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Literature on Job Mobility in Spain

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VII. Literature on Job Mobility in Spain

A review of the literature on spatial or geographic mobility in Spain shows that the greatest interest and scientific output regarding this subject have been focused on some very specific areas. In general, the studies that stand out are those conducted from an economic perspective, primarily focusing on the mobility of human resources in relation to the labour market and to unemployment¹. From the standpoint of demography and human geography, this subject has been dealt with by analyzing job mobility as a decisive factor in the spatial and urban planning of metropolitan areas². Finally, and to a lesser extent than the previous ones, existing publications that discuss this phenomenon from an ecological point of view should also be mentioned; these deal with the impact this mobility has on the environment in large cities³.

An analysis of the sources consulted reveals that there are no studies that differentiate among the different types of job-related mobility, nor are there any regarding the social consequences that it has for the life courses of individuals and their families. Furthermore, a general lack of quantitative data has periodically been observed in Spain as a whole, as well as a significant dearth of qualitative studies that contribute to reflection on the reasons for and effects of this mobility.

1. Job mobility and motility (incl. infrastructure)

1.1. Demands of high mobility of modern life

The growth in mobility is increasingly significant in developed societies, and this phenomenon may be approached from several scientific perspectives. In the Spanish literature, E. Bericat's reflection (1994) aimed at establishing a "Sociology of spatial

¹ See the contributions of: Antolin (1997), Bentolila (1997), Abellán (1998), Antolin (1999), Bentolila (2001), Albert and Toharia (2001), EOI (Escuela de Organización Industrial – Industrial Organization School) (2002), Luis Carnicer et al (2002).

² There is an interdisciplinary research group in Spain known as "Territorio y Movilidad" (Territory and Mobility), whose aim is to analyze daily mobility as a key element in the configuration of urban space. See: Gutierrez Puebla (1990), Salom et al (1995), Feria and Susino (1996), Módenes (1998), Castañer et al (2001), Módenes (2002), Módenes and López (2003) or Sánchez Gutierrez's thesis (2005) from an urban economy perspective.

³ See the annual reports of the Metropolitan Mobility Observatory (Observatorio de la Movilidad Metropolitana) published by the Ministry of the Environment (the latest is from October 2005), which deal with issues relating to mobility and the urban environment (influence of transport on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and atmospheric pollutants generated by transport, urban mobility plans, etc.).

mobility” (“Sociología de la movilidad espacial”) is worthy of note. According to this author, contemporary advanced societies are characterised by the transformations that mobility structures are causing in the social structure. This change includes what is known as “nomadic sedentariness,” which is associated with improved infrastructures that make mobility possible without migration. In this society, individual job-related mobility accounts for a considerable share of the total number of journeys. In referring to this travel, the author makes a distinction among three types: mobility to work, mobility in or at work and mobility because of work⁴.

From a quantitative standpoint, different studies regarding some of Spain’s Autonomous Communities show the increase in the amount of time devoted to daily commutes⁵. The production of statistical data for Spain as a whole is very recent (MOVILIA survey on mobility, 2001; census, 2001; ECVT [Encuesta de calidad de vida en el trabajo - Survey on Quality of Life at Work], 2002-2004). According to De Miguel (2002), regarding the percentage of Spaniards whose one-way commute is over half an hour, Madrid (41%) stands out greatly over two other urbanised regions, the Basque Country (21%) and Catalonia (17%). Madrid’s truly exceptional situation is due to the fact that the entire region is, in practice, a metropolitan area. The opposite holds true for more integrated areas, with a smaller urban scale, such as La Rioja (4%), Cantabria (8%) and the Balearic Islands (10%). According to this author, this increase in the overall commute time in Spain is due to the fact that the structure of the housing market is quite rigid, as it is much more heavily weighted towards owning than towards renting. Over 80% of households own their homes (a disproportionate figure by European standards). Other causes include the fact that the population is heavily concentrated in urban communities, even in agricultural areas; the deficient public transport system; the lack of job mobility; and the persistence of the split shift, which in many cases means the number of trips is doubled.

As far as interregional job mobility is concerned, the periodic reports of the Occupational Labour Observatory (Observatorio Ocupacional de Empleo) show a rising trend in the last five years (2000-2005), with commutes between Autonomous Communities

⁴ The first one refers to round trips that generally take place to go back and forth between the home and the workplace; the second focuses on spatial movements required to perform the functions of or by the content of the job; and finally, mobility because of work is mobility in which the family home stays in the same place while one of the members of the household temporarily changes residence during workdays (Bericat, 1994).

