

# African immigrants in Almería (Spain): spatial segregation, residential conditions and housing segmentation

Juan Carlos Checa Olmos<sup>1</sup>

Ángeles Arjona Garrido<sup>2</sup>

Universidad de Almería, Almería

**African immigrants in Almería (Spain): spatial segregation, residential conditions and housing segmentation.** In this article, the residential situation of the immigrants coming from Africa to the province of Almería is described, analyzing mainly two aspects. Firstly, the residential segregation starting from the indexes of dissimilarity, isolation and absolute centralization. Secondly, the characteristics of the lodgings inhabited by the immigrants, taking as reference the indicators of stability, adequacy, habitability and affordability. The data were obtained from the Municipal Census and from a survey. The results show high residential segregation and a deficient residential situation, where almost three out of every four African immigrants live in unfit dwellings. The main reason that explains this situation is ethnic discrimination.

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## 1. Introduction

Residential segregation and deficient residential conditions have been a constant in cities, although it is during the last century when this process has become more acute, demonstrating a reality of social and environmental injustice. The driving elements today are not only limited by social class, but also by age, marital status, religion, ethnos, and skin colour, with extreme cases such as apartheid in South Africa, anti-Semitism in Europe or the current segregation of blacks and other Hispanic groups in large American cities (see, among others, Massey and Denton, 1993; White, 1987; Bureau of Census 2000).

In the age of migration (Castles and Miller, 1998) and world globalization, we continue to witness this racial segregation process in the context of immigrant reception. Migration generates an urban metamorphosis in terms of sociodemographic, ethnic and cultural diversity (Santos, 1996), which also leads to the vital circumscription of many groups into certain spatial areas (Wacqant, 2001; Quilliam, 2002), where the response of cities to the multiethnic crucible is exclusion and spatial segregation. This process is not created “naturally” as was understood for decades by the classic Chicago authors, Park, Burgess, Zorbaugh,

etc. The response must rather be sought in humanity and the values of the society they are entering.

## Map 1. Main intensive agricultural districts and concentration of immigrants



The province of Almería, a land that used to send its labour force abroad and to other industrial regions of Spain is now a host for immigrants. The development of greenhouse agriculture starting in the seventies has triggered off the need to incorporate large amounts of labour, which was covered in the beginning, mostly by the families of greenhouse owners. Since the end of the eighties, this work has been carried out by a new wave of immigration<sup>3</sup> mainly from Africa (Checa, 1995; Roquero, 1996), and more recently, from Latin America and Eastern Europe. This continuing migratory flow has given the province of Almería the

<sup>1</sup> Address: Professor Juan Carlos Checa Olmos, University of Almería. Department of Historia, Geografía e Historia del Arte, University of Almería. Carretera de Sacramento s/n, La Cañada de San Urbano (Almería). Tlf: (950)015407. E-mail: jcheca@ual.es

<sup>2</sup> Address: Professor Ángeles Arjona Garrido, University of Almería. Department of Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, University of Almería. Carretera de Sacramento s/n, La Cañada de San Urbano (Almería). Tlf: (950)015225. E-mail: arjona@ual.es

<sup>3</sup> We use the concept “new immigration” to describe the phenomenon of non-Community migration that is employed in Mediterranean agriculture. The new agriculture is one of the sectors that have become a pole of attraction for migrants. This fact differentiates it from previous Fordist migrations. Migration heads toward countries, provinces or zones that have previously exported labor, as in the case of Almería. The incorporation of these immigrants also reverses the usual direction of the flow from farms to the city.

second highest legal immigration rate in Spain and possibly the first if illegal immigration is included.

The incorporation of immigrants into its cities has not been balanced or satisfactory, as they are subjected to strict segregation and their housing does not meet the minimum living requirements.

## 2. Data and methods

The twin purpose of this study is, on the one hand, to quantify the degree of segregation that African immigrants suffer and on the other, to evaluate the standard of their housing conditions.

Data were obtained from two different sources. In the first place, from municipal registries in the cities and towns in the province of Almería with the highest rates of African immigration<sup>4</sup> – El Ejido, La Mojonera, Roquetas de Mar, Vícar (in the district of Campo de Dalías) and Níjar (in the Campos de Níjar district). In the second place, a questionnaire was distributed to a sample immigrant population settled in these areas<sup>5</sup>. Sampling was done on a fixed quota by the nationality of occupants and the location of their dwellings – scattered or in an urban centre – with a 95.5% confidence level and sample error of  $\pm 2.3$ . The search for information led us to many places not registered as housing in the various municipal registries: storage sheds, shacks, houses in a state of semi-ruin, etc. Therefore, aerial photos acquired from the Ministry of Defence and the University of Almería were used on the one hand and key informants showed us the locations of many others not accounted for in the official sources. Thus, the scope expanded and 1648 lodgings<sup>6</sup> were visited.

To estimate residential segregation, we have applied the most widely used measuring instruments in international literature – the Dissimilarity Index, Isolation and Absolute Centralization indexes – (Massey and Denton, 1988), with the block as the unit of spatial analysis. The delimitation in centres of population is our own and was carried out taking into account their geographical and physical limits and the date of construction of the buildings. The measure of the centralization index and more specifically, scattered dwellings, was done for tracts of one square kilometre. The distance taken as a reference for measuring were the

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<sup>4</sup> Checa (2007) show for Almería the variables affecting the variety of residential insertion amongst Africans on the one hand and Latin-Americans and Eastern Europeans on the other.

<sup>5</sup> The field work was carried out between November 2005 and March 2006. In any case, the date when the information was collected does not affect the data, since in Almería intensive farming labor extends from September to June; this presupposes that an established population is maintained throughout the year.

<sup>6</sup> Till now, we have referred to housing or residence, but with the appearance of other types of dwellings which, were not originally designed to house the population, we also use the concept lodging.

buildings corresponding to the various local councils or, in their absence, to their delegations<sup>7</sup>.

To assess housing conditions and their characteristics, we started from the concept of what represents a decent dwelling, understanding this to be one which makes it possible for the inhabitants or occupants to live adequately and normally, and which must meet a series of basic requirements articulated in the following rights: *stability*, as defined by the possibility of laying out a long-term project for use and comfort. The main variables that determine this are the type of tenancy, existence of contracts and residential mobility.

In the second place we have, *adequacy*, in which the conditions of the dwelling and the needs of its inhabitants are set and defined, not only privately, but also with regard to their immediate surroundings. Thus, *inadequacy* is when the characteristics of the dwelling impede its standard, independent usage. The variables that measure this aspect are access to the dwelling, characteristics and equipment in the surrounding area, overcrowding, separation of rooms or the subjective perception that the occupants themselves have of it, in terms of the satisfaction generated by the use and enjoyment of the dwelling.

