the number of immigrant people was reduced until 11.728 in 2010.

⁴ Last amended 16 December 1997.

⁵ Last amended 2 November 2000.

⁶ Last amended 19 December 1998.

⁷ Last amended 29 October 1974.

⁸ National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE).

Table 1. Immigrants from abroad by nationality with high residential in the Region of Murcia (2000-2010)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
America	14.909	11.530	12.027	11.880	8.100	7.702	11.308	10.503	6.231	2.760	1.706
Europe	1.567	2.659	4.360	5.962	8.900	9.836	10.691	11.694	4.982	3.855	3.681
Africa	3.455	4.466	5.129	5.669	9.577	11.193	7.241	7.405	6.933	4.282	2.140
Asia	80	134	112	169	486	536	345	513	644	390	341
Oceania	2	5	4	7	5	4	4	5	7	2	4
Total	20.605	19.130	22.369	24.451	27.801	29.897	30.224	31.929	23.443	15.506	11.728

Source: Survey of Residential Variations (Encuesta de Variaciones Residenciales, INE).

As seen in Table 1, the residential high foreign immigrants in municipalities in the Region of Murcia is characterized by the weight of Latin American people (specially in 2000 with 14.909, although from 2004 to 8.100 significantly decreases residential high⁹, but increase significantly in 2006 with 11.308). Latin American immigrants came to the residential high 11.244 in 2006, up from 2000 to the flow of Europeans and Africans.

As for the composition of immigrant women Table 2 shows that as from 2002, the number of female residents progressively increases. This fact contrasts with the growth of the 90's, because in that period, immigration was characterized as African as it was less common to see women of that continent.

This increase occurs simultaneously with the growth of Latino and Eastern Europeans residents. All these nationalities contain groups characterized by a remarkable number of women especially from Ecuador, Bolivia, Ukraine and Romania (PEDREÑO and TORRES 2008), although in general terms there are still more men than women immigrants.

In others countries immigrant women from Eastern Europeans countries especially from Ukraine and Poland are also growing. Two examples are Germany and Italy (KINDLER 2011), but in France and Finland Filipino women are beginning to become in the stars of several care jobs (FRESNOZA-FLOT 2009; NÄRE 2012).

⁹ High is understood like registered.

Table 2. Evolution of foreign registration certificate or valid residence card (1999-2009) by sex in the Region of Murcia

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Women	5.037	6.203	8.212	16.448	19.243	34.516	51.383	61.944	75.714	81.447	87.723
Men	10.976	16.291	19.036	36.356	38.791	58.292	84.704	98.435	112.871	116.178	122.191
Both	16.319	22.823	27.512	52.975	58.150	92.863	136.103	160.390	188.597	197.805	210.103

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Immigration, Ministry of Immigration and Emigration (Anuario estadístico de Inmigración, Secretaría de Estado de Inmigración y Emigración).

The economic sectors which need workers intensively, especially in recent decades are those in which the immigrant population has been over-represented (PEDREÑO and TORRES 2008): agriculture, construction and household work. Those are the sectors in which informal practices in employment relations most frequently occur, as demonstrated by several studies (COLINO 2007; GADEA 2012). In the case of immigrant women, they have participated in the care of the needs generated in the tertiary sector especially in home services such as housework, child care, elderly, sick and disable (RIQUELME and RUIZ 2012).

Something similar is happening in France, Germany, Italy, Finland and Norway, where female migrants are also working as domestic workers, caregivers, nurses or nursing assistant (FRESNOZA-FLOT 2009; KINDLER 2011; NÄRE 2012; WREDE and NÄRE 2013)...in many cases because these societies have the same problem which Spanish society: a high level of aging population.

3. Labour Market Analysis of Home Care: Status of Immigrant Women

The routes of immigrant women working in the area of home care pass from personal contacts (though friends and family) to press advertisements or on the street. But after residing for a while in a given area, they make new contacts, among which their own employers and non-profit entities to form part of their social and labour insertion.