⁵ See Artis Ortuño, 1998 for the case of Catalonia; Salom and Delios, 2000, for Valencia; Fera and Susino, 2001, for Andalusia; and Sánchez Gutierrez, 2005, for Madrid.

growing at a faster rate than those between provinces (2005)⁶. Therefore, commutes are longer. In the shared thinking of Spanish workers, there is also a greater awareness of the increased need for job mobility. The study conducted by Alemán Páez (1999) indicates that this type of mobility is considered to be increasingly important in today's society, even essential to coping with the changes taking place in the productive environment. Thus, a growth in this type of mobility is expected in the medium and long term.

This greater predisposition should not disguise the costs that this mobility entails, as these are still being seen as very significant barriers. Issues such as the loss of quality of life (De Miguel, 2002) and the risk of a decrease in elements of social integration between the worker and his environment (EOI, 2002), among others, may explain the resistance found in Spain to this type of mobility. Bericat (1994) listed the following ten types of costs as those generated by a mobile society: expenses relating to road infrastructure, technical infrastructure, energy, parking, accidents, social supervision and organisation, as well as hidden, induced, and derivative expenses.

1.2. Mobility potential or motility: the access to transport infrastructure

In the area of infrastructures as a whole, those relating to transport are of primary importance for mobility and for the development of any country. Their importance is particularly evident in Spain and its regions because of the imbalance in the geographic distribution of the population and the country's peripheral location in the European Community. In this respect, according to data from the Ministry of Development (2004), Spain has improved its total transport infrastructures significantly compared to the situation that existed prior to joining the EU. The investment in recent years, measured in terms of GDP, has been above the EU average, and this has enabled Spain to narrow and close the gap in the allocation of public capital that existed in comparison to the rest of Europe in the mid 1980s⁷.

Despite the improvement in transport infrastructures, some limitations in the transport system still persist and must be corrected. The principal problems include: in road transport,

⁶ However, the data provided by the ECVT survey on the average territorial mobility in Spain for the period from 1999-2002 show that mobility between provinces, regardless of the Autonomous Community to which the province belongs, is 23.7%, and spatial mobility between Autonomous Communities is 19.7% (Requena, 2005).

⁷ European Community funds have contributed significantly to this investment, which indicates how important European cohesion policy is for Spain. As an example, co-financed investments represented 40% of total government outlays in 2004 (Ministry of Development and associated public agencies), and rose to 65% in Objective 1 regions (Ministry of the Presidency, 2005).

the radial structure of the main highway and motorway system, which causes a lack of accessibility in some parts of the country; and in rail transport, the fact that a large part of the rail lines in the national system have a different gauge than the European standard. There are also structural deficiencies in the Spanish rail system, with notable differences in quality and safety from one rail line to another (Ministry of Development, 2004). The demand for transport is also increasing in Spain at a faster pace than that of economic growth, with greater elasticity than in other developed countries. While this elasticity will tend to decrease and to converge with the European average, it is foreseeable that in years to come the greater dynamism of the Spanish economy will be associated with substantial increases in passenger and goods traffic (Ministry of Development).

Studies have been conducted that demonstrate the significant relationship between improvements in infrastructures, economic growth and mobility, such as the one coordinated by Ugoiti (1999). Other more specific studies have focused on the evaluation of transport infrastructures and their effects on regional development, through the use of accessibility indicators (Orellana, 1994); the key role that roads in Spain play in social and economic development (Lobo Gutierrez, 1993)⁸; and the role of the railway system in land use planning and in the mobility of the population (Fundación de Ferrocarriles Españoles [Spanish Railways Foundation], 1997).

1.3. Mobility potential or motility: the competences

In the study on the competences that facilitate or impede the mobility of the Spanish population, the ones referring to educational level stand out⁹. Two studies demonstrate this relationship: the one carried out by De Miguel (2002) using information from the Survey on Quality of Life at Work (ECVT), and the Bancaja Report (2005) prepared from data from the census (2001).

Both show that there is a positive relationship between the educational level of the employed and daily commutes to a municipality other than the one of residence. In the case of workers who have completed no more than primary education, this percentage does not

⁸ It should be recalled that road transport has a disproportionately high share in the modal split in Spain at this time, both for passengers, where it represents 91% of all journeys (in terms of passenger-kilometres), and for goods, where road transport accounts for 84% of total tonne-kilometres. (Ministry of Development, 2004).

⁹ The EU's Report (2004) on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Skills and Mobility places special emphasis on raising education and training levels in EU countries, as a key competence in increasing mobility in years to come.

exceed 25 %, while for those with university studies it is over 35%. Specifically, 39 % of those who have completed three-year degrees, 39 % of university graduates and 36 % of PhDs work outside of their place of residence. Similarly, it has also been observed that the workers with the longest commutes are generally those with higher educational levels (Bancaja, 2005)¹⁰.