In the third place, *habitability* is understood as a minimum of construction<sup>8</sup> standards, services, infrastructure and equipment in the residence. The basic elements analyzed for this case are, flooring, roofing, walls, ventilation, dampness, electricity, hot water, heating, independent kitchen and bathroom.

The fourth aspect, *affordability*, means that occupation and enjoyment are not linked to excessive expense affecting the normal fulfilment of other basic needs, such as food and clothing. Therefore, affordability is the possibility of using housing under stable, secure economic conditions. We therefore take into account using 35% of the income as a reference housing investment-the expense of the dwelling itself – rent or loans – evictions for non-payment or cutting off the electricity or water supply and on the other hand, the capacity for acquiring debts of the occupants. At the same time, fieldwork was carried out with the most important real estate franchises and the various financial entities that work in the area.

To summarize, the initial hypothesis maintains that the majority of African immigrants settled in Almería, are segregated and do not have decent housing. This fact is basically explained by the rejection and discrimination immigrants suffer – the context of reception – and by their low capacity for indebtedness – economic status-.

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<sup>7</sup> To estimate distances, we used mainly aerial photos. In no case did we use a straight line, but followed roads or paths that a person would have to use to get from one point to another. In other cases we used a car odometer to measure the distances.

<sup>8</sup> To assess construction quality, we had the help of an architect who accompanied us on the visits to the houses of immigrants surveyed.

### 3. The habitat of African immigrants in Almería. A dual<sup>9</sup> environment between the ghetto and the city outskirts.

The location of the lodgings of immigrants in Almería has a double typology, on the one hand, in city centres and, on the other, scattered around the outskirts, although both forms of settling share the characteristics of segregation and sub-standard residence.

When we use the term scattering, we are referring to residential dwellings located outside the city centre –the city outskirts– in non-residential zones. This type of residential building has been a constant, not only in Almería, but in a large part of Andalusia<sup>10</sup> (López 2002)

However, at the present time they have been consolidated as permanent or temporary immigrant residences in many Andalusian cities or towns<sup>11</sup> that require their labour.

The scattered typology in turn, is broad, including traditional farmhouses, called *cortijos*, among the scattered dwellings, but immigrants also make use of barns where produce and farm equipment are kept, shacks, self-built constructions, bays, wholesale produce markets, abandoned cars, etc., as lodgings, all of them scattered around the countryside.

Initially, farms and *cortijos* in Almería were occupied by farmers and their families. Toward the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties, these farmhouses started to be abandoned by their owners, who were looking for the comforts and resources of the city. This progressive desertion coincided with the incorporation of foreign labour to the market for work in fruit and vegetable crops grown under plastic, who gained access to those residences in the interval when they were vacant. The massive continuous arrival of immigrants caused the capacity for housing them to become saturated, generating two processes: on the one hand, the appearance of other forms of scattered residential dwellings (shacks, storage sheds, etc.), and on the other, occupation of urban space, which up until then had been very scarce.

This is how, in a way, the process of invasion-succession and filtering of which Chicago ecologists speak began, especially in the *cortijos*. Since the eighties in

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<sup>9</sup> The proposal of a dual environment, just as in the case of the labor market, is simplistic due to its empirical and conceptual gaps. The city is divided into more than two segments. It is used here to refer to two different habitats in which the immigrant population is inserted and, in Almería, as we shall see below; empirical evidence shows some spaces that are very differentiated for Spaniards and Africans.

<sup>10</sup> The main type of scattered residence is a farmhouse called the *cortijo*. They were built at the same time as the farms. Most of the *cortijos* are located in intensive agricultural areas in Almería and were built from the fifties to the eighties in last century – a period when greenhouse agriculture was taking off and consolidating– and their inhabitants were the farm owners.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to the zones mentioned in the province of Almería, immigrants may also be found in scattered residences in other metropolitan areas in the rest of the Andalusian provinces. Thus for example, there are immigrants on *cortijos* in Torredelcampo, Alcaudete, Villacarrillo, Martos, Úbeda, etc., in the province of Jaén; Zafarraya in Granada and in Huelva, among others, in Lepe and Cartaya.

last century until the present day, the early Spanish immigrants, who occupied and built the *cortijos*, have gradually deserted that habitat, in patterns similar to those described by Turner (1968; 1972). In the life of an immigrant there are three stages of inhabitation and each stage is determined by various basic needs: opportunity, security and identity.

The new arrivals place more value on proximity to work (opportunity) than on property and location of housing (security) or the quality of inhabitation (identity). Once the economic capacity of the household has been consolidated, the immigrant aspires to be the owner of a decent dwelling. Therefore, the first immigrants – Spaniards – abandoned the *cortijos*, which were then filtered from the top down, that is, from those who have more – the native immigrant – to those who have less – the foreign immigrant-.

The question now is, will the same thing happen to foreign immigrants? Although at the present time it is risky to give a categorical answer to this question, there are elements that indicate that it will not happen that way. The residential mobility of immigrants is not just related to their climbing up the economic ladder and the time of residence, but also responds to other social and value factors, such as discrimination and refusal to let or sell decent housing to them. Immigrants mainly depend on the rental and sales strategies of the owners. At the present time, there is an immigrant housing submarket that is mostly in the hands of small owners rather than in real estate agencies (Martínez, 1999; Checa, 2004), in which lettings supplement the income received from another main activity, since they are not real estate agents. Families speculate with their houses, often dilapidated, and with the income from that, they can afford another house or improve their life style.

This is why, in the province of Almería, where there is a large African population, enormous fortified *gated communities*<sup>12</sup> are forming, in which immigrants are “forbidden” to live<sup>13</sup>, especially in most of the tourist zones. Indeed, the ideal situation, for the mainstream population, would be for the presence of immigrants to be limited to peripheral areas. So much so, that when immigrants start moving to a neighbourhood or building, the natives begin to leave<sup>14</sup>.

Thus, the arrival of immigrants in urban areas occurred later than in the outlying areas and as a consequence of the saturation of the latter. Furthermore,

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<sup>12</sup> Blakely and Gail (1997) explain this process for North American cities.

<sup>13</sup> Town and country are not opposites in Almería, but a succession, since most of the wealth of the province is generated in the country, while residential areas are in the city. However, this is not the situation for immigrants, whose residence must remain in the city outskirts – scattered –.