This study focuses on this last point, this is to say, about making a description of the situation of immigrant women in the field of home care (household work), more specifically the subset of employed immigrant women who have used mediation services of non-profit organizations within Murcia City.

It is difficult to know with any precision the number of women working in the home given the high degree of statistical invisibility of this activity. Hence, to carry out this research, we used information generated by various non-profit organizations in their mediation activity. These are entities that register a large number of immigrants (in legal and illegal situation in Spain) to brief them on their training programs; programs for the labour market through training and employment exchange in the area of home (household work) to put at their disposal.

Below is a list of some organizations working with immigrant people and offering a series of actions aimed at social inclusion and employment for them:

a) Private Entities

- **Red Cross (Cruz Roja):** Develops training programs and job opportunities for immigrants with residence permits and work. Its area of action is the Region of Murcia.

- **Caritas (Cáritas):** Conducts training courses (nursing, cooking, job search techniques) and provision of job opportunities for immigrants. Its area of action is the Region of Murcia.

- **Columbares:** Develops training courses (in labor and leisure) and job opportunities for immigrants. Its scope is the region of Murcia.

- **FADE Foundation (Fundación FADE):** Provides immigrants with a series of training courses, as well as an employment agency. Its area of action is the municipality of Murcia.

- **CEPAIM:** Training courses and job opportunities for immigrants with residence permits and work. Its area of action is the Region of Murcia.

- **Radio Ecce Foundation (Fundación Radio Ecce):** Delivery of training and job opportunities for immigrants with residence permits and work. The performance area is the municipality of Murcia.

- **Murcia Welcomes (Murcia Acoge):** Offers training (social skills, greater care, food handling) and job opportunities for immigrants. The performance area is the region of Murcia.

b) Unions

- **General Union of Workers (Unión General de Trabajadores UGT):** Guidance and Counselling of immigrants in obtaining and maintaining the residence and work permit. Job opportunities for immigrants. Its area of action is the Region of Murcia.

- **Workers' Commissions (Comisiones Obreras, CCOO):** Training actions aimed at the territorial, labor law and issues of immigrant women. Its area of action is the Region of Murcia.

c) Additional Services

- **Training and Employment Service in the Region of Murcia (Servicio de Empleo y Formación de la Región de Murcia SEF):** Provides documents, legislation, links, addresses of organizations, jobs and training courses to immigrants. Its area of action is the Region of Murcia.

- **Immigrant Service: Department of Social Welfare and Promotion of Equality (Servicio de Inmigración: Departamento de Bienestar Social y Promoción de la Igualdad):** information and guidance, referral management, network performance and social integration for immigrants. The performance area is the municipality of Murcia.

d) Religious Entities

- **Congregation Sisters of Mary Immaculate (Congregación Hermanas de María Inmaculada):** helps immigrant women or not (also Spanish women), in training them in domestic work, diverting them to families wishing to hire them in their homes. Both the training activities as the provision of job opportunities are open to women in legal or illegal situation. Its area of action is the municipality of Murcia.

Among the entities mentioned and direct actions that aim to integrate the immigrant population, NGOs are private entities within the local government, unions and religious organizations. Thanks to its availability and accessibility, we have been able to gather the information needed to proceed with the development of the field work of this study.

Within these programs some are exclusively directed towards the social and professional integration of immigrant women through home help, which fosters continuous contact with Spanish families looking for immigrant women to cover their needs. Thanks to these entities we have been able to contact a large number of applicants and immigrant women engaged in this type of activities and a significant number of families wishing to employ them (immigrant women). Using information provided by both sides (supply and demand) as well as those responsible for these entities it has been possible to draw out a description of the working conditions of immigrant women and the characteristics of the labour market within Murcia City.

Obviously the results are partial (we cannot survey all the immigrant women working in household labour market) and we cannot establish a complete representative sample. However, despite these limitations, given the high number of respondents, the results provide very useful information to acknowledge the reality of these workers.