The explanation provided by De Miguel (2002) is that people with higher education probably live in large cities, where travel takes longer. Furthermore, university graduates usually prefer to live in suburbs or outlying areas; in other words, they exchange nature or peace and quiet for increased travel time. In a congested area like Madrid, where there are more cars than households, driving every day does not save much time. As far as job mobility involving residential changes is concerned, the Occupational Labour Observatory (2005) believes that there is a polarisation of the highest rates at both ends of the educational spectrum, i.e., those with university studies on the one hand and those with lower than Compulsory Secondary Education (Spanish acronym ESO) on the other.

Despite having educational levels similar to or even higher than men's, women show lower mobility rates in general. This may be due to a significant lack of motility. Nevertheless, according to the detailed study on gender differences in daily work-related journeys conducted by Casado (2000-2003), in which the Community of Valencia is taken as a reference, these differences should take several nuances into consideration, such as occupational categories¹¹ and the highest level of education achieved¹².

1.4. Mobility potential or motility: the appropriation, the culture of mobility

According to Bericat (1994), advanced developed societies create a culture of mobility that becomes woven into the fabric of our lives, resulting in a lifestyle and a set of customs and practices different from other types of societies. Today's citizens form part of society through mobility and tend towards mobility in a world of dramatic changes. However, this general ethos towards movement does not eliminate cultural differences between countries

¹⁰ People whose commute is half an hour or less have completed around 10 years of study or less, while those whose commute is more than half an hour have completed around 11 years of study (Bancaja, 2005).

¹¹ Mobility among women is higher than among men in several groups that represent a large number of workers: professionals, teachers and healthcare workers. In these occupations, characterized by high educational requirements and high average income, female mobility is over 38% compared to the overall mean among women, which is 22.34%, in other words, 70% higher (Casado: 2003:9).

¹² The gap between men and women narrows as the educational level increases, and for those with university studies, the trend is reversed: in these groups, female mobility is higher than male mobility (Casado: 2003:10).

and regions whose citizens are more predisposed to mobility in some places than in others.

Spain has traditionally been characterised by low levels of mobility among its population, a fact that has often been discussed by economists and demographers (Bentolila, 1997 and 2001, and Gutierrez Puebla, 1990); most of them have explained this greater lack of mobility through demographic, economic and institutional factors (Llano and Gómez, 2005)¹³. There are few studies that focus on the cultural variable (although some allude to it). Among the research that places greater emphasis on this facet, the investigation conducted with workers by Alemán Paéz (1999) from a qualitative perspective is worthy of note.

This author believes that understanding Spanish culture is essential to understanding the fact that workers are less predisposed to mobility. This culture is, in turn, expressed in a series of obstacle-forming subcultures. The first of these is the subculture of “home ownership” to the detriment of a “rental” culture¹⁴; second, the presence of a strong family culture¹⁵ that would place great importance on community factors in deciding whether or not to migrate (the spouse’s chances of finding work would be evaluated, as well as the age of the children and their educational opportunities); and finally, idiosyncratic characteristics typical of some regions of Spain that would hinder mobility would also have to be taken into consideration, such as, for example, the existence of an own language (Catalan, Basque or Galician), customs and specific forms of integration into the new social environment. If this type of culture had less of an influence, it would facilitate mobility; this is, in fact, what happens in the case of immigrants¹⁶.

¹³ Among demographic factors, variables such as the following are mentioned: family structure, educational level, the presence of cultural barriers and the ageing of the population. Factors of an economic nature include: economic capacity, expectations for the evolution of the labour market and the cost of housing and transport. Institutional factors include: the degree of political decentralization, the generosity of the social welfare system and unemployment benefits, the mechanisms for redistributing income and the scope of collective bargaining in the national labour market (Llano and Gómez, 2005).

¹⁴ See the study by Módenes and López (2004) on residential mobility, work and housing in Europe. In this study, the authors speculate on whether countries with a more rigid residential system, such as Spain, also have more limited job mobility. In other words, it would not be so much that those who change jobs do not move around much, but that only those who do not need to change their place of residence change jobs.

¹⁵ With regard to impediments to mobility of a family nature, EOI’s qualitative research (2002) indicates that the presence of family values plays a very important role in the life courses of workers. As far as age is concerned, “older people assume that the family is the essential and sometimes only cause, while young people give greater priority to other relationships that help them increase their awareness of identity and belonging. Family loyalty is set against job loyalty. Preferring work is seen as synonymous with not loving the family” (2002: 82)

¹⁶ According to Llano and Gómez (2005), there is an extensive group of factors that suggest that immigrants have greater job mobility compared to the citizens of the country, alluding to the fact that immigrants are less attached to their place of residence, have a greater tendency to rent than to own, have, on average, a lighter burden of family responsibilities, etc.