<sup>14</sup> Some North American literature places the tolerance limit – tipping point – of co-presence of Blacks and Whites at 30% Blacks.

this incorporation does not always occur amongst the immigrants who have been residing in Spain the longest, nor in the main cities, but, often, in the dependent local entities where the immigrants live<sup>15</sup>. However, incorporation to the urban areas does not mean that the population is not segregated and that living conditions are any better. Immigrants, mainly African, live in areas that are completely dilapidated and in the process of exclusion. These new zones are called “Almería ghettos” here, although the characteristics and the configuration differ substantially from the American *ghettos*<sup>16</sup> and even from the French *banlieu*.

**Table 1. Location of the African population in the main host cities in Almería**

	% foreign population	% foreign population in urban	% foreign population in Cortijos
El Ejido	20,9	35	65
Roquetas de Mar	20,3	58	12
La Mojonera	26	32	68
Vícar	18,2	20	80
Níjar	25,5	27	73

Source: Municipal registries 1/6/2004.

Indeed, the levels of residential segregation, both in urban and in scattered areas are very high<sup>17</sup>, especially compared to the figures reported in other studies, both European and North American, or from other areas in Spain<sup>18</sup>. Table 2

<sup>15</sup> For example, Roquetas de Mar is the city with the largest number of immigrants living in an urban nucleus, but over half of them live in their dependent local entities, especially Romanians and Latin Americans.

<sup>16</sup> See Wacquant (1997; 2001) a definition of *ghetto* is given based on the characteristics of such areas. Some qualities are found in Almería, although many others are not. See also the comments of Abu-Lugod (1997) on the Wacquant concept.

<sup>17</sup> To measure the spatial segregation of the immigrants we have chosen the Dissimilarity, Isolation and Centralization Indexes. As shown by the literature in this field, the Dissimilarity Index is the most widely used, although it has methodological problems since it is affected, among other things, by the different sizes of the population groups (Reardon and Firebaug, 2002; Grannis, 2002; Downey, 2003), for which reason, we also recur to the Isolation Index, which partly solves this problem, showing information on the probability of interaction with other groups. (Lieberson, 1980) The Absolute Centralization Index was also used, utilizing two measures, one, taking as a reference the distances to the main city center, both for scattered dwellings and those in the city center of the entire metropolitan area. In number two, the reference for measurement is the different local entities – for the case of the closest scattered dwellings and the houses in the dependent entity itself. At the present time, several different international research groups are working on two new lines of measure: the incorporation of space in the traditional indicators (Wong, 2003) and the definition of the indexes that affect the most groups at the same time (Wong, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Let it suffice to cite as examples, the European studies of Ceri Peach (2001), in which he examined the segregation in Great Britain of different minorities from Southern Asia and the Caribbean. The country with the greatest segregation was Bangladesh, with an index of 62 and the one with the least China, with 37. The research undertaken by Anderson (2004) measures the spatial segregation of non-Community immigrants in the Italian cities of Turin, Milan and Genoa, with the result that the city of Genoa has the highest index of 38.5. Also see other quantitative studies on residential segregation in Europe with figures, in many cases, lower than those of Almería: In London (Petersen, 1998), in Belfast (Doherty and Poole, 1995), in Amsterdam (Musterd and Deurloo, 2002), in Cologne (Friedrichs, 1998), in Viena (Giffinger, 1998) or in Berlin (Kemper, 1998). Moreover, Massey and Denton (1993) quantify the dissimilarity index for all the large North American cities. According to this study, segregation between Blacks and Whites in the United States is an average of 68.3 in the South and 80.1 in metropolitan areas in the North. For more recent data, see the Bureau of the Census (2000). In Spain, Martori and Hoberg (2003) report values lower than those in Almería for certain Catalonian cities.

demonstrates that immigrants from Africa are subjected to the greatest segregation<sup>19</sup>, followed by Latin Americans and finally, Eastern Europeans, and in some cases there may even be hypersegregation (Massey and Denton, 1989) due to their high numbers and the new social, economic and political reconfiguration (Wacquant, 1989; 2001) in these zones –both in scattered and in urban centres-. This phenomenon is mainly caused by the negligence or absenteeism of the State. In other words, these zones were built up as places of transition in a stage of local economic development, and with the arrival of the immigrants they have become permanent habitats.

**Table 2. Residential segregation in province of Almería<sup>20</sup> (2004)**

	Dissimilarity	Isolation	Absolute Centralization (main nucleus)	Absolute Centralization (nearest urban nucleus)*
Argelia	0.69	0.70	-0.66	-0.33
Argentina	0.52	0.48	0.40	0.70
Colombia	0.63	0.53	0.50	0.84
Gambia	0.80	0.75	-0.74	-0.53
Ghana	0.78	0.74	-0.70	-0.39
Guinea Bissau	0.67	0.73	-0.65	-0.33
Mali	0.84	0.84	-0.68	-0.45
Marruecos	0.53	0.60	-0.62	-0.23
Mauritania	0.86	0.74	-0.66	-0.23
Nigeria	0.80	0.83	-0.37	-0.19
Rumania	0.49	0.35	0.37	0.60
Rusia	0.54	0.37	0.63	0.75
Senegal	0.70	0.74	-0.66	-0.24
<b>Medium</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>-0.30</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Municipal registries and by the author.

\* These figures do not include immigrants who live in the main city centre or in the scattered housing closest to it. Only the population residing in each dependent centre and the closest scattered housing were used for calculation.

The results of the three measure indexes for African immigrants show that, in addition to being concentrated in certain areas (dissimilarity), the figures on lack of contact with the mainstream population (isolation) and the distance to the main city centre (centralization) are even higher, demonstrating that it is the Africans

<sup>19</sup> In general, it is the natives of the European Community countries who have the highest figures. Thus for example, the British in El Ejido have a dissimilarity index of 86.55 or the Germans in Roquetas de Mar, 83.03. However, the circumstances and processes are different from those experienced by the non-Community immigrants. The Community population is composed exclusively of tourists and settles near the beach, in such places as Aguadulce and the Urbanización de Roquetas de Mar or Almerimar in El Ejido.

<sup>20</sup> Of more than 110 nationalities present in the province of Almería, we have only taken into account those who have a large numerical and proportional representation in the various cities and towns studied.

who customarily live in scattered lodgings among the greenhouses. Whilst segregation figures for Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans are also high in the dissimilarity index, they are located mainly in the cities themselves or in the scattered dwellings closest to them, therefore offering a higher probability of contact with those of their own nationality, either in the neighbourhood, or in public spaces.