3.1 Methodology

Given the difficulty of obtaining data showing with any precision the object of our study, we resorted to the assistance of various non- profit entities to gather information necessary to conduct the research. These have provided us contact with 411 immigrant women who had

requested their mediation services to get a job in home care. Thanks to the contact made by these entities 381 women immigrants have been surveyed. Within the survey personal data of immigrant women (nationality, age, length of residence, marital status and family) and business data (education and training, professional experience in Spanish homes, tasks performed, duration in the post-working and causes of job-completion) were collected¹⁰.

These organisations have a database listing the characteristics of the offer (in this case, Spanish families wanting to hire immigrant women) and of the demand (i.e. data collected on immigrant women wanting to work in the household). Thanks to these entities we were able to contact 184 families, 149 of which have agreed to be surveyed. The survey records the profile of the supply such as the work week, hours, wages, tasks, Social Security pay and personal qualifications of the candidates. Note that all the data collected is of 2009 and belong to Murcia City. Using the data obtained, we developed a database, which allowed us to analyse these services partially.

3.1.1 Profiles of employment in household work offered by families

In this section we describe the characteristics of different jobs in the field of household work, depending on the type of position offered: **Internal** (if the employee resides in the home where she works), **External** (the worker does not sleep in the home where she works) and **Hourly** or **Per Hour** (to work four hours maximum per day).

Table 3 provides information on the type of rank offered, which corresponds to 43% internal, followed by 33% external position and finally the 24% per hours. As for the work week, we see that 45% of household requires a person from Monday to Friday, 42% from Friday to Saturday, 7% from Monday to Sunday and 6% individual days. In the case of internal work, 82% are looking for someone Monday to Saturday, 5% from Monday to Friday and 12% Monday to Sunday.

¹⁰ Survey model is available in annexes I y II.

Table 3. Offers Features: Total and type of job. Working conditions (%)

	TOTAL	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	HOURLY
Type of Job		43	33	24
Working Week				
Monday to Friday	42	5	63	78
Monday to Saturday	45	82	30	3
Monday to Sunday	7	12	7	0
Single days	10	3	3	33
Type of Contract				
Temporary	3	5	2	3
Temporary/Summer	3	25	5	3
Indefinite	94	70	95	94
Social Security				
Without Social Security	38	27	16	91
With Social Security	57	69	84	9
Average hours worked per week	44	59	44	18
Average Salary: Euros	597	719	639	335

For the external position it is observed that 63% of the offers are work from Monday to Friday, 30% from Monday to Saturday, 3% individual days and 7% work from Monday to Sunday. As for the offers to work per hours, we see that 78% of the offers are work from Monday to Friday, 3% from Monday to Saturday and 17% for single days work.

If we analyze the overall distribution of types of contracts we see that families are looking for job stable, since 94% want a person to work indefinitely, while 3% on a temporary basis. If we disaggregate the information by the type of job (internal, external and hourly), we note that it generally agrees with the results of all tenders.

The estimated average salary is EUR 597 (3.75 Euros/Hour) per month, with an average of 44 working hours per week. These entities determine this through negotiation in order to raise families on minimum wage to be paid. These organizations make it clear to the engaging party that you cannot deduct Social Security of the worker's minimum wage, as the trend of most families is paid below the minimum justified by the fact they do not have enough money.

The data telling us about Social Security are very interesting, simply because 38% of the families are not willing to pay it; this fact shows that 38% of the offers of the sample are left in the economy. The employers compromise to the employees to pay their Social Security, but in reality those employers do not pay, therefore the employees are the one paying the full amount

of their Social Security (EUR 160 per month in the year 2009). In the long run, they decide not to pay it due to the high amount, causing their job to remain in the underground economy

Since the entities responsible for carrying out mediation, insist that families must pay Social Security, the extra pay and vacation in these cases that are covered by the legislation. This point is very important because without improved working conditions, the need for these families to look for cover in their house, will not be covered in a stable manner, because these women, while working improperly, end up looking for another job with better conditions.

The results discussed above refer to the characteristics of all jobs, but the data do not reflect the same depending on the type of job. For example, there are also differences in the number of weekly working hours, because to become an intern nearly 60 hours a week (59 hours), while the legal maximum is 40 hours per week. The minimum weekly rest condition is often difficult to accept and respect by the families, who in many cases are looking for someone to work continuously seven days a week.