2. Family functioning, family structure, family development

2.1. Family structures

In recent years, different studies have been undertaken from the perspective of family sociology, designed to learn about the changes taking place in family structures in Spain. A general norm in these studies has been that the unusual thing about these structural changes is not their direction (as they tend towards uniformity with other European countries) but the speed at which they have occurred (Iglesias de Ussel, 1998).

Different studies have analyzed some of the consequences of the “post-modernisation of the family” (Meil, 1999) and of the pluralisation of family forms¹⁷; these changes have been shaping the “new Spanish family” (Alberdi, 1999). Studies have also been carried out on new family forms, such as single-parent families (Fernández Cordón and Tobío, 1999; Arrollo, 2005), cohabitation (Meil, 2003), and dual-earner couples (Dema, 2005). Another phenomenon that has captured the interest of researchers is the introduction of the process of individualisation into the family and its influence on paternal (Flaquer, 1999) and maternal roles (Tobío, 2005), as well as on the couple’s intimate relations (Díaz et al, 2004) and on the new “flexible” family lifestyles (Alberdi and Escario, 2003).

Despite the fact that all of these studies analyze the changing functioning of Spanish families, our review of the literature found very few studies containing references to the relationships between family structures and mobility. The only investigations that come close to the purpose of our study are those conducted on “weekend marriages” in Spain by Ruiz Becerril (2003) and Rodrigo Soriano (2005), using qualitative methodology.

2.2. Family functioning

In the absence of studies that link family relationships to mobility, one resource that can be used to shed light on this phenomenon is to take advantage of different socio-demographic variables in surveys in which variables relating to mobility have been included, such as, for example, the time it takes to get to work. In the study conducted by Alemán Páez (1999), in which data from the 1998 Working Population Survey (Encuesta de Población Activa) are used, a greater willingness to move around is seen in those who are single,

¹⁷ See: 5th FOESSA Report (Fomento de Estudios Sociales y de Sociología Aplicada – Promotion of Social Studies and Applied Sociology) (1995), Pérez Díaz et al (2000), Del Campo and Briosio (2002) and Del Campo (2003).

separated and divorced, with the trend being reversed among those who are married or widowed. In other words, a greater resistance is seen to mobility once family responsibilities have been taken on, and after the death of a spouse, the latter perhaps due to a greater attachment to the immediate personal context when this type of loss is suffered.

The data from the Survey on Quality of Life at Work (2002-2004) also makes it possible to learn about different mobility-related characteristics of the Spanish population. A larger proportion of daily commuters feel that their work is stressful, and in general terms, they are more satisfied with their salaries, although not with household income. With regard to their daily lives, they claim to be more dissatisfied with the amount of free time they have and with their lives, but not unhappier than others. With respect to those who are less mobile, they have a greater desire to change jobs, and if they had a choice, they would devote more time to being with their families and friends and to leisure pursuits and relaxation (in that order). As far as the family variable is concerned, it usually takes those who are married or have a partner longer to get home from work, on average, than it does those who are unmarried or do not have partners.

2.3. Family functioning: The division of domestic and professional labour within couples

From a quantitative standpoint, and despite the lack of specific studies on this dimension, some relevant results can be obtained on a national level from the data provided by the ECVT (2004). The division of routine tasks by type of marriage (traditional, collaborative and egalitarian¹⁸) shows that males whose commute to work takes longer (one hour or more) have traits most closely resembling those of a “traditional” marriage (77% compared to 69% of those whose commute is less than one hour). For women who spend more time commuting, the “traditional marriage” category predominates (57%), although a greater presence of collaborative (21%) and egalitarian (21%) marriages are seen. Something similar occurs with child care, in that the most mobile men are the least collaborative (69% traditional marriage). Women who have the greatest mobility and have small children are usually in collaborative (63%) and egalitarian (25%) relationships. Thus, an analysis of these

¹⁸ Traditional marriages would be those in which chores are not shared and all of the housework is performed by the woman, while the man does not take part or collaborate in any household task. In a collaborative marriage, the woman does most of the housework, while the husband collaborates in it. The tasks are not divided equally, because the man only collaborates when the woman asks him to. In egalitarian marriages, the division of labour between the man and the woman is fairly balanced. The housework is shared between the two, and both collaborate as much as they can.

data shows significant differences by gender, revealing that increased mobility may contribute to maintaining traditional family models in the case of men, and to an evolution towards more egalitarian forms in the case of women.

Existing qualitative studies only focus on long-distance marriages or “weekend marriages,” and the results obtained yield disparate conclusions. Ruiz Becerril (2003) defends the idea that in these marriages, a very fair division of tasks takes place during the time the couple are together. This issue is not negotiable; the need is assumed and does not have to be formally and explicitly expressed. In this more symmetrical situation, it is the male who makes a greater effort to be equal to the woman in work-related separations.