Taking the isolation index as a dependent variable – the best instrument of measure for this context – and the data obtained from the survey of African immigrants, we found the main variables in the model of residential segregation in the province of Almería.

**Table 3. Model of Segregation in Almería**

	B	Beta
Income	-0,42	-0,92
Good command of the Spanish language	-0,28	-0,27
Years of residence	-0,31	-0,25
Residential preference	0,03	0,10
Discrimination by population in property sale and rental	0,74	1,36
Discrimination by estate agencies	0,44	0,75
Constant		14,3
R <sup>2</sup>		0,78

B: Partial regression coefficients; Beta: Standard regression coefficient. Sig T= 0.05. Independent variables that do not meet significance criteria are not included.

Table 3 shows that the discrimination variable<sup>21</sup>, in its individual, social and institutional manifestations, is the one that carries the most weight in explaining the segregation of African immigrants in Almería. 74.1% of the immigrants state that they have been subjected to discrimination or rejection in their search for housing at some time, which impeded access to the dwelling they desired, even if they were able to pay for it. Therefore, a correlation is established between discriminatory treatment and segregation: the more discrimination, the more segregation. The mainstream population's view of space, which in the beginning is instrumental and useful – the environment in which they live and achieve their purposes – takes on a sense and feeling of roots and identity<sup>22</sup> with the arrival of immigrants and their occupation of the streets. This causes a dualization of the housing market along ethnic and colour lines (Berry 1979) to the extent that Africans

<sup>21</sup> How discrimination is perceived has objective and subjective elements. In this paper we asked immigrants to tell us their experience of being discriminated against when they stated they had been subjected to discrimination. Thus, when their store offered subjective arguments, the discrimination response was invalidated.

<sup>22</sup> Martínez (2001), Checa and Arjona (2001) and Arjona (2004) emphasize how fear and insecurity caused by the immigrants was one of the arguments used by the natives in their attacks on businesses run by Moroccans in the city of El Ejido in Almería. Díez (1998: 92) shows that Spaniards think that the last benefit that illegal immigrants should have access to is housing – 45% –.

who try to leave their prescribed territory generate unease and violent resistance, as it occurred in the town of El Ejido in February of 2000.

To this situation must be added, on the one hand, the scarce intervention or negligence of the government in solving the problem of segregation and the deficient housing conditions<sup>23</sup>. In no case is equal housing approached, or aid given for its renovation<sup>24</sup>. On the other hand, even when they are economically solvent or are backed by their employers<sup>25</sup>, the fear of becoming exclusively a financial entity for the poor and the immigrants, closes the door on many loans, but not with regard to saving or sending money. Evidently, planned shrinking (Fischer, 1984) is the result of relations among social and economic action and the negligence of political and government leaders.

To summarize, the importance of the context of reception (Portes and Böröcz, 1992) in explaining and defining, not only the immigrants' incorporation to the labour markets, but also their residence, is clear that the context is mostly hostile, affecting a basic necessity which is protected as a fundamental international right<sup>26</sup>.

The second explanatory point of segregation is income: the lower the economic capacity, the greater the segregation, as advocated by the classical Chicago theorists. Immigrants are mainly located in those places where the price of housing, is in theory, the lowest<sup>27</sup>, old centres, State housing projects or scattered dwellings where housing is more deteriorated and has lower social prestige. However, part of the explanation for the reduced capacity for indebtedness of the immigrants is also rooted in ethnic discrimination<sup>28</sup>: They seem to be condemned to be located in the outlying areas and employed in the greenhouses, with scarce

<sup>23</sup> The city councils of the Almería province, conversely to some in Huelva or Jaén, are unwilling to accept the subsidies offered by the regional government in the framework of Andalusian plans for immigrant housing, saying that this policy would be a comparative offense to the natives.

<sup>24</sup> The Mayor of the city of El Ejido declared that the solution to the housing problem would be to rehabilitate the eight thousand cortijos existing within the municipal limits, so that they could live near the farms and not cause trouble.

<sup>25</sup> Citibank grants most of the loans to immigrants, although, according to immigrants, charging them a higher commission than natives.

<sup>26</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 25, Paragraph 1, states that everyone has a right to housing. Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution also states that: "All Spaniards have the right to enjoy a decent, adequate dwelling. Public authorities shall promote the necessary conditions and establish the pertinent regulations to make this right effective".

<sup>27</sup> We have verified that the prices paid for the rent of a cortijo and a flat in city centers are not very different, nor are the figures asked of the Spanish population for the rental of flats in other places. However, one way of making them cheaper for immigrants is by overcrowding, which is more permissible in the cortijos and in segregated urban areas. Likewise, the sale price of housing in those areas – degraded – where immigrants live, is considerably higher. That is, housing that the mainstream population would not pay even six thousand euros for, is sold to immigrants for forty-two thousand. Therefore, in areas such as the Doscientas Viviendas in Roquetas de Mar or Manolo Escobar and Almería streets in El Ejido, the people of Almería buy flats at a lower price for resale to immigrants.

<sup>28</sup> See, among others, Checa (1995); Foro-Cívico (2000); Martínez (2001); Martín *et al.* (2001) and Arjona (2004) where the process of labor discrimination against African immigrants in agriculture in Almería is perfectly described: From non-compliance with contracts to appalling working conditions, to the use of illegal labor being permitted.

labour mobility, reducing their opportunities for work. Discrimination is accentuated in the case of Africans, however, as Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans, in spite of belonging to a more recent migration wave have been incorporated to other labour markets where the wages are higher and they can at least have access to city centres in addition to greenhouses. Therefore, with the innuendos in Almería, this situation has some points in common with the *spatial mismatch hypothesis*<sup>29</sup>, since too many people with employment in agriculture have settled in scattered dwellings among the greenhouses and live there most of the year, as the doors to other jobs are closed to them, even though this army of reserve labour is ideal for the more economical operation of the Almería agricultural system, which is variable, temporary and irregular.

The third explanatory point, although it carries less weight, is related to how familiar they are with their surroundings and how they assimilate them<sup>30</sup>. Thus, the less time they have spent residing in Almería and the scantier their knowledge of the language, the greater the segregation they suffer. A prolonged presence enables immigrants to acquire a more profound and wider knowledge of how the residential market works and more exhaustive information on the offers available. Nevertheless, this point works better for Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans, while the Africans have a more difficulty moving out of the scattered dwellings or micro-ghettos of the cities, and their residential mobility is reduced to different degraded areas. (See Checa, 2004) Thus, the greatest part of residential movement is between different scattered lodgings. In brief, their mobility generates socially marginal residential loops (Mingione, 1996: 6) and stigmatization that relegates them socially in all regards – economic, social, labour, residential, affective, etc.