The average salary offered is of EUR 719 (2.59 Euros/Hour) per month, which is disproportionate in terms of the number of hours worked by the woman. On this point, the various responsible of the job boards (in non-profit entities) agree that in many cases families of poor working conditions do not have enough income to meet all expenditures.

On Social Security we see that almost 40% of households do not pay Social Security, including failure to pay the extra pay and vacation. This it's the reason why the majority of immigrant women with residence and work permit are not willing to work internally, but those who do not own and have just arrived in Spain are more willing to do so, even though they would rather work externally. Nevertheless they accept their situation as such.

When we speak of "the situation" we are referring to women newly arrived in Spain and in this study, more specifically in Murcia, and seeking to work in the domestic and internally because they manage a property which does not lead to any expense. This way, they can send the money to their country, while they remain in Spain with the minimum necessary. Once they have saved enough money to rent a room and get a residence permit and work, they seek to work outside the family and to enlist in Social Security.

As for the families, they initially want to hire a person with residence and work permit to work in domestic (although according to Table 3, 69% is discharged to the worker), but when it is impossible to find someone, they risk hiring someone in illegal situation, which logically cannot be registered in the Social System.

If we focus on the external set type, we see that the number of hours they work each week, it corresponds to almost 45, with an average salary of EUR 639 (3.93 Euros/Hour) per month. In the figure of foreign worker, we observed that 58% of the families are not willing to pay Social Security, while 42% do, but sometimes have to be the worker herself who is just met.

In terms of working per hours, the average weekly working hours is 18 hours and the average wage EUR 335 (5.89 Euros/Hour) per month. Note that a work per hours does not necessarily means that you sign up for Social Security to the worker (as stated in the legislation referred to the Special Employment Relationship for Domestic Employees R.D 1424/1985, described above), which is why 100% of the families who offered this job do not pay.

Table 4. Offers Features: Total and type of job. Tasks requested (%)

	TOTAL	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	HOURLY
Type of Tasks Requested				
1. Cleaning	92	90	98	86
2. Ironing	82	84	89	69
3. Cooking	71	79	87	36
4. Child care	44	31	74	31
5. Elderly care	38	60	22	17
Number of tasks performed at the same time				
1 task	13	10	7	27
2 tasks	7	3	4	18
3 tasks	22	19	13	39
4 tasks	56	68	72	15
5 tasks	1	0	4	0

To finish the job description, Table 4 shows information about the main tasks requested by the employee. The data reveal that 92% of the families require cleaning job, 82% ironing and 71% work in the kitchen. As for the attention of people, 44% for child care and 38% for elderly care. Finally it is interesting to see that most of the tasks are requested by the families to external workers (72% of surveyed households requesting 4 tasks), even 4% of the families are requested the 5 tasks together.

3.1.2 Description of the Application for employment in domestic work

Within this section we see a description of immigrant women seeking employment in the labour market of domestic work. The description focuses on personal and professional characteristics of those included in the survey.

Table 5. Personal Characteristics of job seekers by nationality and residence time (%)

	Bolivian women	Ecuadorian women	Moroccan women
Nationality	40	30	11
Average Years			
Average Age	35	39	33
Average Residence Time	4	7	5

Based on information provided by Table 5, 40% of the applicants are of Bolivian nationality¹¹, the second largest group originates from Ecuador (30%), and the last one is the group of Moroccan women (11%). There are also some other nationalities present but with very low weight (such as Brazil, Nicaragua, Colombia and Paraguay). As for the age factor, we note that three groups of women move in a similar age range, 35 years in the case of Bolivia, 39 years for Ecuador and 33 for Moroccan women.

The data in Table 5 show differences in the residence time between both groups. Bolivian women have an average of almost 4 year's residence while Ecuadorian has resided in Spain for over 7 years, and the Moroccan 5 years. These differences show that the Ecuadorian, Bolivian¹² and Moroccan women living for a longer period in Spain have a residence permit allowing them to reside in our country legally, because a time residence for more than 3 years is one of the various requirements which must, thereby achieving the coveted "Social Integration".

