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***Immigration policies and migrant entry  
channels: a theoretical and empirical  
investigation***

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# Background



- Growing body of literature on the role, effectiveness and outcomes of migration policies (Castles 2004; de Haas and Czaika 2013; Ortega and Peri 2013)
- Theoretical challenges:
  - Need to formulate an integrated framework to analyse distinct policy strands for the governance of different types of flows (labour, family, etc.)
  - Need to conceptually frame the relationships between the macro, meso and micro level of analysis
- Evidence gaps:
  - most data sources on the migrant population don't keep track of immigration status on entry
  - most empirical analysis deals with the impact of policies on migrant economic outcomes, scant attention is given to the social dimension

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# This paper



Aim: contribute new thinking and analysis on the role of migration policies in shaping migratory processes

## Contents and structure:

- Conceptual framework – the links between immigration policies and migration decision-making
- Data and empirical methodology: the EU-LFS AHM2008
- Composition of the migrant population by category of entry
- Comparison of migratory and household formation patterns of different immigrant categories

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# The role of migration governance structures



## 1) Selectivity of admission channels

- ✓ Examples: selection of labour migrants most suitable to fill the jobs in demand, preferential channels for certain nationalities (or origins), openness to rights-based admissions (e.g. pre-entry language tests)

## 2) Regulation of stay conditions

- ✓ Examples: conditions for permit renewal and leave to remain, restrictions in access to the labour market and occupational mobility, status changes (e.g. regularizations), sponsorship of family members, citizenship

## 3) Integration and welfare policies

- ✓ Examples: exclusion of some categories from employment benefits, targeted measures to enhance employability (language, training, recognition of qualifications)

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# Key role of the family as migration decision-making unit



- Migration as a strategy to maximise economic benefits for all household members (Da Vanzo 1976; Stark 1991)
- Decisions are gender-biased (Bielby and Bielby 1992)
- Temporal interdependency between mobility, employment and family formation (De Jong and Graefe 2008)
- Social networks: households as agency conveying cultural norms, expectations, providing information and assistance etc. (Boyd 1989)

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# Migration policies and migrant households as decision-making units



- Migrant families dynamically respond to opportunity structures imposed by migration policies
- Choices on whether the family migrates jointly or initially sends off one member depend on the viability of immigration channels
- If the selected 'candidate' does not possess the immigrant profile exogenously imposed by immigration regulations, migration costs increase (Borjas and Bronars, 1991)
- Restrictions on sponsorship criteria (e.g. 'sufficient' financial means)
- Eligibility of family members who are allowed to migrate is established on the basis of marriage and the nuclear family unit
- Gender bias of work permit and sponsorship system (Kraler 2010)

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# Data and empirical methodology

- The **EU-LFS 2008 ad-hoc module on migrant workers**
- **Target group:** foreign-born population in 6 major EU receiving countries (Fra, Ger, Ita, Spa, Swe, UK)
- Cross-classification of data on country of birth, nationality, year of entry, reason for migration, country of birth of parents, year of acquisition of citizenship
- **9 categories** of entrants: EU-15/EFTA; Post-enlargement EU-12; labour migrants (with and without job on arrival); study, international protection; family reunification or formation; ancestry-based + residual 'other'