Rodrigo Soriano (2005) believes that many variables relating to the marriage must be taken into consideration (such as the division of tasks before the separation; after the separation; according to the reason for the separation; according to the stage of the marriage, the couple’s ages and academic background; or according to the type of reunification). The author concludes that a separation of residence hinders rather than favours equality in the division of tasks, because the small amount of participation by the male in these tasks disappears almost entirely when he spends most of his time away from home; thus, the woman is, once again, almost solely responsible for all household chores. In marriages where both the husband and wife work, the fact that they live apart has an impact on the division of household tasks; those who have two homes are affected because the work is multiplied, and those who travel are affected, because it is the woman who performs all of the chores, with the increased stress that this can cause.

Although no definitive conclusion can be reached about either of these theories, the classic literature has shown a significant relationship between the division of domestic tasks and mobility, according to Casado (2000-2003). Female workers devote more time to the care of their children and to household chores than men do, and therefore choose jobs that are nearer to their places of residence than those chosen by men, because their lower salaries and shorter working hours reduce the cost-effectiveness of their commutes. Another reason is that their responsibilities at home increase the cost of longer commutes. This is consistent with a fact observed in a study conducted in the Community of Valencia, according to which working women have greater mobility levels than those of male workers in several occupational categories associated with higher income: specialised industrial workers, architects, engineers, teachers, etc.

2.4. Family functioning: an autonomous self versus a family as a group

Despite the studies conducted on processes of individualisation in family life (Meil, 1999; Alberdi and Escario, 2003; and Diaz et al, 2004), the relationship between this phenomenon and mobility has not been confirmed. Only Ruiz Becerril (2003: 181) states, with regard to weekend marriages, that “this type of marriage could be seen as an extension of the individualism and the supremacy of the person over the couple, a fact that we do not share; we believe that, in Spain at least, couples place a high value on their marriages and have a high opinion of the family. If they had to choose between the couple or the family and work, they would give up the latter. We would agree that this family form could be considered the epitome of the separation between workplace and family, at least for one of the members.”

The conclusion reached by the author also needs to be qualified. There are different types of weekend marriages that should be differentiated according to several characteristics. Ruiz Becerril himself (2003) eventually acknowledges two ideal types. One of these involves young couples under the age of 45, childless, whose separation for work-related reasons lasts around a year. The situation has arisen because of an opportunity for a new job, and the personal fulfilment of each member of the couple carries significant weight in the motives for this separation. The other ideal type refers to older couples, over the age of 45, with children in their care (typically two). Their period of separation is longer, around eight years on average, and the situation is motivated by the promotion of one of the members of the couple rather than a new job.

2.5. Family functioning: Family problems and ways of coping

From the standpoint of problems arising because of mobility, commuters in Spain – according to the data from the ECVT (2002-2004), as mentioned earlier – are more likely to feel that their jobs are stressful than those who are less mobile, even though they are more satisfied with their salaries. Mobility has a greater impact on family life in weekend marriages, and the studies of Rodrigo Soriano (2005) and Ruiz Becerril (2003) practically coincide in this regard. The latter states that one of the main inconveniences is having to modify the pace of one’s daily life to adjust to living alone, and the feeling of a loss of time and place because of having to change location at least twice a week. From a health perspective, the effects are primarily measured in psychological terms, because of the loneliness and stress resulting from the circumstances themselves.

Rodrigo Soriano (2005) takes special pains to point out the distress caused by loneliness, expressed in the harsh fact of having to make decisions alone and bring up the children on one's own. This author also underlines the lack of dialogue and loss of intimacy in the relationship. This type of marriage runs a greater risk of disturbances in the marital relationship, caused by the absence of conversation, social isolation, emotional distancing, sole parenting, an overload of domestic tasks, changeable feelings or infidelity.

2.6. Family life cycle

The family life cycle is closely linked to the family's capacity for mobility. This can be seen through an analysis of the age variable, the time it takes to get to work by type of family, or the residential changes characteristic of the life cycle. With regard to age, Alemán Páez (1999), De Miguel (2002) and Requena (2005) corroborate the fact that younger people (aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 34) with fewer family responsibilities and greater expectations of integration into the labour market and of finding better opportunities are the ones who show the most willingness towards geographic mobility. After these ages, the trend steadily declines, because these individuals have taken on family commitments and become established in their jobs.

As far as daily commuters are concerned, according to the type of family to which they belong (using the 2004 data from the ECVT), the ones who spend more time in commuting to work are those whose family structure is "couple with children" or "mother with children." This is no doubt motivated by the fact that they live in lower-cost homes in more remote areas, as they have a higher burden of family-related expenses. The ones with the shortest commute are those who belong to a single-parent, male-headed family, and "childless couples."

