

## **International immigrants' integration in rural areas and small towns in Spain**

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International immigration is not anymore only linked to urban and metropolitan contexts. In Spain, a relatively new phenomenon has appeared: foreign immigration in small towns and rural areas. However, there is an uneven geographical distribution of this kind of immigration. They are mainly located along the Mediterranean coast, in the islands and in some inland enclaves while many Spanish rural areas are still following depopulation processes.

Building on a fieldwork carried out from October 2003 to March 2005 in Spain, the European country with the highest foreign immigration increase during the last years, the author offers new data into international immigrants' integration processes, focusing on rural areas and small towns that host a significant percentage of foreign population. Concretely, a hundred immigrants' interviews are analysed in order to unveil how these population relates to integration processes.

This analysis takes into account the immigrants' country of origin (most of them are from Latin America, North and Western Africa and Europe), gender (there is a certain equilibrium between men and women), age group (most of them are under 44 years old), civil and family situation (most of them are single without kids or married with kids), relation with the economic activity, economic sector and sub-sector, years of residence in the county, size of the current residence locality, size of the main locality of origin, and county of settlement in Spain.

The rural areas and small towns where fieldwork was carried out are located in the following provinces: León (Castille and León), Cáceres (Extremadura), Huelva (Andalusia), Alicante (Valencia Region), and Girona (Catalonia).