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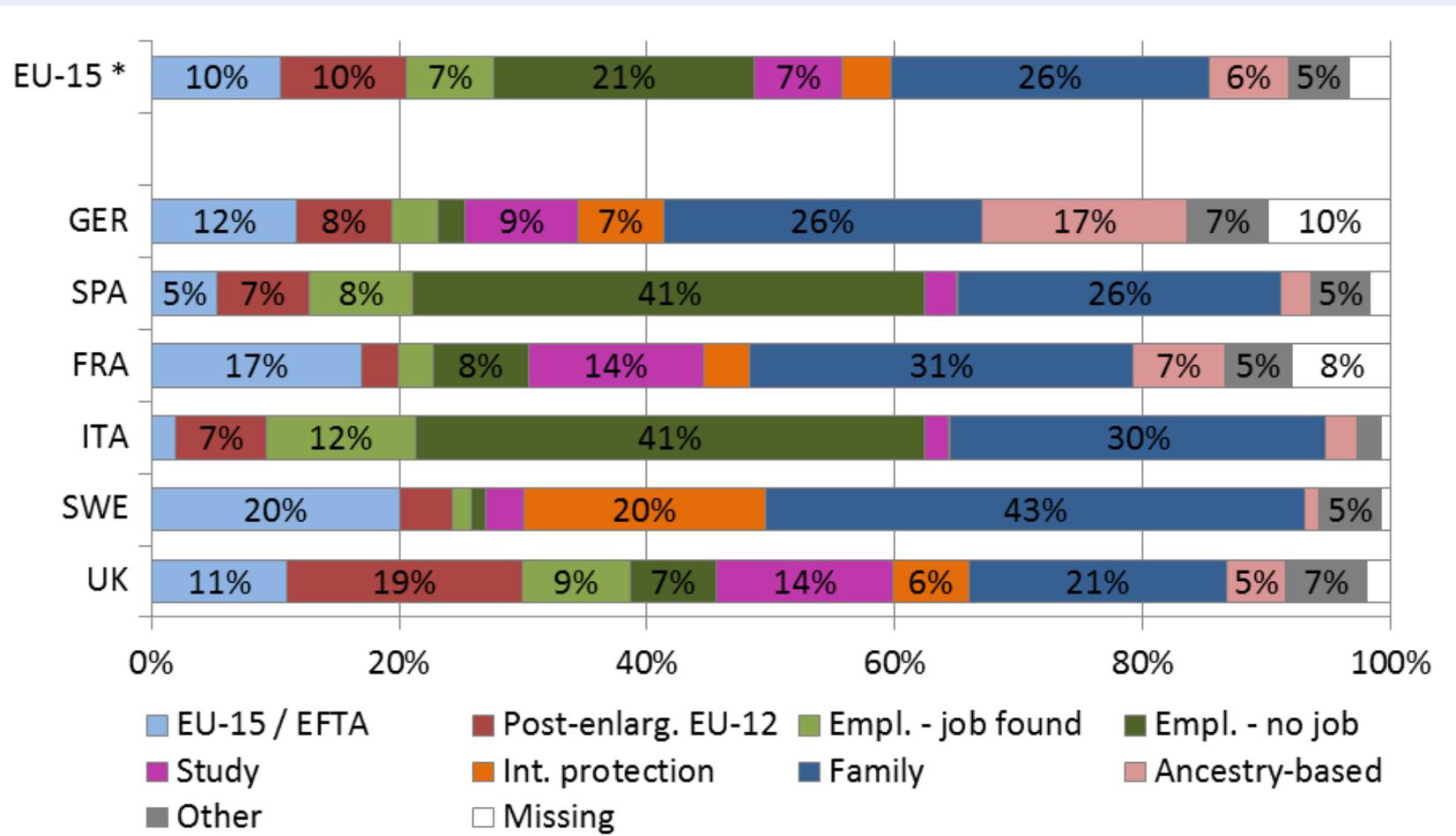
# Data limitations



