

Gentrification in Barcelona city from a gender perspective: a quantitative approach

Executive summary¹

Department of Gender Services and Time Policies Municipal Manager's Office

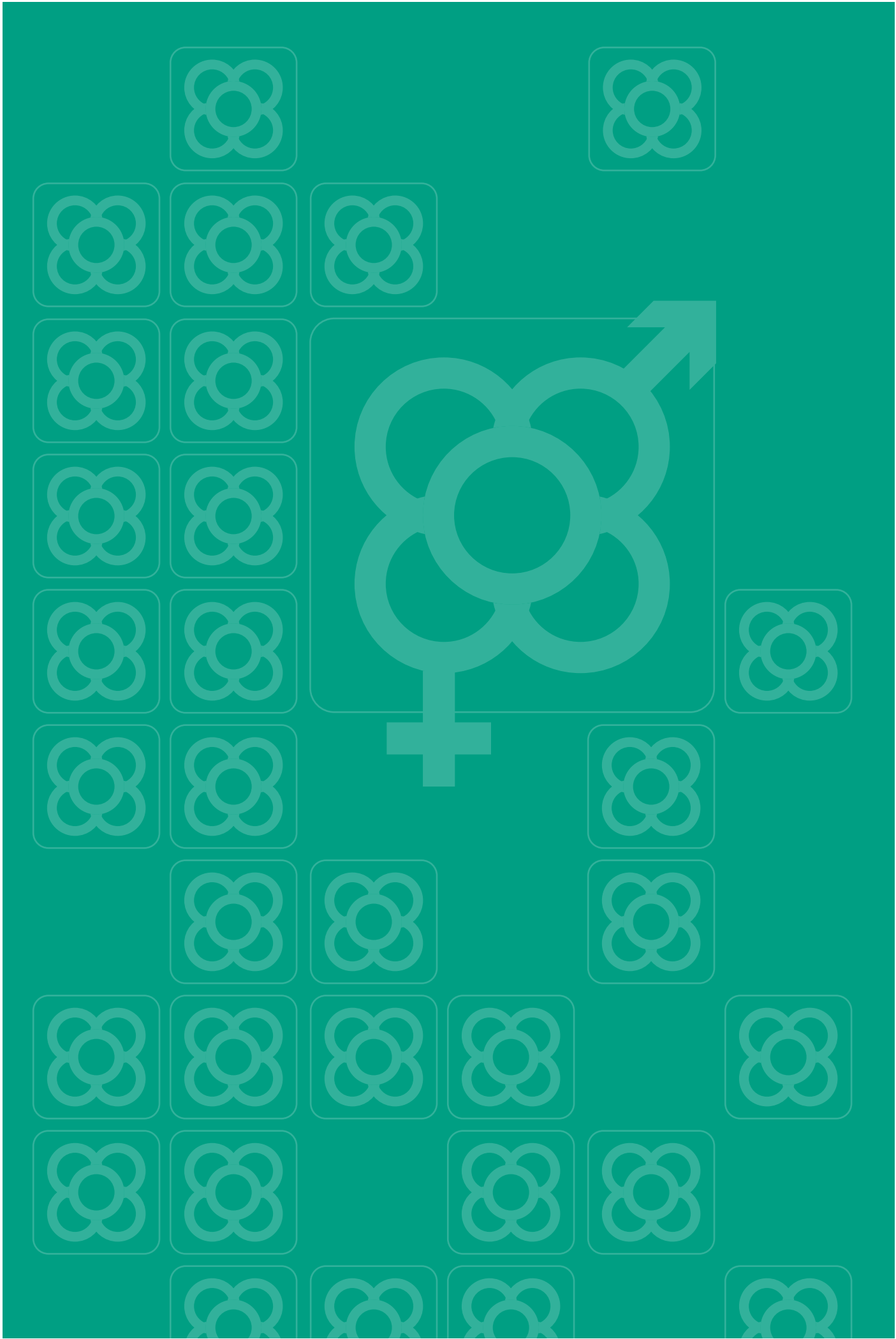
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1. The complete report can be viewed at <http://hdl.handle.net/11703/119273>