Likewise, a good command of the language allows immigrants to interact better with the context: They obtain more reliable information on accommodation offers, their social network of Spanish acquaintances is broadened and their integration becomes easier. This is the reason why Latin Americans do not encounter this problem.

The last point that influences the segregating process in the Almería Poniente (West Side) is the residential preferences of the immigrants themselves. In Almería, the majority of immigrants show a desire to be inserted in zones with a mixed population. Even those who state their wish to live in exclusively co-ethnic

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<sup>29</sup> Kain (1965; 1968) proposes three hypotheses for explaining the differences in access to work between Blacks and Whites in North American cities, giving great importance to the spatial variable: first, residential discrimination in the metropolitan areas results in the concentration of Blacks in downtown areas. Second, the location of Blacks reduces their job opportunities. Third, the formation of suburbs and scattering of jobs in the metropolitan areas reduces the opportunities for work of Blacks who live downtown. Wilson (1978; 1987; 1997) is possibly the author who has made the greatest research effort to verify this hypothesis. See Bruce (2001) for a review of his most important studies.

<sup>30</sup> Studies, such as those of Callejón (2004) show that according to the natives of Almería, the best model for incorporating immigrants into the host society is their total assimilation.

zones do so because it protects them from interethnic confrontations and, to a lesser degree, helps them retain their culture.

In conclusion, the residential segregation of immigrants in Almería is definitely the result of the existence of a dual residential market controlled mainly by smallhold owners who slow down immigrant incorporation, especially of Africans, to places of mainstream occupation due to ethnic rejection and economic reasons, in the same manner that the reduced capacity for indebtedness limits their access to any area at all.

#### 4. The impossible housing

The conditions and characteristics of housing that define it as indecent have become, together with spatial segregation, another handicap for the full integration and balanced incorporation of African immigrants to the Almería society. Taking as a reference the concepts of residence<sup>31</sup> (Kemeny, 1992) and decent housing, we separately assess below the degree of compliance of accommodation with the various basic requirements for the dwelling/lodging of African immigrants. However, a definition of decent housing is temporary and coincidental in any case and depends on the context in which it is assessed.

*Stability.* Rental is the most common access to housing for African immigrants (55%), followed by provided housing (25%) and occupation (11%), and finally, 9% are owners. Provided housing and occupation (36%) are very unstable for the occupants of the residences: the first is closely linked to the employer, that is, the owner of the dwelling allows the immigrants he employs, mainly on his farm, the use of it. Although this does not mean that all the occupants are his workers, since some are employed by other farms and others form part of the reserve labour force. Furthermore, only 35% of them have a contract linking them to the agricultural season.

Occupation, on the other hand, is the maximum expression of instability for various reasons. In the first place, because they are inhospitable places that, which, to the extent of their possibilities, they will abandon as soon as possible. In the second place, it depends on the desire of its owners to have the place occupied vacated<sup>32</sup>. And, of course, in no case is there a contract.

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<sup>31</sup> The traditional concept of the housing problem has basically been defined as an imbalance between need and production, without taking into account the relationship or integration between housing and social structure. The concept of residence or of habitation (Cortés, 1995) is therefore proposed as a way to join social and physical-spatial dimensions.

<sup>32</sup> Provided housing and occupation of housing in city centers has sometimes allowed the application of a local city policy inspired by that of Haussmann in Paris. Thus, in El Ejido or Roquetas de Mar, the creation of a “purified city”, out of concerns for hygiene, unhealthy conditions or morality, turns into a cause for eviction from a house, shop or building, hiding the desire to convert those habitats in new buildings, shops, etc., and thereby, masking an incipient *gentrification* process in the name of a garden city. In the outlying areas, on the other hand, cession and occupation act as sources of reserve labor and both immigrants and their habitats are “invisible” and are not in such great need of political sanitation.

Ownership and rental are the most stable forms of residential incorporation, although in the latter case, sometimes there is no contract regulating the term. However, as with provided housing, they are not long-term arrangements, and only 3% last longer than three years, 7% two years and 15% one year. The rest last less than one year – mostly from six to nine months.

**Table 4. System and ownership of African immigrant housing**

System		Title	
	%		%
Property	9	Public title	9
Provided	25	Oral contract	23
Rental	55	Written contract	19
Occupation	11	None	48
		Other	1

Consequently, immigrant residence is highly unstable, as observed in an analysis of the number of dwellings they have lived in. 70% of immigrants state they have occupied more than one dwelling, 25.5% two, 18.9% three, 15.6% four, 6.9% five and 3.1% six or more. However, in 85% of the cases, mobility is not equivalent to an improvement in accommodation, which occurs in a limited manner and means moving among the different cortijos or the different zones or dilapidated buildings in city centres. Only 15% of African immigrants' moves result in an improvement in housing. This circumstance mainly occurs in the city of Roquetas de Mar, where families are totally regrouped and various members make economic contributions to the family nucleus. In other cities, this reality is worse, even under the same conditions, as decisions of the context of reception come into the equation.

As a result, residential instability affects 77% of immigrants – occupied, provided and rented for less than one year –. This situation generates great uncertainty and anxiety in the occupants.

*Adequacy.* The location of residences inhabited by African immigrants in Almería, as we have seen, is mostly scattered, compared to their location in urban areas. However, in both cases, a varied housing typology is found to be inhabited by immigrants. Thus, in cities, immigrant lodgings may be flats, single houses, garages, shops, stair wells, on the verandas of buildings, etc.<sup>33</sup>. Also in the scattered areas, as pointed out above, these dwellings are cortijos, tools and pesticide storage sheds, shacks, abandoned cars, etc.

Scattered habitat is one of the maximum expressions of exclusion and residential isolation which, in most cases, derives from inadequate residence.

<sup>33</sup> Huttman, Blauw and Saltman (1991) have collected a series of studies made in the United States and Europe in which places unfit for human habitation, such as shacks, abandoned cars, garages, etc., are described as dwellings.

Thus, for example, the average distance from scattered dwellings to the main city is 4,836 meters, to the closest city centre 3,319 meters and to the closest scattered dwelling 437 meters. These distances indicate how difficult it is for immigrants to establish relations, not only with the natives, but also with other immigrants or their own co-ethnics. Checa (2003) and Callejón and Casado (2004) demonstrate the scarcity of interethnic relations among the various groups in Almería, besides other reasons, because of the occupation of different spaces or in other words, the places where there is co-presence are slightly beyond the sphere of work,. Therefore, habitat is configured as the main indicator for explaining the process of the integration or segregation of immigrants.