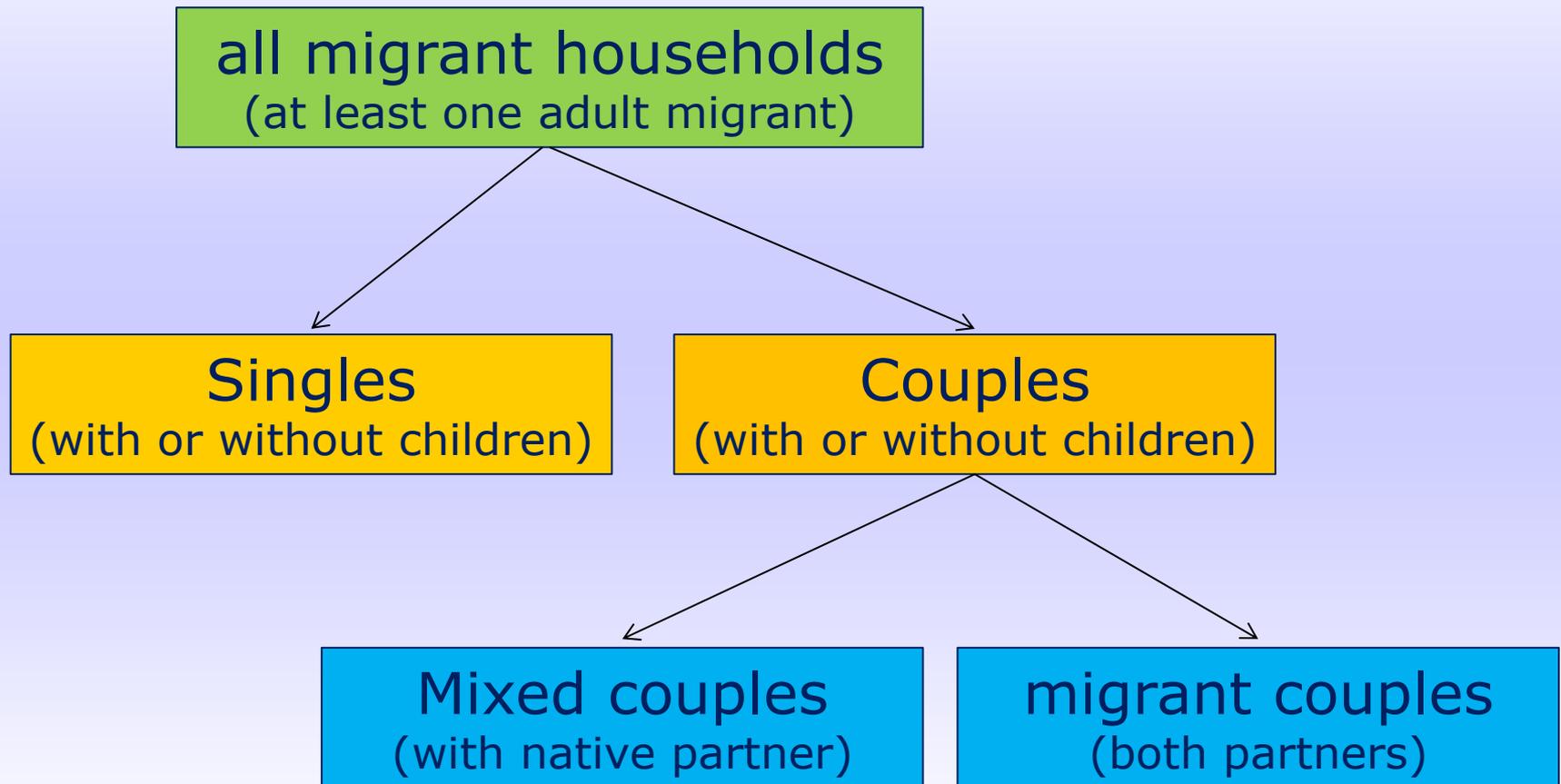
- Underrepresentation of recent migrants
- Immigration categories not specific enough
- Irregular status on entry not captured
- Possible disconnect between visa held and actual reason for migration
- Selective nature of return migration (or re-migration)
- Info on the timing of couple formation (e.g. before or after migration) not available

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# The categorical composition of recent migrants (arrival in or after 1998)