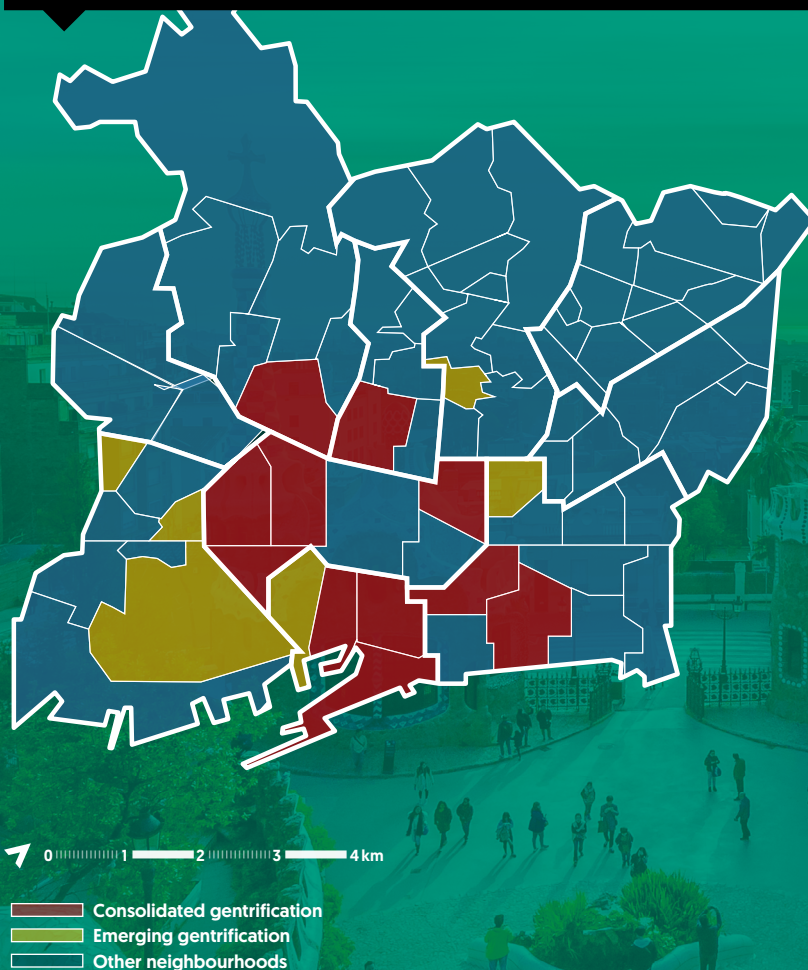
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Introduction

The main aim of this study is to explore, from a gender perspective, the implications of the gentrification processes that have taken place on the socio-demographic dynamics of Barcelona's population in the period from 2011 to 2018. The research methodology used is purely quantitative and includes other variables, apart from gender, which are necessary in order to understand how the gentrification processes have evolved in the city. These include age, origin (place of birth) and level of education.

Conglomerates of Barcelona neighbourhoods according to the gentrification indicator of López-Gay *et al.* [2019].



Source: Own production, in accordance with the proposal of López-Gay *et al.* [2019].

Context, social class and gender

Various studies have shown that gentrification, understood as a process of urban transformation and the replacement of a local population in favour of socio-economically wealthier strata, has had a dramatic impact in Barcelona city in recent years (Antón-Alonso et al., 2018; Arias-Sans, 2018; Nel-lo, 2018). In the last decade, the exclusive and exclusionary areas have expanded. Consequently, nowadays gentrification processes are not only affecting some restricted areas of the city (López-Gay, 2018). The generalised increase in housing prices has been one of the determining factors for explaining the expansion of this process to wide areas of the city. Access to housing has become a serious problem (Donat, 2018) and residential insecurity is now affecting a significant part of the population (Módenes, 2019).

Although there is growing research approaching the study of gentrification processes from various perspectives, there are few contributions that have focused on their implications from a gender perspective. Notable studies include those of Liz Bondi (1999), Marguerite van den Berg (2012), Leslie Kern (2013) and Judith N. DeSena (2018), which underline the differential impact of urban transformations on the male and female populations and posit that women could suffer the effects of gentrification with special intensity, as they are over-represented in the most vulnerable sectors of the population. However, taking into account that gentrification is a process driven mainly by the socio-economic situation of the population, it should not be forgotten that they can also act as driving forces for gentrification. It should be stressed that the report which inspired this brief publication is a pioneering work in Spain on the treatment of gentrification from a gender perspective.

In this study, we work with data sourced from the municipal register of residents (2011-2018), the registers showing the residential and migratory movements of the population at an infra-municipal scale, [2011-2018] and the Barcelona Socio-demographic Survey (2017). We have used López-Gay et al's gentrification indicator [2020]² in order to group together neighbourhoods that have experienced gentrification processes during the 2011-2017 period, and thereby synthesise the results. As shown on the map on the previous page, in this study, we will speak about the conglomerate of consolidated gentrified neighbourhoods (which includes the Gòtic, Barceloneta, Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera, Sagrada Família, the Antiga Esquerra de l'Eixample, the Nova Esquerra de l'Eixample, Sant Antoni, Sant Gervasi-Galvany, Vila de Gràcia, the Parc i la Llacuna del Poblenou and Poblenou), the emerging gentrified neighbourhoods (El Raval, Poble-sec - AEI Parc de Montjuïc, Hostafrancs, Sants-Badal, Can Baró and Camp de l'Arpa del Clot), as well as all the other Barcelona neighbourhoods.