The most used by women to become legal immigrants is through "temporary residence permit for exceptional circumstances" (Article. 31.3 L.O 4/2000), particularly for socially embedded system. The requirements are:

- Residence of three years.
- Report of the Council, that request must have the quote in foreign.
- Work availability (Job certificate must be proven)

To the above must be added the presentation of the necessary documentation required under Article 42.2.b of the R.D 2393/2004 (Integration of three years).

¹¹ The fact that the Bolivian involving 40% of the data is not surprising, Bolivia was the last country to which the visa was imposed in order to travel to Spain and by 2007 a significant proportion of immigrants arrived in this country came to Murcia taking advantage of this feature.

¹² In the case of Bolivian women, they started to get the residence and work permit in Spain, because many of them have lived in Spain at least 4 years.

Table 6. Personal Characteristics of job seekers: Living situation and level of education (%)

	TOTAL
Marital Situation	
Living with the partner	29
Living without the partner	65
Children	
Women having children	71
Women living with their children	37
Women living without their children	54
Women without children	21
Level of Education	
Primary School	36
High School	44
College	15

According to the data of Table 6 we note that most women applicants do not live with their partner (65%), while 29% are claiming to live with their partner. Most of the applicants leave their families in their country of origin, becoming a strong source of income for them, once they have begun the migration Project. It was also noted that 71% of women applicants state that they have children, but 54% of them confess that they do not live with them in Spain, while 37% do.

On the question of training, the data show that 36% of the applicants have only a primary education, 44% high school and only 15% college. This phenomenon shows that we have a fairly large number of jobseekers with middling qualifications. It is true that the results reveal rather low skill levels, but in terms of work experience in this field, 90% of them say they have experience in Spain, compared with 10% who do not have experience in the same country (Table 7).

Table 7. Features job seekers experience in home care (%)

	TOTAL
Work Defendant	
Internal	55
External	74
Per hour	57
Professional Experience	
without experience in Spain	10
with experience in Spain	90
Type of Experience	
External	19
Internal	79
Per hours	2
Tasks Performed	
Cleaning	87
Ironing	67
Cooking	61
Child care	25
Elderly care	61
Average duration of professional experience: Years	2

Focusing on the type of experience, reflected in Table 7, we see that 79% have worked as internal, 19% external and 2% per hours. Interestingly, at this point, most respondents still have no residence permit and work and have acquired experience in domestic work as internal. Apparently, many immigrant women, especially from South America, follow the route, normally come alone (without family), and look for a job as internal worker to avoid having to pay rent for a room. When they start “making money” they are left with the least and send all they can to their families, since the income earned in Spain are significant amount of money in their home countries, in Bolivia especially. When they are close to reach the three years in Spain, they do their best to get a residence permit, and once achieved, they are able to visit their home country, and quit their job. When they return to Spain and they do not seek a job as internal, but they rather work as external so, they can have Social Security.

As for the tasks requested by the families (employers), cleaning was the main task 87%, followed by 67% ironing, cooking or elderly care 61% (due to the progressive increase in older people with high levels of dependence) and 25% for child care.

We talked about the experience of the applicants of this activity in previous years, so it is interesting to know what kind of job they want to cover. The data reveal that 74% of them want to work as external (though most have experience as an internal), 57% per hour and 55% like internal. Most of the women surveyed prefer to work as external, mainly because they are not deprived of their social and private life.

Regarding the work stability, the results show that (at least in appearance) these workers are not very stable, as they tend to stay 2 years in post. The main causes of the abandonment or termination of the contract are varied, most notably the death of the elderly people, the return to the home country, low wages, lack of days off, or employers unable to register their employees to the Social Security.

4. Conclusions

Domestic work is presented as one of the most important ways to achieve social and professional integration of immigrant women. Although it is not an easy road, but is plagued by insecurity, abuse, arbitrariness, gender discrimination and uncertainties. Among the various resources that these women possess to achieve their integration, there is the support given by various non-profit organizations which through training and employment exchanges available to immigrants (in this case for immigrant women) achieve greater inclusion of them in the Spanish society.