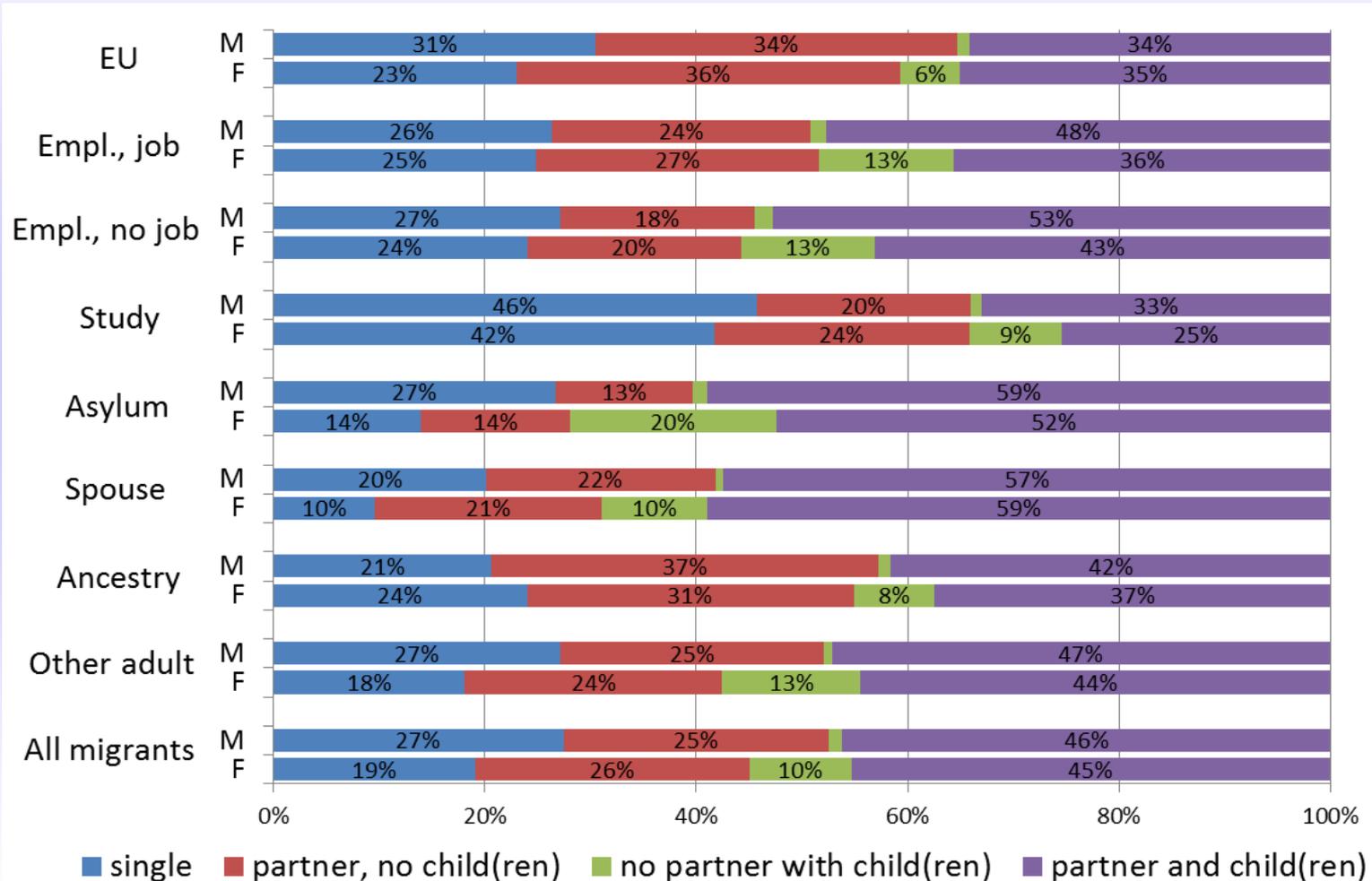


# Household framework for empirical analysis

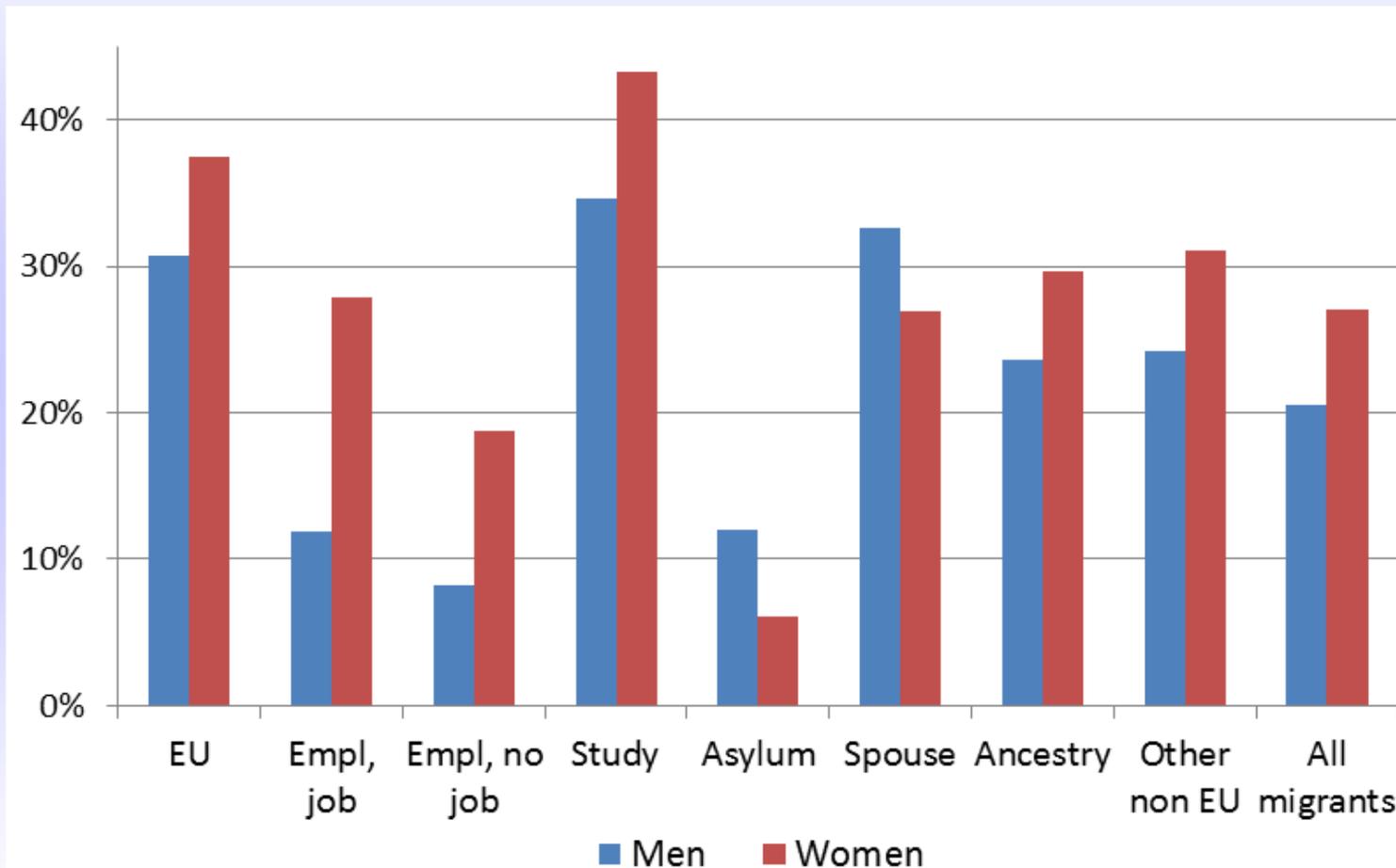