Until now, few studies have centred on the implications of gentrification from a gender perspective

In this study, we will speak about the conglomerate of consolidated gentrified neighbourhoods, the conglomerate of emerging gentrified neighbourhoods and all the other Barcelona neighbourhoods

2. The gentrification indicator has been calculated according to the evolution of the values for seven socio-economic factors for the population: (i) rejuvenation, (ii) origin of the population, (iii) single-adult households, (iv) attraction for the qualified population, (v) population replacement, (vi) rate of transformation and (vii) housing prices.

The territorial distribution of the sex ratio in Barcelona

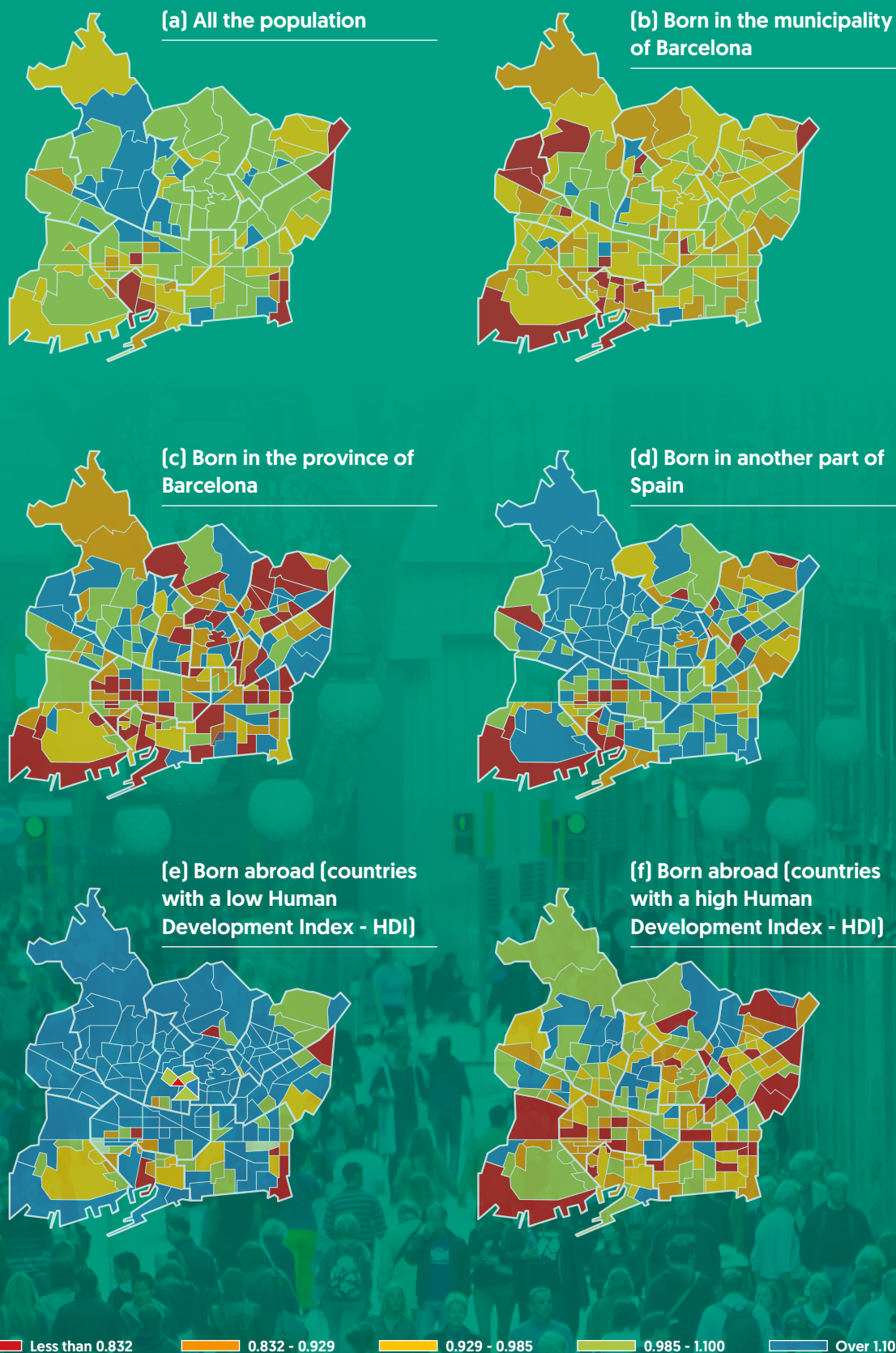
The 25 to 49 age group is studied, using the ratio of 95.6 women for every 100 men as a standard

In Barcelona city, there are more women than men. On 1 January 2018, there were 854,381 women residents compared to 765,962 men. This difference is mostly explained by the greater life expectancy of women. Therefore, in order to understand to what degree residential mobility and migration explain the unequal distribution of men and women in the city, we need to delimit the age group used for the analysis. More specifically, we focus on the 25 to 49 age group and use the ratio of 95.6 women for every 100 men as a standard (which corresponds to the average for the city as a whole in 2018). The more the observed data varies from this standard, the stronger the socio-demographic selection of residential and migratory flow will have been (whether this is for the incoming or the outgoing population). Therefore, when the observed value of each unit (233 basic statistical areas) is 3% above or below the ratio of 95.6 women for every 100 men, this is considered to be a balanced sex ratio and is presented in light orange in the maps shown below. A ratio above 98.5 indicates that there is a larger feminisation of the population, shown in green and blue. Lastly, when the ratio is below 92.9 women for every 100 men, we consider that the population of that unit is masculinised and it is shown in dark orange and red.