We know that household work is an activity that it is most often covered by immigrant women, but under what conditions? The starting point of these conditions is in the labour legislation governing the Special Relationship for Domestic Workers. This is a minimal legislation which in most cases does not come to fruition, deteriorating the situation of immigrant women, as shown in the results of the database in Murcia City.

To improve the working conditions of those employed in the household work is a very complex task, given the necessary interaction of the actors in this area (local government, unions, businesses and non-profit entities). It is true that in the early 90's, this activity was presented as an area of high potential for job creation, but in practice it has become a precarious area where immigrant women are the main path of integration, and for families a quick way to meet their needs (at least temporarily) and for administration in a job that exists, but remains in the shadow economy.

As the study tried to show, law and custom in this labor market are not going simultaneously, the latter being the predominant aspect that has just about the law, a fact which determines the strategies for improvement in working conditions of domestic workers and which ultimately makes them in the real agents of change.

Today these women have been found in non-profit entities a channel (at least "informal") which allows them to represent their professional reality, hence that we consider that these intermediary organizations can not only play a role with local families, but also with the other entities (local government, business home help, Social Security Treasury, etc..) to improve working conditions effectively. These entities have the information and trading tools to influence

change, inspiring the administrative authority for the legal management of the labor market, leaving the informal situation in which these entities are to act as mediators in a job remaining in the economy.

Another issue of growing interest is the process of legalization of most immigrant women surveyed, who claim an employment contract in writing and to register in social security contributions in the area in which they are employed: the domestic sector. This phenomenon could cause much of this labor market, which remains in the shadows, to emerge precisely because the regularization of foreign women would entail the regularization of their work as well, like the "King Midas" (the things which he touched turned into gold).

This is not only interesting for obtaining residence and work permit, but also to preserve it, as also required maintenance in the Social Security system in a context of economic crisis to affect other sectors where immigrant women are also represented (stores, hotels and shops). This situation is causing that many of them (especially women of Ecuador) decide to return to the domestic sector to be one of the last options to work in Spain and maintain their legal status¹³.

This return to the labor market of home help by legal immigrant women, who were employed in other economic activities, together with the increasing legalization of foreign women without legal status, could cause a significant proportion of employment generated in the domestic sector to become visible thanks to the regularization of the immigrant women, through the obtaining and maintenance of the resident permit and work in Spain.

¹³ In Spain, if immigrant people lose their job and are not able to pay the social security during 9 months, their residence becomes invalid and they therefore become illegal. This new legal change was introduced by the "R.D 1162/2009, de 10 de Julio", which amended "R.D 2393/2004 de 30 de Diciembre".

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ANNEX I: SURVEY TO FAMILIES (EMPLOYMENT OFFER)

Date:

1) Type of job and working conditions

- Type of job:

Internal External Hourly

- Type of contract:

Temporary Temporary summer Indefinite

- Working week:

Monday to Friday Monday to Saturday Monday to Sunday Single days

- Hours worked per week :

- Salary per month:.....

- Social Security:

Without Social Security With Social Security

2) Tasks requested

Cleaning Ironing Cooking Child care Elderly care

- Number of tasks performed at the same time

1 task 2 tasks 3 tasks 4 tasks 5 tasks

ANNEX II: SURVEY TO IMMIGRANT WOMEN JOB SEEKERS (EMPLOYMENT DEMAND)

Date:

1) Personal characteristics

- Age:.....
- Nationality:.....
- Residence Time:.....
- Marital situation:

Living with the partner Living without the partner

Children

Yes No

Women having children

Living with their children Living without their children

2) Level of education

Primary School High School College

3) Work Defendant

Internal External Per hour

- Professional experience:

Without experience in Spain With experience in Spain

- Type of experience:

External Internal Per hour

- Tasks performed:

Cleaning Ironing Cooking Chile care Elderly care

- Duration of professional experience:.....