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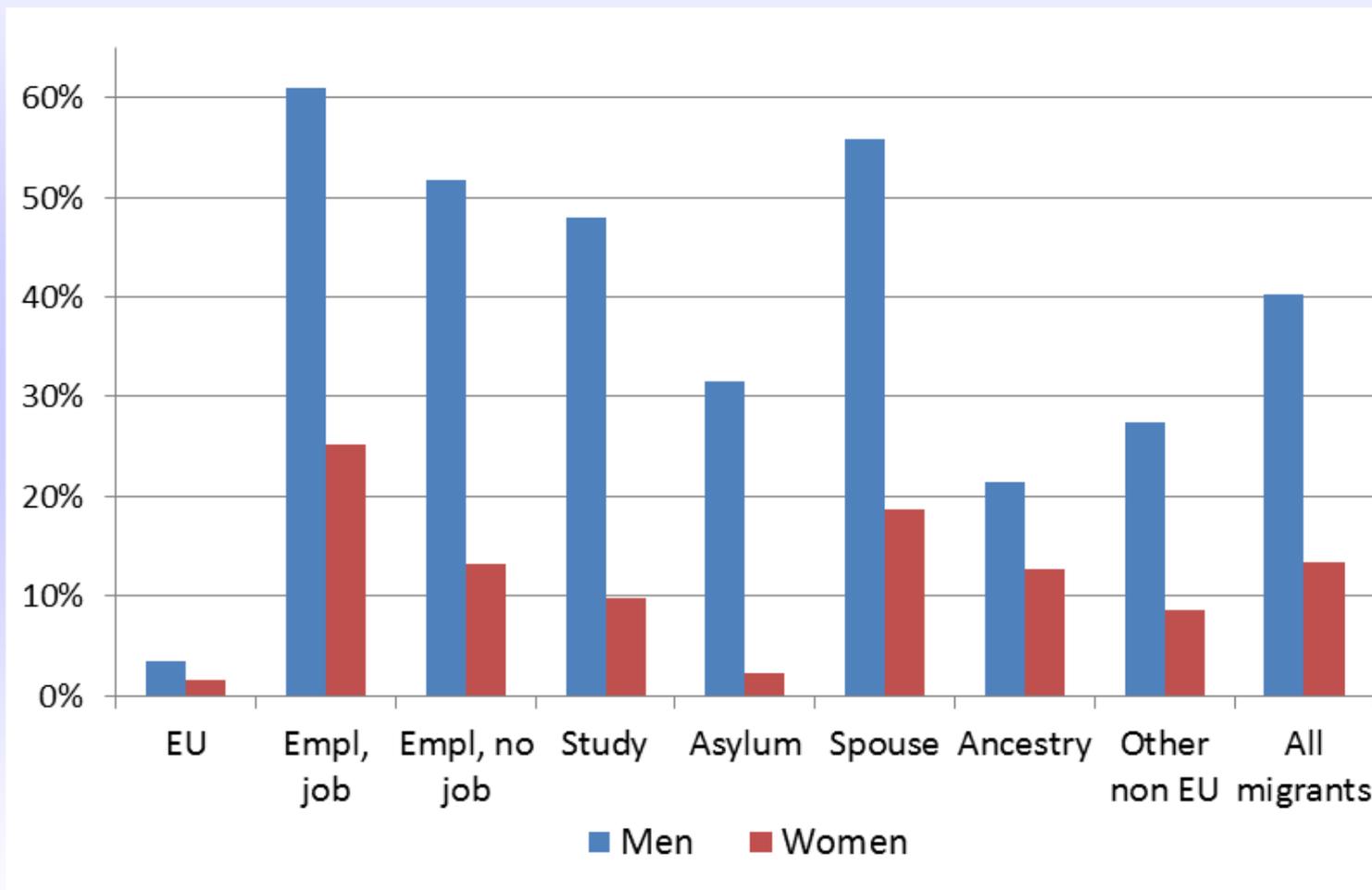
# Type of household by immigration category on entry and sex (%)



