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THE HOMEOWNERSHIP AS MIGRANT INTEGRATION INDICATOR CALIFORNIA AND SPAIN, 2001-2006

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Despite its contradictions and paradoxes, access to homeownership continues to be one of the key indicators to measure the integration of immigrants in host countries, even more so in countries such as the United States and Spain, where homeownership is by far the majority option. To a certain extent, ownership in these countries represents reaching the standard of living of the middle class, which for immigrants is of special significance as it tends to indicate upwards social mobility. In the United States, ownership is often represented as part of the contemporary “American dream”.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the evolution of homeownership of nationals and foreigners in California (United States) and Spain. In particular, it is a question of examining and determining the sociodemographic influence. The following questions are raised: Is nationality a variable influencing home ownership? Are foreigners more inclined to live in rented accommodation?

The cases of California and Spain have been selected for several reasons. First, because they are two areas which have registered high immigration in recent years, favoring the emergence of new processes which are transforming residential patterns. In this respect, we can indicate that California immigration in the last few decades has recorded an unprecedented volume. Between 1960 and 2000 immigrants went from 1.3 million to more than 8 million people, representing a third of all immigrants in the United States. On the other hand, in Spain the increase in the foreign population is very recent: 4.8 million people in the last 10 years. In 2009 there were almost 5.6 million people of foreign nationality residing in Spain, which in relative numbers represents 12% of the total.

A second element of interest for the comparison is that they are two countries in which homeownership is by far the majority option: six of every ten households in California and eight of every ten in Spain were homeowners in 2006. In this context, the analysis of the evolution of sociodemographic factors is its special interest to measure

the immigrants integration. We could also add that during the years studied there was also a property boom in both countries.

Another element of interest to compare California and Spain is their migratory context. Both countries have not only been major recipients of international immigrants in recent years, but also share a similar “border situation” in relation to the countries from which a good part of the immigrants originate. California borders on Mexico to the south and Spain on Morocco. Moreover, in both countries the borders separate more than countries, a subcontinent and a continent, and they are not just geographic but also cultural and economic borders. We are possibly faced with the two borders with the most economic inequality in the world.

Last but not least, the comparison between the two countries is of special interest because California, with 27% of its 37 million residents born abroad in 2005, can be considered as one of the world’s main laboratories to analyze the settlement of immigrants and their incorporation as new residents. In comparison, Spain, which has become an immigrant host country in recent years, lacks this broad experience of immigration and even a public philosophy and academic studies on the practices of social integration of immigrants.

To achieve the objectives raised, various logistic regression models will be performed which will allow us to compare, on the one hand, the access to homeownership in California and Spain. On the other hand, the differences between nationals and foreigners in the two areas. The idea is to determine the households sociodemographic characteristics influence (household type, reference person age, nationality, country arrival year and socioeconomic category, among others) under the home ownership regime.

The analysis will be limited to those variables for which the statistical sources used allow the comparison in both areas of study in 2001 and 2006. Immigration will therefore be analyzed considering nationality: nationals (United States or Spanish) and foreigners).

It is planned to use different statistical sources which collect information on the households sociodemographic characteristics. For California, we used the 2001 and 2006 census microdata obtained from the IPUMS-USA of the Minnesota Population Center, and for the Spanish case the 2001 Population and Housing Census (Censo de Población y Viviendas) and the 2006 Living Conditions Survey (Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida), both sources prepared by the National Statistics Institute (INE).

In relation to the results, to date various models have been performed which analyze the likelihood of migrants to own houses. These models are exploratory, they should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Moreover, the paper objective focus on ownership as migrant integration indicator using 2001-2006 data set. In any case, the models allow us to forecast the results. To summarize, table 1 and 2 shows that the most determinant variables to California case are: reference person age, household size and the education level, among others. While, in the Spain side, nationality it is the most determinant variable, following with long distance: reference person age, household size and economic activity. In other words, the likelihood of a foreigner in California to own a house in 2001 was higher than that of a Spaniard.

Table 1. Characteristics of the regression model for household according to sociodemographic characteristics through the probability value (-2LL). Spain 2001-2006 (whole household)

Variables	-2LL	Gain	% of gain
Nationality	20.814		5.78
Age	20.423	391	3.67
Size of household	20.094	329	2.26
Activity	20.032	62	2.40
Education	19.995	37	1.90

Source: Censo de Población y Viviendas 2001, INE.

Table 2. Characteristics of the regression model for household according to sociodemographic characteristics through the probability value (-2LL). California 2001-2006 (whole household)

Variables	-2 LL	Gain	% of gain
Age	200.853		8,47
Size of household	192.262	8.591	4,47
Education	186.232	6.030	3,29
Nationality	182.603	3.629	1,99
Activity	182.011	592	0,33
Year	180.996	14	0,01

Source: Census microdata, 2001 IPUMS-USA, Minnesota Population Center.

The models take account migrants in California and Spain with less than 20 years of residence. The main result in this analysis is the homeowner disparity evolution between migrants. California migrants are more likely to own a house and the likelihood is increasing thru years. Whereas the Spanish migrant propensity to become homeownership it is lower and decreases in time.

Table 3. Regression models for migrant reference person household in accordance with sociodemographic characteristics. Spain and California, 2001-2006

SPAIN 2001-2006				CALIFORNIA 2001-2006			
Variables	Category	B	Exp(B)	Variable	Category	B	Exp(B)
Nationality	Spanish (ref.)			Year	2001 (ref.)		
	Foreing	-0,396	0,673***		2006	0,188	1,206***
Age	< 35 (ref.)			Age	< 35 (ref.)		
	35-49	0,244	1,277		35-49	0,594	1,811***
	50-64	0,611	1,842**		50-64	1,005	2,731***
	>65	1,127	3,087***		>65	0,723	2,06***
Activity	Employed (ref.)			Activity	Employed (ref.)		
	Unemployed	-0,322	0,725		Unemployed	-0,122	0,885***
	Other non-working	1,148	3,152***		Other non-working	-0,152	0,859***
Education	Primary (ref.)			Education	Primary (ref.)		
	Secondary	0,072	1,075		Secondary	0,441	1,554***
	Higher education	0,426	1,531***		Higher education	0,948	2,58***
Size household	One (ref.)			Size household	One (ref.)		
	Two	0,878	2,406***		Two	0,712	2,039***
	Three	1,143	3,135***		Three	0,925	2,522***
	Four	0,553	1,738*		Four	1,206	3,339***
	Five and more	0,129	1,137*		Five and more	1,568	4,797***
	Constant	-1,488	0,226***		Constant	-3,025	0,049***

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