

Socio-Residential Characteristics of Immigration Areas in Spain: a Comparative Metropolitan Approach

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ABSTRACT

Foreign immigration is a very recent phenomenon in Spain. Over the last few years, and especially since 2001, there has been strong growth in the number of non-EU immigrants changing the historical characterisation of Spain as a country of emigration, above all in the 1960s and 1970s. As in other countries with a high degree of foreign population, one of the principal consequences has been the transformation of the social structure, with a special focus on the larger cities. In this way, the main metropolises (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Sevilla, Malaga, Bilbao and Zaragoza) have been the principal areas for the settlement of those migration waves. Between 1999 and 2005, these metropolises have absorbed some 45% of the 3,000,000 immigrants who have arrived in Spain.

This phenomenon has led to these metropolises becoming more diverse over a short time, generating different kinds of problems relating to housing and the residential segregation of such immigrants. This paper seeks to analyse from a metropolitan comparative approach, what the socio-residential characteristics of immigrants' concentration areas in those metropolises are and the differences with the Spanish population. In order to do this, the paper will focus on socio-residential clusters and their ethnic composition of each metropolis, comparing the clusters with immigrant overrepresentation and without it. The analysis for each metropolis will be carried by at the small scale of Census sections (or enumeration districts) for 2001 and 2005, in order to show the recent evolution.

Key Words: immigration, socio-residential cluster, metropolises