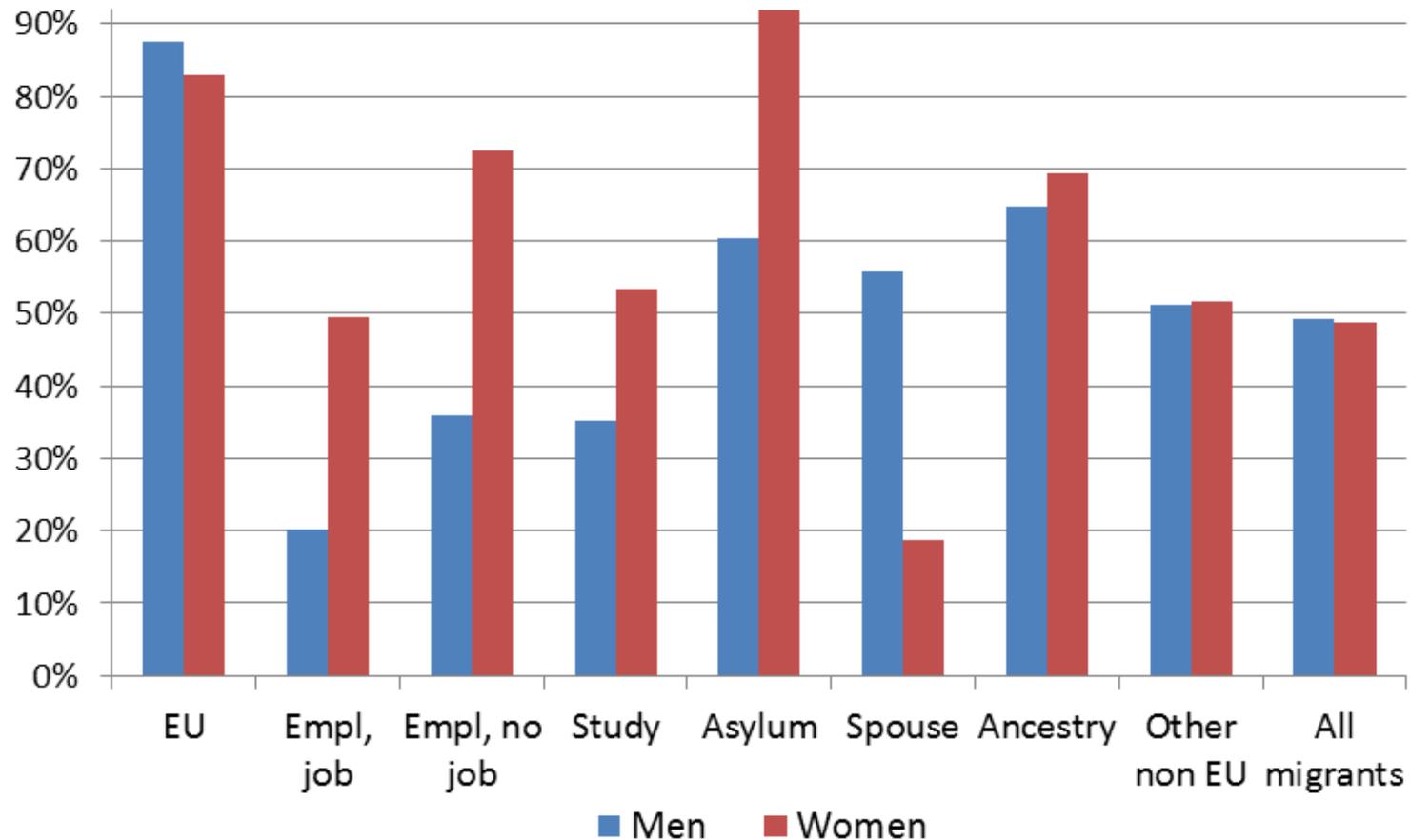
# Migrants in couples with native-born partners (% within all couples)