In neighbourhoods where gentrification has become more consolidated, there is a greater presence of women than in those where the process started later

- Not all the gentrified areas behave in the same way, in terms of the presence of the female population. In neighbourhoods where gentrification has become more consolidated, there is a greater presence of women than in those where the process started later. Examples of the first group include Vila de Gràcia, Sant Gervasi - Galvany and sectors of the Eixample closer to Avinguda Diagonal. The second group includes the neighbourhoods of Ciutat Vella, especially El Raval.
- The composition of the migrant population has a major role in explaining the heterogeneous presence of women in the city. Internal migration (originating from other areas of Spain) has contributed to the feminisation of gentrified neighbourhoods. This impact is in decline, as in recent years the male population from these origins has increased more than the female one. The exact opposite is true of international flows, traditionally made up of more men than women. Over the last decade, this has evolved into a balance between the sexes.
- The settlement of the population born in the city reveals strong contrasts in a similar way, with more adult women than men in the area around Diagonal, and the inverse situation in other areas, especially in Ciutat Vella. During the last decade, gentrified neighbourhoods have experienced a decrease in the population of people born in the city, of both sexes, but to a slightly greater extent for women.

Sex ratio (female population/male population) according to place of birth. 25-49 age group. 233 basic statistical areas. 1 January 2018



Source: Own production based on municipal register, 2018 (INE). The central category includes units with a gender ratio within 3% of the expected value, without selective migration. The extremes are those that surpass 15%.

Hidden population replacement in an apparently stable population

In gentrified neighbourhoods, and in central adult ages, the decrease in the female population born in the same city has been slightly greater than for the male population

The stability in the number of women residing in gentrified neighbourhoods over the decade cannot hide the replacement that is occurring inside the neighbourhood: there are more younger women, born abroad with a high level of education, to the detriment of an adult and older population born in the province of Barcelona. Therefore, better qualified foreign women not only resist gentrification, but their numbers are reinforced and their weighting has increased considerably. By contrast, in gentrified neighbourhoods, and in central adult ages, the decrease in the female population born in the same city has been slightly greater than for the male population. Residential mobility and migration are the main mechanisms that determine the replacement processes.

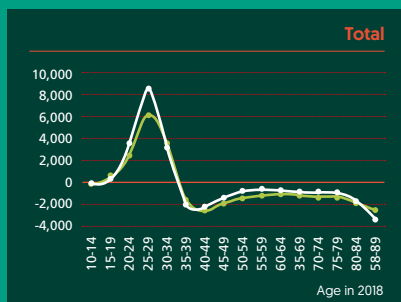
Evolution of the population by gender and type of neighbourhood, 2011-2018

	1-1-2011			1-1-2018			Average annual growth (%)		
	Fem pop.	Male pop.	Total	Fem pop.	Male pop.	Total	Fem pop.	Male pop.	Total
Consolidated gentrification	206,004	182,312	388,316	206,625	183,344	389,969	0.04	0.08	0.06
Emerging gentrification	88,529	86,820	175,349	88,020	85,475	173,495	-0.08	-0.22	-0.15
Other neighbourhoods	553,000	498,783	1,051,783	559,736	497,143	1,056,879	0.17	-0.05	0.07

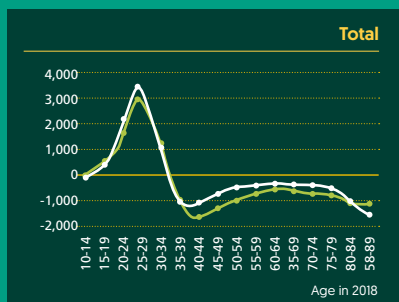
Source: Own production based on municipal register, 2011-18 [Barcelona City Council].