Mobility, family life cycle and economic position are three factors that should be taken into account when analyzing residential changes. Módenes' studies (2000) on residential mobility and the family dynamics of urban youths in the 1980s, or the one conducted by the same author in 2004, demonstrate this. When a certain degree of job stability is attained, individuals and their households may undergo certain residential changes. The achievement of residential aspirations often depends on a successful career path. This factor is increasingly important. When only one of the couple works, mobility rates are higher, as it is not easy to make the transition from renting to owning. Dual-earner couples have less mobility because the percentage of those who own their homes increases. The

differences between the mobility rates for couples with one member or both members working are not great, but they are consistent in most EU countries: around one or two percentage points higher for the former. In this respect, Susino's study (2006) on demographic processes and family strategies relating to residential mobility is also interesting.

3. Job market

3.1. Social mobility and spatial mobility

Although there are no specific studies in Spain dealing with the influence that spatial mobility has on social mobility, it is possible to arrive at interesting conclusions through the analysis of certain sources. For example, through the data provided by the Occupational Labour Observatory (2005), the most dynamic sectors in this respect can be identified, as well as the occupations with the highest mobility rates. The highest percentages in mobility rates occur in agriculture and construction, which account for more than half of the contracts involving inter-provincial travel.

Furthermore, if the ten most representative occupations in terms of mobility are analyzed, it can be seen that four of them account for one third of the contracts involving interprovincial travel (bricklayers, farm labourers, labourers in the manufacturing industry and shop assistants). There is a logical correspondence between the occupations that have high mobility rates and the economic activities that also have high rates. Thus, occupations relating to agriculture and construction have a higher-than-average level of interprovincial mobility, while the rate in other occupations is lower.

Requena's study (2005) on people who migrate, which directly links the variables under study, is much more exact and enlightening. This author, using data from the ECVT (1999-2002), shows that spatially mobile workers generally achieve a higher status. The main conclusion that can be reached from this is that migrants have much higher levels of occupational achievement, as well as greater opportunities for upward mobility. In fact, migrants have higher intergenerational mobility rates than those who have never moved away from their place of birth. This situation is further accentuated among women who leave the place where they were born and go to another province to work. In general, leaving one's birthplace is related to a higher socioeconomic status.

The author explains this relationship between migration and upward mobility through a varied set of causes and circumstances. First of all, emigration means breaking with a series

of traditional ties, pressures and social commitments, giving the emigrant greater freedom of time and resources. In addition, emigration involves a significant psychological cost, which implies the selection of the most capable. In fact, as De Miguel pointed out as far back as 1965, businesspeople from outside have greater possibilities for advancement than local ones.

3.2. Spatial mobility choices according to opportunities and requirements of the job market

As argued throughout this bibliographic review, mobility rates in Spain are lower than those of other countries in its sphere. From an economic perspective, the requirements of the job market in relation to mobility are variables that have traditionally been studied¹⁹. Bentolila's studies (1997 and 2001) are among the most significant ones. According to this author (1997), a singular trait of the Spanish economy in the last 25 years has been the low level of interregional migration²⁰, which he sees as a very negative factor for dealing with future economic disturbances within the EU. He explains the causes for this lack of mobility among Spaniards from the standpoint of the economy: the national unemployment rate has meant a drastic reduction in job opportunities in all of Spain, which has negatively affected migration. Secondly, major institutional changes (political decentralisation, regional redistribution of income, the expansion of the welfare state and trade union activity) reduce incentives for migration.

From the perspective of residential mobility in relation to job markets, the study by Módenes and López (2004) concludes that in countries characterised by early home ownership, such as Spain, the mobility of individuals with few and uncertain resources is limited in comparison to the rest of the population because they can make few residential adjustments, whether these are desired or brought on by family, economic or job circumstances. However, this lack of mobility in difficult employment circumstances leads to the conclusion that, in part, these individuals can use a strategy of low mobility and an emphasis on stability, which also makes it possible to maintain proximity-based social relations. Therefore, one must conclude that low mobility is a restriction (for example, in the loss of job opportunities, and not only those that involve long-distance migration), but it may

¹⁹ See: Bentolila and Doblado (1991), Ródenas (1994), Bover and Velilla (1997), Antolín and Bover (1997), De la Fuente (1999), Bover et al (2000), and Barceló (2001).

²⁰ As an example, the author cites the case of Andalusia and its behaviour during the last major economic recession suffered by the Spanish economy in 1994. This region, which had the highest unemployment rate in its recent history (34%) and which remained the area with the second-lowest per capita income in Spain, had no emigration at all. In 1994, Andalusia had a net influx of population from the rest of Spain (although this was minimal: 2,327 people).

also be a strategy that is consciously sought.