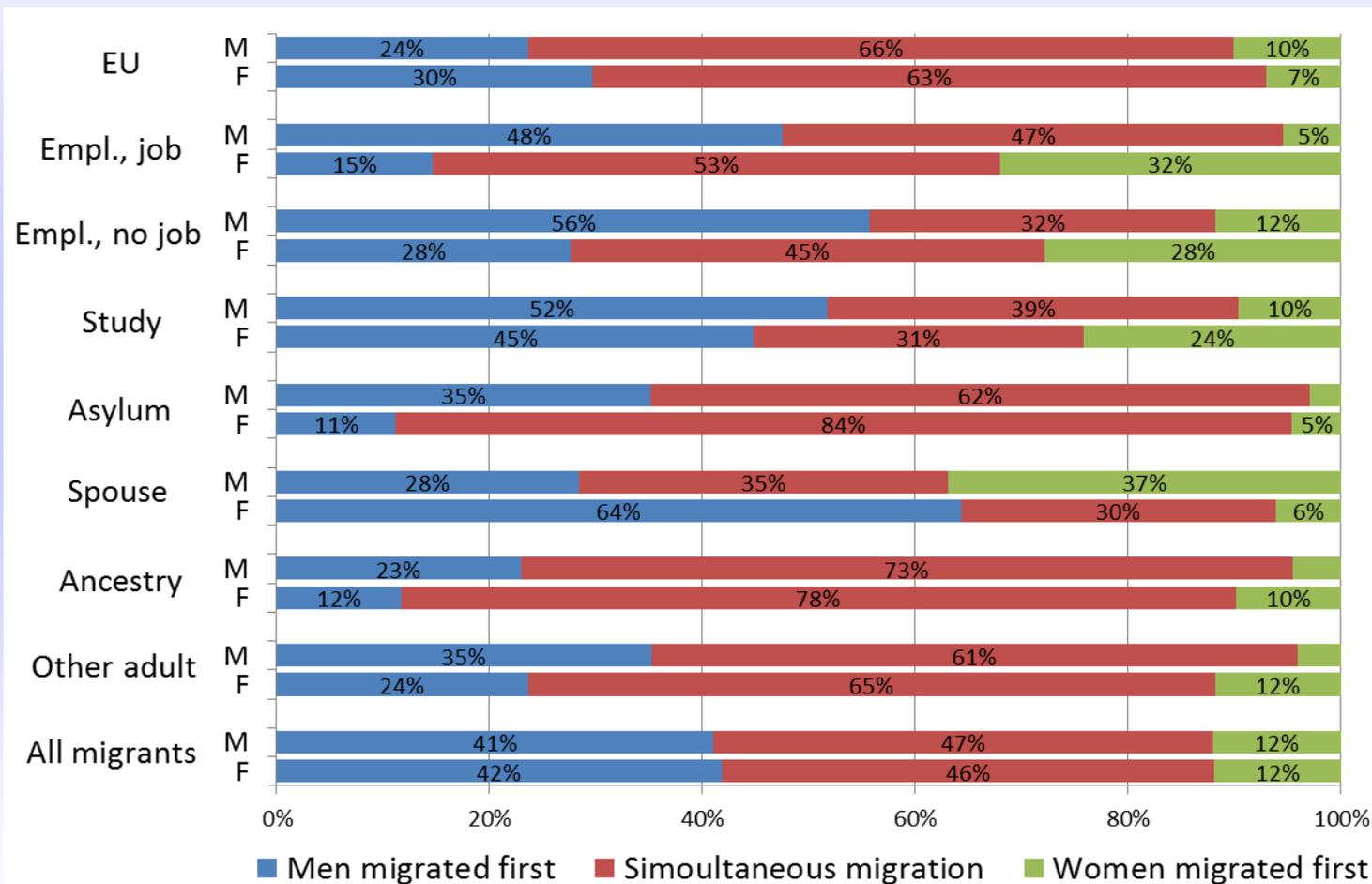
# Migrants in partnership with spouse visa holders (% within migrant couples)