Evolution of the population by gender, place of birth and type of neighbourhood, 2011-2018. Age group at end of period

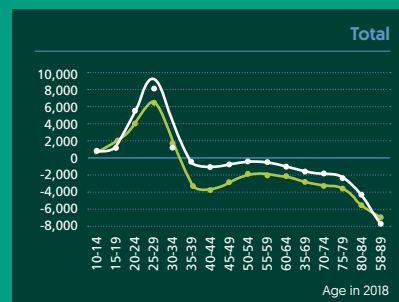
Consolidated gentrification



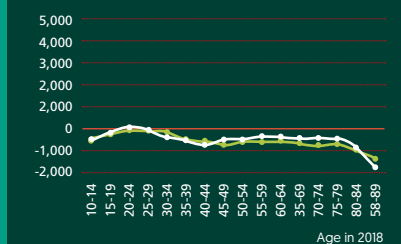
Emerging gentrification



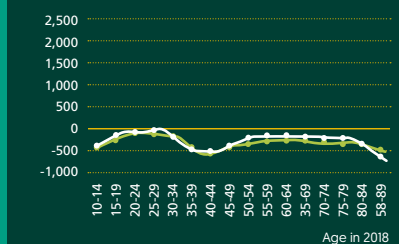
Other neighbourhoods



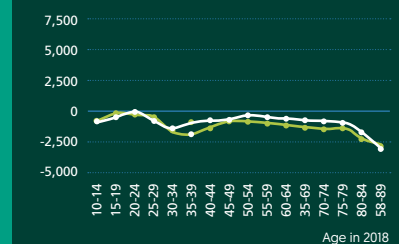
Born in the province of Barcelona



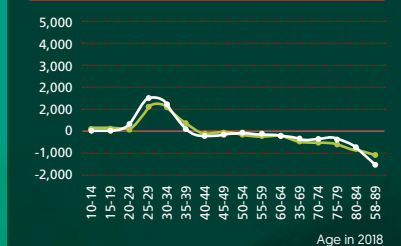
Born in the province of Barcelona



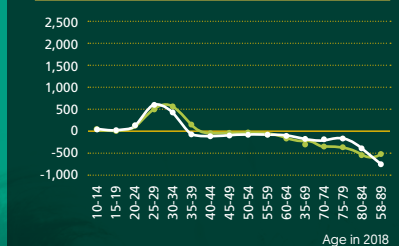
Born in the province of Barcelona



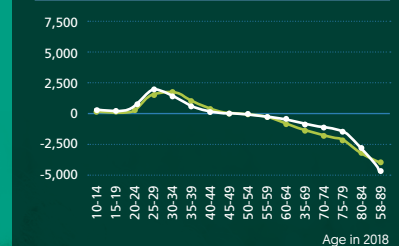
Born in other provinces in Spain



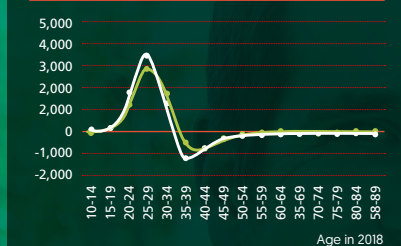
Born in other provinces in Spain



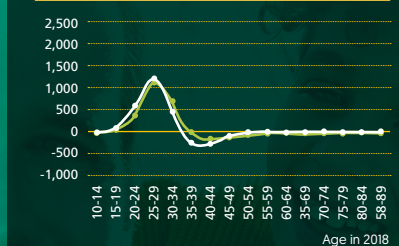
Born in other provinces in Spain



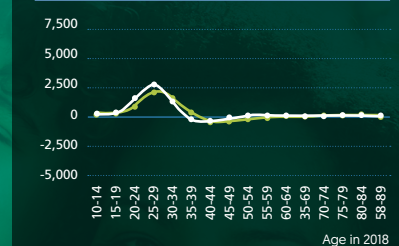
Born in HDI+ countries



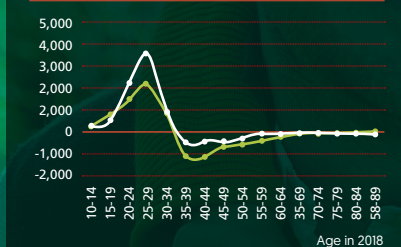
Born in HDI+ countries



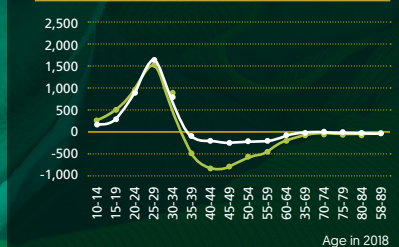
Born in HDI+ countries



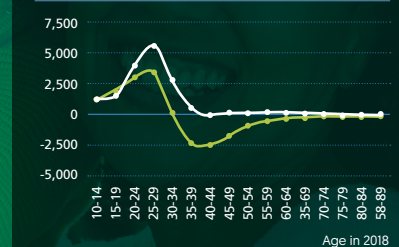
Born in HDI- countries



Born in HDI- countries



Born in HDI- countries



—●— Female population —●— Male population

Residential mobility and migration

The socio-economic profile of the people arriving in Barcelona has become internationalised and more elite. Nearly 45% of those arriving in consolidated gentrified neighbourhoods are people born abroad who have a university education, especially women

Who is arriving in gentrified neighbourhoods? An analysis by sex, level of education and place of birth