In the same way, access to housing is an important point in measuring their adequacy, since every dwelling must have a type of access that ensures the security of its inhabitants. Therefore, sidewalks, lighting and street signs become indispensable elements.

In the first case, 45% of housing has adequate access – for vehicles and pedestrians or only pedestrians – the rest has inadequate access (roads without pavements or sidewalks for pedestrians) or none at all (vacant land), especially among the scattered dwellings. Lighting and street signs among the scattered dwellings are non-existent. Only those cortijos located near towns or on main roads have outdoor lighting. Its absence has caused immigrants walking in these areas to be run over. There is no public sewage system, or daily refuse collection, leading to foul odours and the proliferation of rats. And, of course, in no case are there health centres near scattered dwellings, or schools or places for leisure such as parks or gardens. This situation has led to the appearance among the greenhouses of ethnic entrepreneurs, that is, immigrants who offer food, leisure facilities, telephone services, etc. to their co-ethnics. (See Arjona, 2004)

Another of the factors that define adequate housing is overcrowding<sup>34</sup>. According to Castles and Kosack (1973), the reasons why it occurs are varied and the origins are different. Here we highlight the most representative and important in Almería. In the first place, immigrants move into areas which are already starting to become overpopulated and where affordable housing becomes a problem for all the demand – immigrant and Spanish-. This leads to maximum exploitation of the free space they can find. In the second place, the income that can be earned as a farmhand in agriculture is insufficient for an individual or a family to pay for rented or purchased housing. Therefore, to lower the cost of accommodation, they share the expense with other individuals<sup>35</sup>. In the third

<sup>34</sup> Lurbe (2004) refers to immigrant being at risk with regard to health, in which overcrowding can be an important factor.

<sup>35</sup> To this it must be added that many immigrants send money to their home countries, reducing their capacity for saving for and investing in housing even further, which is compensated by taking in new individuals.

place, ignorance of the surroundings and lack of information lead immigrants, through support networks, to live together. Almost all of them have an address at their final destination where they can go and stay until they find a job or obtain information about some other place. In this case, landlords are permissive, as they charge by the number of occupants, which is far more profitable, since the more immigrants they take in, the higher their income they earn. (See Checa and Arjona, 2001; Martínez, 1999) Therefore, overcrowding, which would at first seem to be only a strategy to reduce immigrants' expenses, becomes a perfectly profitable business for the landlord, since housing rented to immigrants needs little investment in maintenance, repairs or improvements, while the income received from them is very high.

Measuring overcrowding in a dwelling involves finding out the number of persons who live in it and the space available to them, however, its definition depends on the historical moment of reference and the standards defined for the occasion, and there is no unanimous concept of what these are. We have taken the standards of the OCDE, World Bank and the most relevant international literature as our reference for the following. First, a maximum of 1.25 persons per bedroom, second, that each subject has a space – counting shared spaces – of 20-25 meters, third, that there is a partition between the bedrooms of children and their parents, and fourth, that several families do not live together.

With regard to the first criterion among African immigrants in Almería, there is an average of 2.4 persons per room, which rises to 3 in scattered dwellings. Only 7.3% of Africans comply with the 1.25 person-per-room standard, especially, Moroccan families who have totally or partially regrouped. In the second case, 85% of the immigrants have less than fifteen square meters available to them<sup>36</sup>, while only 5% have twenty square meters. The third and fourth criteria of overcrowding are those that are found most rarely among the Africans. 15% of families with children over 6 years of age sleep in the same room with the parents and at no time do brothers and sisters over 16 years of age share a room. Similarly, only in 12% of the cases do families live together, a reality which is more common among Eastern Europeans, especially Romanians.

In any case, overcrowding arises in housing whether rented, provided, or occupied and even owned.

Finally, condition is also defined by the perception that the inhabitants themselves have of their accommodation. In our case, only 8% are completely satisfied with the opportunities their dwelling and the surroundings offered them. However, 76% of African immigrants state their dissatisfaction.

<sup>36</sup> The average population of Africans per lodging is 6.3 persons. According to the Cologne European Convention and the Parker Morris Committee of the United Kingdom, the net area recommended is a usable space of 98 square meters. However, the average surface in our case is 61 meters.

**Table 5. Degree of satisfaction with residence**

	%
Completely satisfied	8
Rather satisfied	13
Not very satisfied	54
Not satisfied at all	22
No answer	3

The causes for satisfaction put forward are, in the first place, the conditions of habitability of the dwelling and the deficient state of the roads/streets, especially for inhabitants of shacks, storage sheds and cortijos. In the second place, is inadequacy for normal living, especially because of the distance required to go shopping, for leisure or to take their children to school. In no case do city buses offer pickup services to people among the greenhouse areas, so that to go anywhere, they have to go on foot or by bicycle. In the third place, we find the high cost of housing compared to the income earned, or in other words, the low capacity for indebtedness. Finally, there is overcrowding in lodgings.

To summarize, 93% of immigrants dwell in lodgings where 77% have an inadequacy indicator of two and 58% of three.

The *habitability* of housing becomes an excellent element to define a decent residence. The indicators chosen for their measure are the quality of construction and whether they have a basic infrastructure.

People's security depends on quality of construction, so a dwelling with deficient roofing, walls or floors places the inhabitants at severe risk, and ventilation or dampness define the habitability of the residence. In this respect, 43% of the lodgings inhabited by African immigrants had one of those deficiencies, 32% two and 21% all of them. Inhabitability is mostly found among the scattered dwellings whereas it is only found in 11% of dwellings in city centres.

The habitability of housing is also determined by whether it has drinking water, hot water, electricity and heating/air conditioning. 68% have drinking water, 55% hot water and 71% have electricity, however, only 0.3% of the dwellings have heating or air conditioning.

In lodgings that do not have drinking water, immigrants take it from the reservoirs that supply irrigation water to the greenhouses at severe risk to their health, whether consumed directly, in food or used for personal hygiene. Similarly, in lodgings where there is no electric lighting, candles or lanterns are used for illumination.

Likewise, the existence of certain living units and their separation from the rest is fundamental. There is a cooker or stove for the preparation of food in 75% of the cases, but 35% of them are normally found in the living room or outside the

house itself. The same is true of the bathroom. 72% of the lodgings have one, but 38% do not have a dividing wall or are built outside. This is repeated in bedrooms, where 18% of dwellings use the living room as a bedroom. In the summary of all the factors, it turns out that 43% of immigrants inhabit lodgings that lack one of the above basic elements affecting the inhabitability of the dwelling.