# Migrants in couples with a partner with same immigration status on entry (% within migrant couples)



# Timing of couples' migratory patterns (%)

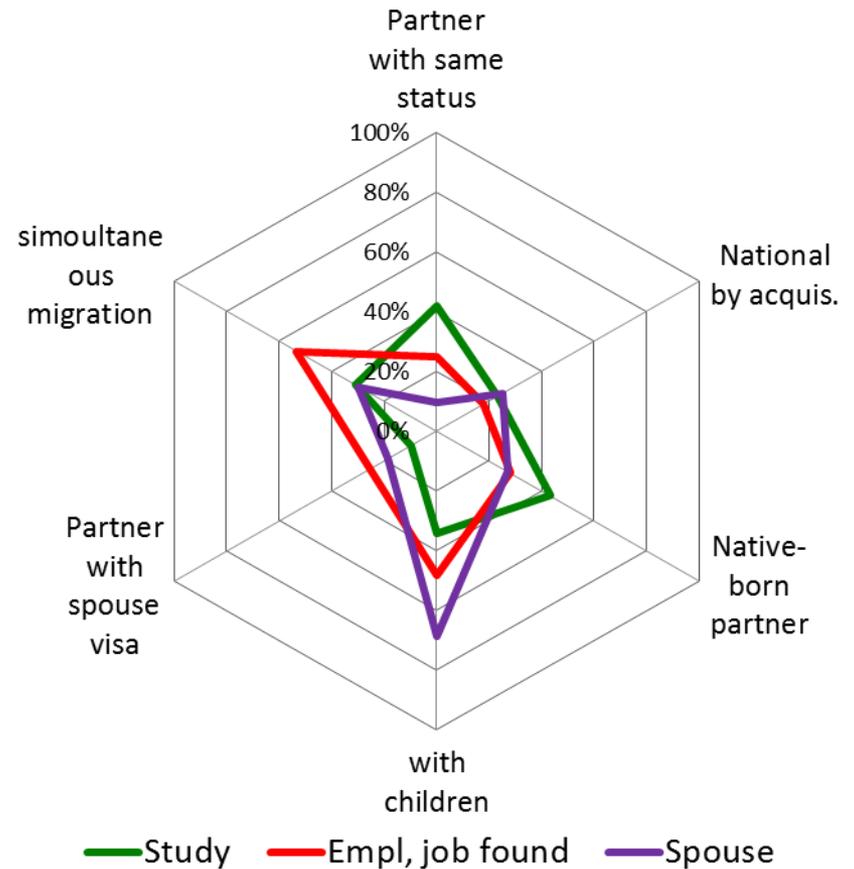
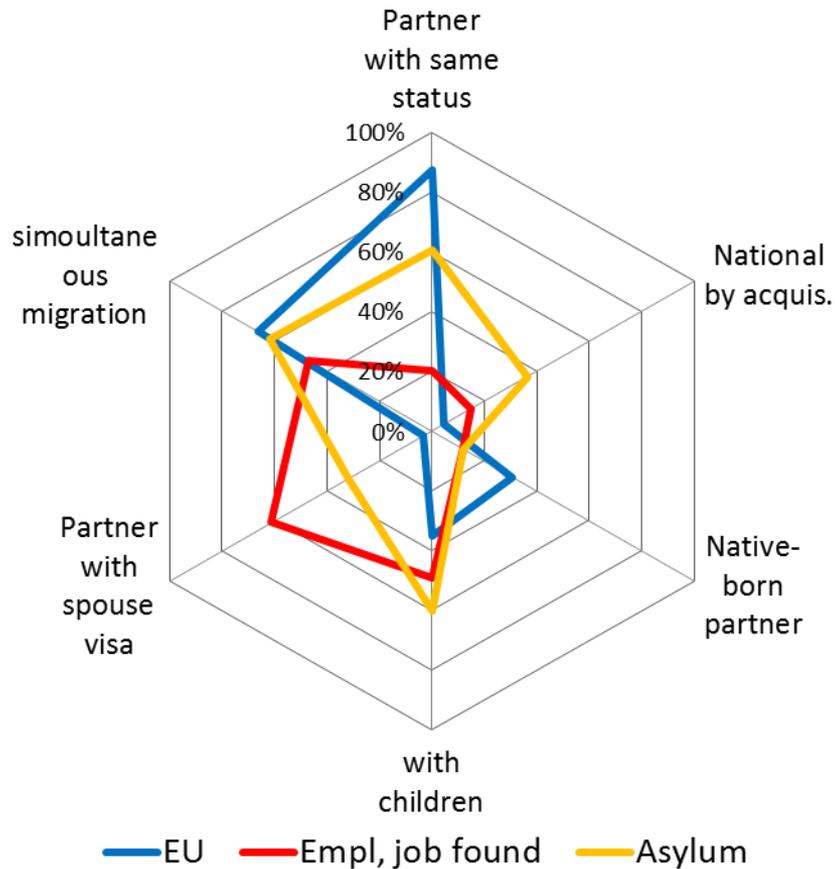


# Profiles of migration and household formation



## Men

## Women



# Emerging conclusions



- Migration regimes effectively 'channel' migrants into selective admission categories
- Admission systems reproduce well-established gender roles in migratory patterns
- Differential operation of family networks by admission category
- Policy implications:
  - some admission channels (labour migration) generate more 'demand' for family reunification (different multiplier effect)
  - for some temporary admission categories, especially students, indefinite leave to remain (citizenship) is likely to be obtained through unions with native partners

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# VINAKA!

(thank you)

Questions? Comments?

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