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### FOREIGN POPULATION IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF BARCELONA: RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS AND DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS.

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#### **Abstract:**

##### *Objectives:*

The main goal of this paper is the description of the residential patterns of foreign population in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (MAB), and in a second place identify the causes of this distribution of the total of foreigners and the main nationalities.

##### *Antecedents:*

Since the last years of the nineties, in Spain has been produced a high growth of foreign population. From proportions of foreign residents of 1.6 per cent in 1998, in 2006 has been reached the 9.3 per cent. This growth has been even more intense in the territory of study, the MAB. With similar proportions in 1998, 12.4 per cent has been attained in 2006. From 1998, the MAB has increased its population by 15 per cent, with a growth about 600 thousand persons. Foreigners has been the most important component of this evolution, almost 90 per cent of the new residents are of foreign nationality. This growth represents an important change in the demographic dynamics of the region, after twenty-five years with a population placed in the same figures.

In this quickly and intense growth, the city of Barcelona has developed an important role of gateway within the MAB, anticipating the foreigner's growth in the towns of the MAB, and accommodating nationalities in a first stage of insertion. This fact has been especially remarkable between 2001 and 2004. In these years has been observed the higher growth of migratory flows, but in the last years, and in parallel with the length of stay in the country, it can be observed an intense exit flow from the central city to the surrounding towns. Nowadays, these towns attain greater proportions of foreigners among their residents than those for the central city. This deconcentration process has been produced with different calendar among nationalities and with territorial patterns

that differ in their location. Besides, it's a process that every year takes greater importance. At the same time, it's also important consider the Spaniards residential mobility, in a residential dynamics that can facilitate the entry of migrants in some or other places of the MAB.

After ten years of acceleration of migratory flows, and having attained high proportions of migrants, we can observe in the last statistics two different phenomena: on the one hand, a minor growth of foreign population, related to the changes in the Immigration Law that affect the management of the Continuous Register, and secondly a minor growth of foreign population in the central city of Barcelona in comparison with the RMB, dynamics that is produced since 2004.

#### *Data:*

These facts will be studied using three different statistical sources. Firstly, the 2001 Population Census, that gives us the sociodemographic characteristics of the population and housing characteristics, at level of census tracks. Secondly, the Continuous Register of Population, with the last available official data from 2006, and thirdly, the Residential Variation Statistics (RVS), with information between 1988 and 2006 about the residential mobility.

The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona contains the seven counties (*comarques*) surrounding the city of Barcelona, with 164 municipalities. They have more than 4.84 million inhabitants and 601 thousand foreigners, approximately the 15 per cent of foreigners who resides in Spain. We will focus our attention in the ten most numerous nationalities in the MAB: Morocco, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, China, Argentina, Peru, Italy, Pakistan and Romania.

#### *Methodology:*

With these antecedents, the residential patterns of foreign population and the main nationalities will be studied. It will be identified the residential dynamics, and then, the territorial characteristics related to the presence of foreign population. The economic activity and the housing market are configured as the two main elements to understand the distribution of foreign population in the territory. In the first place, it will be identified the socioeconomic hierarchy of the towns and neighbourhoods of the MAB, for in a second stage relate this classification with the presence in the territory. In essence, we want to identify the residential patterns of foreigners and their relation with the territorial characteristics.

#### *Expected Results:*

The existing bibliography on residential dynamics in the MAB only takes into account the total population until the intense growth of international immigration. In these studies, a deconcentration process of Spaniards is observed, moving to the second metropolitan ring. However, the first studies that focus their attention to the residential

patterns of immigrants pointed out a greater implantation in the first metropolitan ring, in a process where the interactions between the two movements can experience a positive feedback. In these sense, we expect an increment of mobility rates due to the incorporation of foreigners in those dynamics.

On the other hand, we expected a segmented distribution of foreigners in the MAB. Like previous migratory flows, those produced between Spanish Regions in the 60s, the newcomers are settling in the most precarious part of the housing market, especially in those municipalities near to the central city.