

At the beginning of 2005, 230.000 foreign people (without the Spanish nationality) were living in the city of Barcelona, which represents, approximately the 14% of the city's population. One decade ago, only 30.000 foreign inhabitants were living in Barcelona, hardly 2% of the whole population. This situation is the result of the increase and acceleration of the international migratory flow, a trend that started during the second half of the 90's and remains today. Spain, and specifically Barcelona, is a clear example of the international migratory dynamic that has taken place in Southern Europe during the last 5 years: flow acceleration, diversification of the origin of the people, and chronological and territorial heterogeneities.

The municipality of Barcelona contains a population of 1.578.546 inhabitants and occupies an area of 100km², converting the city in one of the smallest and dense between the great European large cities. This characteristic provides to this administrative unit a great representativeness in the definition of the central space of the metropolitan region and therefore it allows to study more accurately center-periphery residential movements.

The municipality of Barcelona has exerted a significant role as the focus in the attraction of international flows to Catalonia, because of its central role in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona, its favourable economic dynamism and its international projection. After the first episode of settlement, the foreign population participate, like the native residents do, in the urban and residential processes of the metropolitan area. The residential mobility among the foreign residents is higher, in relative intensity, than the global rates. During the period 1981-2000, Barcelona lost 250.000 inhabitants, mostly because the suburbanization process. Population from the central areas moved, first, to municipalities located at the first ring of the Metropolitan Region, and, later, to the second metropolitan ring. On the contrary, between 2000 and 2004 Barcelona's population increased by 80.000 inhabitants. That population growth was caused, exclusively, because of international migration. The Spanish population living in the municipality still have a net migration loss in relation to the Metropolitan Area.

According to the data of the Population Continuous Register of the City Council of Barcelona, around 60.000 foreign people has moved to the municipality of Barcelona

every year since January 2002. At the same time, during the last two years an average of 15.000 foreign people left the central city to another Catalan municipality. That flow represents the 30% of the residential mobility generated in the municipality of Barcelona; one of every three individuals who leave Barcelona for another Catalan municipality is foreign, a percentage that is increasing every year.

The main aim of this paper is to analyse the intensity of residential mobility and its evolution among the foreign population living in Barcelona. With this purpose we analyse the last five years (2000-2004), focusing, firstly, our attention on the demographic profile of people who have changed their residence, with special interest in nationality and the spatial relations that are established between the city and its metropolitan area. Secondly, residential strategies and the behaviour of the main nationalities will be identified and contrasted with the residential patterns of the whole population. Finally, the incidence that foreign residential mobility can exercise upon the global mobility of the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona will be analysed. Our hypothesis is that, far from a substitution process, where the mobility of the foreign population substitutes the Spanish, we observe an intensification of the flow of people leaving the city, with a diversification of the mobility patterns.

The migratory data used for our analysis comes from the microdata of the Estadísticas de Variaciones Residenciales (EVR) for the period 2000-2004. We also use the data published by the Continuous Population Register of the City Council of Barcelona. The EVR is elaborated by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), and it is based on the municipal registration of residence changes between all Spanish municipalities. Although these sources are not the best ones measuring the global mobility of the foreigners, since they don't register correctly the movements generated from outside of Spain, they have a good degree of coverage in the mobility between Spanish municipalities, also when the foreign population change their residence.