- Throughout the analyzed period, the socio-economic profile of the people arriving in Barcelona has become internationalised and more qualified. In consolidated gentrified neighbourhoods, nearly 45% of arrivals (from other neighbourhoods, municipalities or countries) are people who were born abroad and have had a university education. In both types of gentrified neighbourhoods, more qualified women than men have arrived, most of whom were born abroad.
- What has happened in the last decade? The gentrified neighbourhoods top the list for the decrease in the number of incoming people without a university education, compared to the start of the decade, especially in emerging gentrified neighbourhoods. In these neighbourhoods, the drop in the flow of people with a low level of education is at around 40%, and is slightly greater among men. The population arriving in these neighbourhoods is increasingly well educated, but the increase is especially pronounced among people born abroad.
- The arrival of well-educated people that were born abroad has increased in a similar way – and with great intensity – among women and men, while for the population born in Spain, this increase has been notably higher among men. With regard to the population with a lower level of education, the decrease has been greater in women born in Spain and men born abroad.

Evolution of residential mobility in gentrified neighbourhoods

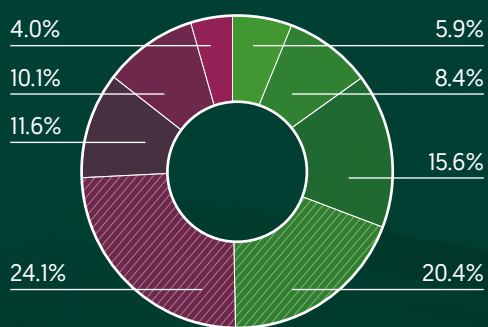
In a context of rising housing prices, as in the last decade, there is no observable increase in the frequency with which the population has changed dwellings in gentrified neighbourhoods. Within the younger adult ages, there has been a notable reduction, while in older adult age groups, there has been a slight increase.

However, there has been a clear reduction in movements within the neighbourhoods themselves, in favour of changes of dwelling to other neighbourhoods with lower average incomes and to other municipalities in the province. This phenomenon has occurred with notable intensity in gentrified neighbourhoods and among the population with a lower level of education. In the same way that the socio-economic factor can be clearly observed

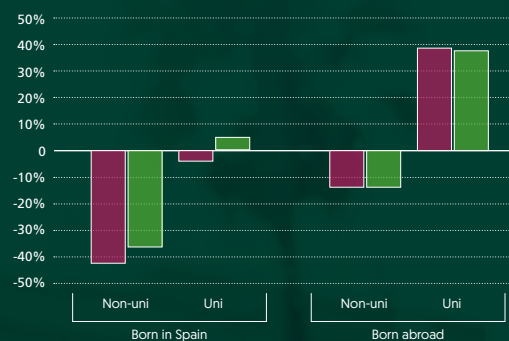
Origin and evolution of arrival flows in Barcelona neighbourhoods by sex, place of birth, type of neighbourhood and level of education, 2011-2018

Distribution of arrivals, 2016-2018, 25-49 age group

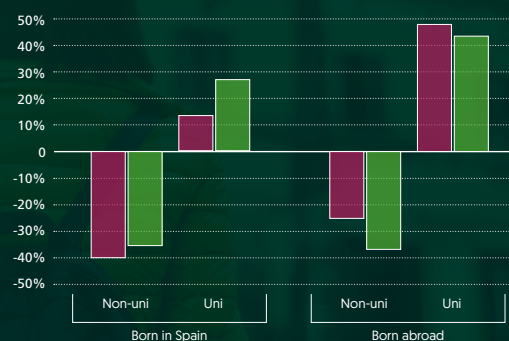
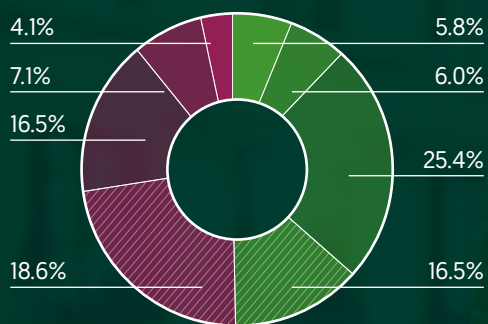
Consolidated gentrification



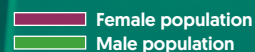
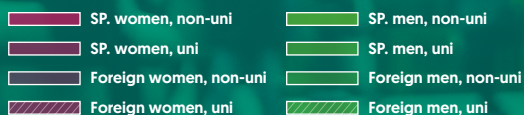
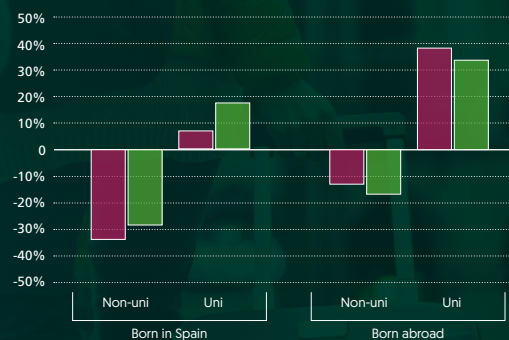
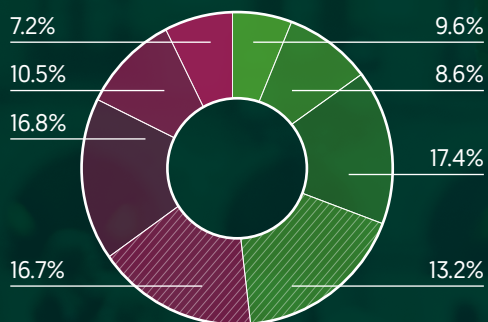
Relative growth in arrivals (2016/18 - 2011/13), 25-49 age group