3.3. Localisation of jobs within each country, spatial distribution of various kinds of jobs

The distribution of job markets in Spain and the mobility of workers in relation to these markets have evolved significantly in recent years. According to Bentolila (2001), the flows were one-way from poor regions to richer ones in the 1960s, giving rise to high net migration balances; however, the situation changed in the 1980s, creating a paradoxical situation in which the regions that had had net losses now had net gains and vice-versa, resulting in “very small net flows” (Puyol and García, 1997).

At this time, according to data from the Occupational Labour Observatory (2005), which analyzes worker inflow and outflow rates²¹ for Spain’s Autonomous Communities:

a) La Rioja is the autonomous community which has both the highest inflow and outflow rates, and these rates are similar. Castile-La Mancha, Navarre, Murcia and Aragón have similar characteristics, but to a lesser degree. These are autonomous communities with an open job market and with strong, balanced exchanges with other regions in Spain.

b) There is another group of communities in which the outflow rate is high and the inflow rate is low. These usually send workers out and seldom receive any. The ones where this situation is the most pronounced are Extremadura and Asturias.

c) At the opposite extreme are those that have a high inflow rate and a low outflow rate. These are autonomous communities that mainly receive workers, with a small proportion of workers who go out to other communities. This is the case of Madrid and the Balearic Islands (the latter because of their insular character), and to a lesser degree, Catalonia and the Canary Islands.

With regard to inter-provincial flows²², the ones that experienced the greatest increase in 2005 in absolute terms were the ones from Alicante to Murcia, from Barcelona to Tarragona, from Madrid to Guadalajara and Toledo and from Valencia to Castellón.

²¹ A high rate of outflow from an autonomous community indicates that a substantial number of workers residing in that community have been hired to work in another one.

²² In terms of mobility, “flow” is considered to be the number of employment contracts that involved a commute from workers’ homes to their workplaces, as long as the latter are in a different province, during a specific period of time.

Conversely, the ones that experienced the greatest decrease were those going from Seville to Cádiz, Córdoba, Málaga, Jaén and Madrid, from Barcelona and Madrid to La Coruña, from Cádiz to Málaga and from Valencia to Vizcaya.

4. Social integration, social capital

4.1. Composition of networks

In general, the Mediterranean countries in southern Europe have been characterised by the existence of an informal network (primarily made up of relatives and friends), and the high value placed on it. This network is used in a variety of ways in everyday life. In Spain, despite the changes that have taken place in recent years, the culture of values continues to be dominated by the high level of consensus about the importance of the family²³ (Camarero, 2003). This high value is evidenced to a large degree by the development of what Meil (2000) has called “relational solidarity,” i.e., the set of relationships that are formed in the primary groups (relatives, friends, neighbours) which enable mutual support functions to be developed and provide material and subjective assistance among its members.

According to Meil (2000), Spaniards use a variety of strategies to organise and maintain this relational solidarity:

a) The geographic proximity of different generations. During the initial or middle stages of the family life cycle, most nuclear families live in the same town or city as at least one of their parents (the bigger the size of the municipality, the more this probability is reduced).

b) The high frequency of contact, primarily due to geographic proximity. Childless individuals see their neighbours and friends somewhat more frequently than those with children (however, there does not seem to be a greater relational density with a higher number of children).

c) Intergenerational leisure practices. Leisure, recreation and relaxation time takes place within the framework of heavily structured relationships. Families usually prefer to use

²³ Camarero's study (2003) based on Eurobarometer survey data shows that: 98.6% of Spaniards affirm that their family is the most important thing in their lives; 96.2% say that they would be willing to sacrifice everything for their family; 82.8% feel that their family's opinions matter a lot or quite a lot when they have to make important life decisions; 99.5% feel that the family is important, and 79% say the same thing about marriage (a significant difference); and 91.4% believe that it would be a good thing if more importance were given to family life in the future.

leisure time as a family.

However, an analysis of this relational structure should not hide the alterations and equilibriums in the different stages of the family life cycle. Meil's study (2001) regarding the Community of Madrid reveals the different uses of leisure time relating to family and friends according to the stage of the family life cycle of those interviewed. The use of free/leisure time primarily for family activities, compared to with friends, tends to increase as the family life cycle advances: as long as individuals have no partner (but do have residential independence), or no children, leisure time is spent mostly with friends. However, when children come along, this time tends to be more focused on family members, especially parents. As the children get older, this emphasis on the family is reinforced, although this does not mean that there is no longer contact with friends at greater or lesser intervals. Thus, family ties are reproduced and reinforced over the generations, with children as the primary mediators in the family.