The last indicator that defines decent housing is its affordability, that is, the economic investment that must be made by a person to be able to gain access to it. National surveys of family budgets and expenses have demonstrated that the costs of use and occupation of housing are very high<sup>37</sup>, a fact that is aggravated in the case of immigrants, where it acquires dramatic tones.

All African immigrants who say they own their home in Almería have had to obtain financial assistance from other sources: 95% exclusively from banks and the rest from family or friends as well as from banks. In any case, their average monthly payments come to 330.5€. However, the average income is 611.9€, or in other words, over half their income (54%) goes exclusively toward paying for housing. Never the less, families who own their homes usually have several members working outside the home, and in addition to the wages of the head of the family, there are other contributions that go to pay for the loans on the residence, to the point where family expense on housing comes to 38% of the total budget.

On the other hand, the average payments for immigrants who live in rented houses is 114.76€ per month, which is equivalent to 18.75% of their income. This fact, which *a priori* is not high, hides a different reality, since in none of the cases do immigrants live alone, but share a house in overcrowded conditions, among other reasons, to lower the cost. Evidently, this reality limits other fundamental rights: the regrouping of families, privacy, adequacy, etc. Therefore, if an immigrant had to confront payments without the help of others, the average investment would be 85% of his income.

Immigrants, who live in provided housing<sup>38</sup>, theoretically do not pay for their lodgings. However, in some cases (42%) the reality is different. Although entrepreneurs do not charge rent directly, the immigrants pay for their residence by working overtime – raising and lowering the greenhouse strips, irrigating at dawn, watching over the farm – or, in other cases, it is deducted from their wages. The union agreement for rural labour in this case would be specifically 35€ per

<sup>37</sup> Spain is the country in the European Union – of the fifteen – with the lowest housing expenditure in its GDP (0.9) compared to 4.1 in Sweden. The construction and real estate sectors are exclusively in the hands of private businesses which have put no limit on the escalation of prices. Thus, in Spain, since 1980, the price of housing has gone up 726% in nominal value and 124% in real value (very far from 33% in Germany), a situation which has required households to invest almost all their income in housing.

<sup>38</sup> 94% of provided housing is in scattered dwellings that are next to the farms, the rest is in dependent local entities – the case of Cortijos de Marín in Roquetas de Mar.

day, but hardly 25% of the entrepreneurs pay that. The rest pay 27 to 30€, under the excuse that they have been given accommodation. In this case, calculations show that the savings in wage payment is higher than the income they would perceive from rental, because the owner takes 5€ per day off their wages, which is equal to 150€, more than the average sum paid for rented lodgings. Therefore, we are talking about locally-based micro-markets<sup>39</sup>, partially separated from general competition. (Bourdieu, 2003)

**Table 6. Affordability of residence for African immigrants in Almería**

Monthly cost of rent (individual)		Monthly cost of mortgage (whole dwelling)		Monthly income	
€	%	€	%	€	%
0-30	2,1	120,01-180	3,1	120,01-180	0,4
30,01-60	32,6	180,01-240	8,1	180,01-240	0,8
60,01-90	27,9	240,01-300	21,5	240,01-300	1,1
90,01-120	14,5	300,01-360	26,0	300,01-360	1,3
120,01-150	9,0	360,01-420	18,8	360,01-420	3,9
150,01-180	6,2	420,01-480	9,2	420,01-480	4,4
180,01-210	3,4	480,01-540	4,6	480,01-540	8,6
More than 210	4,3	540,01-600	4,8	540,01-600	8,9
<b>Average cost</b>	<b>114,76 €</b>	600,01-660	2,7	600,01-660	9,4
		More than 660	1,2	660,01-720	7,5
		<b>Average cost</b>	<b>330,5 €</b>	720,01-780	19,4
				780,01-840	14,5
				840,01-900	6,5
				900,01-960	6,2
				960,01-1020	5
				More than 1020	2,1
				<b>Average income</b>	<b>611,97 €</b>

Non-payment of electricity and water bills is common. 43% of immigrants have at some time been unable to meet their payments on time, and have later had to pay the extra charges and a reconnection fee. Furthermore, 12% of immigrants have been evicted at some time due to local sanitation policies, although in none of the cases were they offered alternative residence, thus they have rebuilt or relocated somewhere else in the same or worse conditions. Summarizing, 31% of immigrants have difficulty to afford their current dwelling, although the rest recur to overcrowding or economic assistance from one or several members of the family.

<sup>39</sup> Obviously, when immigrants inhabit lodgings by squatting or when they build their own shacks, there is no payment involved.

In conclusion, derived from the accumulation of deficient conditions, affordability, stability and habitability, it can be said that 71% of African immigrants settled in the province of Almería reside in substandard housing<sup>40</sup>.

#### 4.1. The undesirable neighbour in a residential submarket

The reasons for the occupation of indecent housing are many and varied in depth. As understood from the regression analysis<sup>41</sup>, the first reason explaining poor housing conditions is the discrimination perceived: the greater the discrimination, the worse the living conditions of the lodgings. Immigrants affirm that even when able to pay, there are many catches in occupying a decent dwelling. In the survey carried out among the immigrants, 30% of them state that they would be willing to pay around 300€ a month for a house in good condition.

Thus, the main places occupied are scattered among the greenhouses, where their invisibility is greater. But when they live in city centres, they concentrate in certain more deteriorated neighbourhoods or buildings. The explanation for discrimination has two sides to it: one, as we have seen above, the mainstream preference for some groups over others. (Arjona, 1999) Two, economic interests, since a hardly solvent residential market, characterized by severely deficient housing is rehabilitated, where nothing is invested and, of course, no native is willing to occupy.

The second element that defines indecent housing is its location. Thus, housing/lodgings in the outskirts are those in worst conditions in all respects. This situation becomes more dramatic, above all, in Campos de Nijar, where African immigrants are doomed to live in the outskirts since the mainstream population is very unwilling to have them as neighbours.

Thus, for example, near the town of San Isidro there is a disused greenhouse of around seven thousand square meters, where over one hundred shacks have been built and that, depending on the season, may give shelter to four hundred or five hundred sub-Saharan Africans, mainly from Mali and Senegal. The greenhouse has become a small city with no infrastructure, no furnishings. Recently, Nijar Town Council provided a tap with drinking water next to the greenhouse, but before this occurred, they had to fetch water from over a kilometre away in the centre of the town. 80% of these immigrants have been living there for over two years under these conditions, with no expectation of ever moving out. All of them are employed in agriculture, except one immigrant who repairs bicycles for the

<sup>40</sup> Other studies that have also concentrated on Almería, using various methodologies and procedures, describe the situation of residential exclusion, segregation and occupation of substandard housing by immigrants as severe and extreme (see, among others, Martínez, 1999, 2001; Foro Cívico, 2000; Defensor del Pueblo Andaluz, 2001; Girón, 2002; Checa, 2004) concerning residential exclusion, segregation and the occupation of substandard housing by immigrants.