Emerging gentrification



Other neighbourhoods



Source: Own production based on new registrations and changes of dwelling in the municipal register, 2011-18 (Barcelona City Council). Arrivals in neighbourhoods include all types of arrivals (coming from other neighbourhoods, municipalities or countries).

in gentrified neighbourhoods, the data provides less clear results in terms of an analysis by gender. **Once again, there is an indication that within the well-educated population born in Spain, women have been less likely than men to change their dwelling between neighbourhoods during the decade. However, this type of movement is as frequent for women as for men.** Furthermore, it should be noted that in terms of people born abroad with a lower level of education who move to other municipalities, the increase has been greater for women than for men.

Household structure and income spent on housing costs

Proportion of households with expenditure for housing costs, according to type of households (hh) and neighbourhood, 2017

	One-person hh, adults		One-person hh, older adults (≥65 y.o.)		Single-parent hh		Other	Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total	Total
Gentrified	79.8	75.7	37.8	36.6	74.4		64.8	64.8
Other neighbourhoods High income	72.5	75.7	21.6	35.0	52.1		56.1	54.8
Other neighbourhoods Low income	57.2	56.9	27.4	20.5	66.9		54.8	52.5
Total for Barcelona	72.6	70.9	29.5	31.0	65.6	59.7	59.0	58.1

Own production based on the Barcelona Socio-demographic Survey, 2017 (Barcelona City Council). Exploitation based on household variables L3 and L4 (tenancy and mortgage payment).

Median value in terms of the effort in expenditure directly related to paying for housing costs, according to the type of household and neighbourhood (only households with housing costs expenses)

	One-person hh, adults		One-person hh, older adults (≥65 y.o.)		Single-parent hh		Other	Total
Percentage of income spent on housing costs	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total	Total
Gentrified	39.3	32.5	33.4		28.9		19.8	24.3
Other neighbourhoods High income	33.5	36.9					19.8	22.4
Other neighbourhoods Low income	37.0	36.1	21.6		30.5		19.7	21.4
Total for Barcelona	37.0	33.7	26.5	25.4	29.5	30.1	19.8	22.6

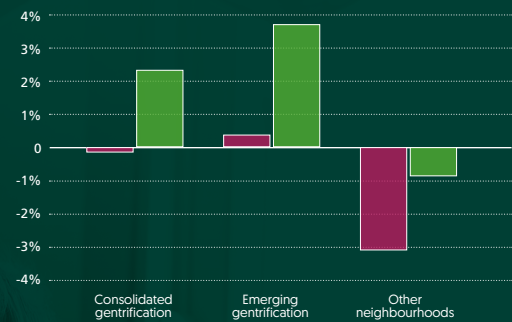
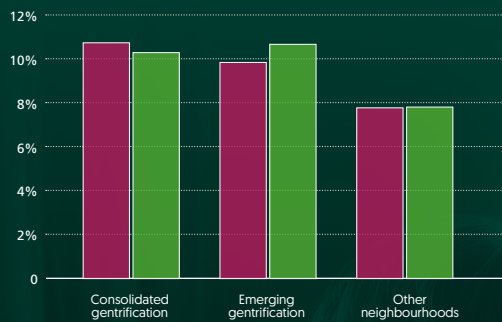
Own production based on the Barcelona Socio-demographic Survey (ESB), 2017 (Barcelona City Council). Only crossovers with a minimum of 30 observations are shown. Only expenditure directly related to paying for housing is included, not others, such as water, electricity or gas, which are not foreseen in the ESB.

Weight and evolution on one-person households (adults and older adults) and single-parent households. 2011-2019

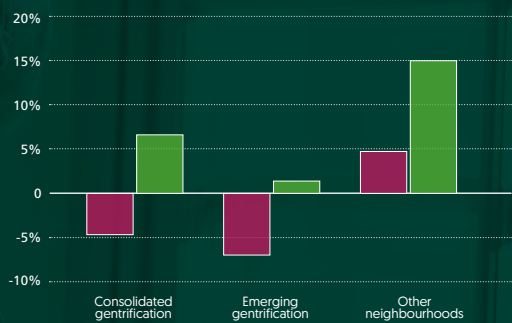
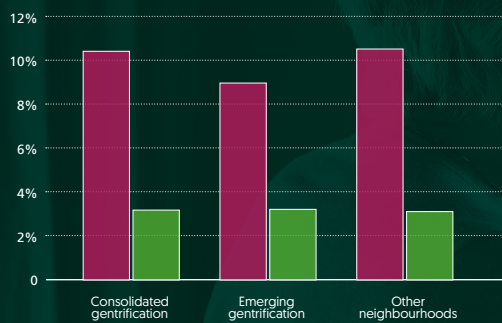
Weight among all households, 2018-2019 average