With regard to the influence of social networks in relation to mobile persons, there are only references to weekend marriages in Spain though the studies mentioned earlier. Ruiz Becerril's research (2003) shows that couples in this situation usually have very good relationships with their parents and even very good close relationships with their in-laws. As far as friendships are concerned, a certain distancing takes place because of a lack of time, as weekends are devoted to spouses or partners. However, these networks remain intact and are even expanded with new friends.

Rodrigo Soriano's study (2005) on the maintenance of friendships shows that as a general rule, these relationships become weaker for several reasons. Some married couples find that the intensity of the relationships diminishes because there is less available time, as part of this time is taken up by commuting; this significantly reduces opportunities to be with old friends. These friendships might also be weakened because couples prefer to spend the little time they have together by themselves. Nevertheless, there are cases in which old friendships are not only maintained, but the network is expanded in the new workplace. According to the author, this especially takes place when the woman is the one who works outside of the home environment.

4.2. Social support, social networks and social capital

The establishment and maintenance of informal networks through family solidarity has given rise to the formation of what some authors have called a “Mediterranean family system” (Flaquer, 2004 and 2005). The family network acts as reserve “relational capital” which, depending on needs and circumstances, can be activated to resolve problems which must be faced in the course of one’s life. The type of help that can be obtained from the family network is very extensive, ranging from a feeling of belonging to a community, which operates on the basis of ascriptive and particularist values, to benefits with no direct compensation in return in the form of money or services, including the inheritance of means of subsistence. Meil (2001) has summarised these forms of assistance as belonging to several groups: a) Those relating to the care and nurture of children, especially when they are or were small, of pre-school age; b) Staying at a relative’s home; c) The flow of money or property within the family network; and d) Help in the routine running of the household.

Different studies have established the importance of these family networks in maintaining well-being in Spain²⁴. Among the most significant of these is the one conducted by Pérez Díaz et al (1998), which demonstrates the contributions of this network in areas such as education, unemployment, health care and pensions. Its development also makes it possible to take advantage of substantial intergenerational services (Pérez, 2004) and economic support from elders (Trinidad, 2005); it is even the best avenue for finding work (Requena, 1991 and 1996). This has given rise to the fact that different authors look upon these networks, on a micro level, as a “domestic social security system” (Meil, 2003), and on a macro level, as the real Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Spain (Iglesias de Ussel, 1998).

5. Quality of Life

5.1. Subjective well-being, health related issues and spatial mobility

Different studies conducted on quality of life for both a Spanish (La Caixa, 2004; Sastre, 2003) and European context (EU Report, 2005) demonstrate the demand for and high value that these citizens place on obtaining more free time and maintaining family or community relationships. The greater spatial mobility in today’s societies goes against both principles, because a more mobile life reduces free time, which on many occasions is meant

²⁴ See: Sarasa and Moreno (1995), FOESSA (1995), González Seara (1999), Simón Alfonso and Rejado (2000) and Rodríguez Cabrero (2002).

to be enjoyed as a family.

In the Spanish bibliography on this subject, there are no studies that have specifically discussed the effects of mobility on quality of life (despite the fact that some studies have used a large number of indicators). However, references located in some works indicate the increased level of general dissatisfaction that this practice causes. For example, the results (mentioned earlier) from the ECVT (2004) show that commuters consider themselves to be more dissatisfied with the amount of free time they have and with their lives, but not unhappier than others. Nevertheless, if they could, they would like to change jobs in order to be able to spend more time with their families and friends.

De Miguel's (2002) analysis on quality of working life views the time required to travel to work as a major disturbance in the living conditions of individuals, as it is time that must be added to the workday, is not gratifying in the least, and has increased in recent years as part of an urban lifestyle. However, Módenas and López (2004) point out that in most countries, dissatisfaction with the distance travelled in the daily commute to work is not a decisive factor for residential mobility²⁵.

In some countries, such as Spain and Greece, for example, the less satisfaction there is with the distance of the daily commute, the more residential mobility is reduced. In countries like Spain, dissatisfaction with the distance between one's home and work is linked to the difficulty of introducing mobility into one's residential history. Even with a change of residence, the first thing to suffer is the relationship with the workplace. Spain is the country with the highest percentage of individuals who say that their satisfaction with the distance they travel to work declined after they changed residence (nearly 40% compared to the typical figure of 30%).

²⁵ The expected relationship (more satisfaction, more mobility) only appears in some countries, such as France and Austria, for example. For most of the population, it is difficult to make residential adjustments when the relationship between the location of the home and that of the workplace is not satisfactory, or such a change is not worthwhile if this dissatisfaction is linked to a lack of security of continuity, as so often happens.