<sup>41</sup> In this case habitability was used as the dependent variable (see table 7).

others, and another who heats water over a wood fire during the day for those who need it.

In this area, there are also immigrants living in disused pigsties and stables, cars, vans or truck trailers. Therefore, we can say, without fear of being mistaken, that all of these places have become enclaves of basic survival and extreme poverty.

We name the third point explaining the occupation of substandard housing “timing”. It is defined by the years they have been in this country, documentation and knowledge and information about their environment, so that the shorter the time they have been living in this here, the worse their living conditions, since on the one hand, documentation is an obstacle that can be overcome and on the other, their time of residence spent in this area leads to a better knowledge, in all respects, of the dynamics of the host society.

However, this element has certain jagged edges that keep returning to ethnic discrimination, since African immigrants have been in Almería the longest, compared to Latin Americans and Romanians, who have been present in large numbers since 2000, but who occupy better housing<sup>42</sup>. Similarly, More Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans have illegal status because their recent arrival in Spain has not allowed them to legalize their situation in the various extraordinary opportunities that have been granted for this, whereas the sub-Saharanans have been able to obtain legal status “more easily” since they have been in our country the longest.

The fourth point is the capacity for indebtedness of African immigrants. The greater their income is, the better their residential conditions. As we saw above, a large part of the African population has severe difficulties to afford housing, investing over 35% of their income in it. However, this would mean that immigrants who come from other places earn more, or that they are willing to invest more money in housing. Checa (2004) has shown that differences in wages among the different groups are not that significant. It is true that Africans seem doomed to do exclusively greenhouses labour, with less job mobility and lower wages, while other population groups are employed in their auxiliary industry, in construction, domestic service or restoration as well as in agriculture. But in all cases these are jobs where submerged economy is strong and wages are low. Thus, except in provided and/or occupied housing, the prices paid are similar,

<sup>42</sup> Checa (2004; 2007) shows that Africans, Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans enter very similar labor markets – especially agriculture and construction – and earn the same income. Equally, their accommodation expenses are very similar, as well as their remittances. There is however, a difference in the arrival of women: The numbers of Latin American and Eastern European women are greater – mainly female migration – as opposed to the predominantly male migration from Africa. Thus, the presence of women is perceived by the autochthonous population as a guarantee for the care and maintenance of the accommodation, for which reason it is easier for them to have access to dwellings in urban areas. We are, therefore, confronted with evident statistical discrimination.

although the conditions of habitability, adequacy and stability differ, and therefore, discrimination is again reaffirmed as the basic element explaining their situation.

The regrouping of families and residential preferences arise as the fifth and sixth elements explaining less-than-optimum housing. The presence of women is a basic point for access to decent housing. The mainstream population raises fewer impediments when the family is complete due to the assumption that maintenance will be better if there is a female presence. And, of course, residential preferences are not clearly explanatory of this situation, since they are very limited, no further from the residential market designed for them.

**Table 7. Variables impacting on the occupation of decent housing in Almería**

	B	Beta
Location	-0,43	-0,98
Residential preference	0,01	0,08
Regrouping of families	0,18	0,15
Years of residence	-0,41	-0,60
Perception of discrimination by mainstream population and real estate agencies in sale and rental	0,54	1,18
Affordability –Income-	-0,28	-0,35
Constant		15,6
R <sup>2</sup>		0,76

B: Partial regression coefficients; Beta: Standard regression coefficient. Sig T= 0.00  
Independent variables that do not meet significance criteria are not included.  
The nominal and ordinal variables were transformed into dummies.

## 5. Conclusion

The figures shown throughout the text reflect that the African population settled in Almería suffers from high rates of segregation and their right to live in decent accommodation has been cut off, since almost three out of four immigrants are living in indecent housing. The main habitat that these immigrants occupy is scattered – *cortijos*, tool sheds, old cemeteries, old transformer towers, empty pools, etc. – located in the labyrinth of roads, paths or vacant land in the countryside, which due to their location, makes them invisible. Therefore, immigrants in Almería inhabit enclaves of poverty, which at the present time are merely survival spaces. This has uncovered an ethnic line in the city separating the segregated and undesirables from the rest. This frontier, which is mainly based on deliberate discrimination from all sides, citizens, politicians, financial entities, government, etc., has led to a kind of modernized poverty for which everyone is responsible, but which nobody takes responsibility for. It is also hierarchical and unequal because it implies judgments on values and relationships of power. That is to say, it produces and defines as being “different”, anyone who not is wanted

as a neighbour and furthermore, rehabilitates a residential market mostly controlled by employers and not so much by real estate agencies.

The limited economic capacity of immigrants, partly explained by a segmented, discontinuous and variable labour market, along with the location of lodgings, time of residence and residential preferences of the immigrants also explains, although to a lesser degree, the segregation and occupation of indecent habitats.

To summarize, however that may be, the residential situation of African immigrants in the province of Almería is desperate and rapid, effective action is needed to solve this problem, which is leading to others, such as segregation in schools, spreading of infectious-contagious diseases, etc., that is to say, social and environmental injustice is required.

**Juan Carlos Checa Olmos**, is professor in Sociology, Almería University (Spain). Doctor by Almería University (2004). He is author of the books *La diferenciación residencial de los inmigrados* (2004) and *Viviendo juntos aparte* (2007). He is coeditor of the books *Convivencias entre culturas* (2001), *La integración social de los inmigrados: modelos y experiencias* (2003) e *Inmigración y derechos humanos* (2004). He is author to various articles in the following reviews: *Anthropologica*, *REMI*, *Papers*, *Ciudad y Territorio*.

**Ángeles Arjona Garrido**, is professor in Social Anthropology, Ciencias Humanas y Sociales Department, Almería University (Spain). Doctor by Almería University (2004). She is author of the books *La inmigración y el mercado de trabajo: el caso de la economía étnica en Almería* (2004) and *Los colores del escaparate* (2006). She is author to various articles in the following reviews: *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, *Sociología del Trabajo*, *Redes*, *Migraciones Internacionales*, *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, etc.

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