Relative growth of households (2018/19 - 2011/12)

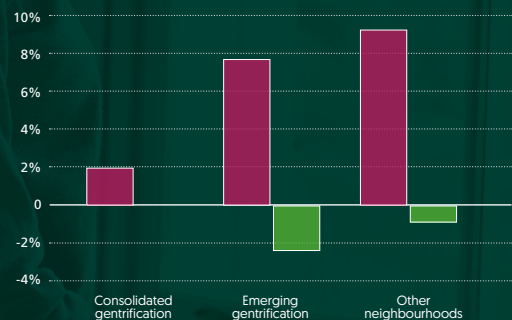
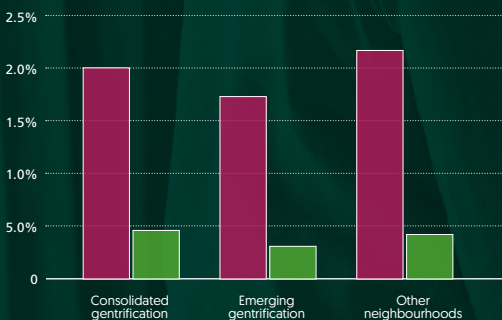
One-person households, adults



One-person households, older adults



Single-parent households



Female population
Male population

The data we have used until now does not allow us to investigate the effect of the **household structure**, a key factor for understanding the residential and migratory movements of the population. Many of the movements we have analysed in previous sections may respond to a joint movement of the household, with the participation of both women and men. By exploring this household factor, we could isolate those arrangements in which the female and male populations show independent residential behaviour. In this section, we specifically analyse the behaviour of **one-person households** (composed by adults or older adults), **as well as single-parent households**. The bibliography usually cites the women who live in this type of household as being the most vulnerable when gentrification processes start.

Adult women who live in single-person households in gentrified neighbourhoods present two negative factors compared to the male population in those neighbourhoods and residents in the rest of the city: they pay higher prices for their dwellings and they allocate a higher proportion of their income to paying housing expenses, especially if they are tenants

The number of single-mother households is increasing throughout the city, but in gentrified neighbourhoods it is growing at a rate below the municipal average. This is an especially vulnerable family unit

- In spite of the extra effort that adults who live alone have to make in order to meet housing expenditure, gentrified neighbourhoods are the preferred areas for establishing this type of household. Although the number of adult single women households has not decreased in gentrified neighbourhoods in the same way as in the rest of the city, it has been observed that this number has risen significantly less than that of single-men households, especially in neighbourhoods that have been undergoing gentrification for a number of years. It seems that, although these neighbourhoods are especially attractive for women, their residence in one-person households is more complicated than for men, a hypothesis that is supported by the extra effort that women have to make in order to meet housing expenditure. Adult women who live in one-person households in gentrified neighbourhoods present two negative factors compared to the male population in those neighbourhoods and residents in the rest of the city. Firstly, they have to meet higher housing payments than for other types of housing or in any other neighbourhoods. Secondly, although they earn less than men, there is no group that allocates a larger part of their income to paying for housing expenditure, especially if they are tenants.
- At older ages, most of the group is vulnerable and made up of women, with a higher probability of living alone. The more gentrified neighbourhoods are the only ones that have experienced a decrease in single elderly women households, especially in areas that have a more recent history of gentrification.
- The number of single-mother households is increasing throughout the city, but in gentrified neighbourhoods it is growing at a rate below the municipal average. The increase is lower in consolidated gentrified neighbourhoods. This is an especially vulnerable family unit. Firstly, because three out of every four single-mother households living in gentrified neighbourhoods have to meet direct housing expenditure (when the average for households in the city is 58%). Secondly, because the effort made by these households to pay for their housing is higher than the average for city households: half of single-parent households in Barcelona have to allocate over 30% of their income to housing expenditure, while the median value for other Barcelona households (excluding single person and single-parent households) is 19%.

In order to understand gentrification processes in Barcelona from a gender perspective, it is necessary to accept their complexity. This complexity is reflected in the composition of the female population, including various social strata, ages, origins, with various migratory itineraries, and with different aspirations, constraints, preferences and residential strategies. The available international literature emphasises that the female population, as for the population in general, may simultaneously be the promoters and the victims of gentrification processes. However, we should not consider the areas that have experienced gentrification as a single, homogeneous unit either. Gentrified neighbourhoods are also very diverse, as shown by our results.

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**Ajuntament
de Barcelona**