

HOUSING THE
MAJORITY
Barcelona,
1860-2010

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Finding somewhere to live has been a constant challenge for most people in the contemporary city. Many large cities have shared the problem of persistent shortages and shocking shortcomings of housing for the most economically disadvantaged classes and this has prompted a range of responses which have influenced one another. However, history reveals the extent to which the specific features of each setting are critical and the need for a relational approach keenly attentive to the various historical evolutions. Now that housing is once again back at the forefront of Barcelona's political agenda, it is more helpful than ever to take a longer-term historical view which surveys the actions undertaken and their outcomes to better understand the city and assess the inheritance and constraints of a legacy which, even today, are still decisive when it comes to finding a solution.



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HOUSING AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW CITY

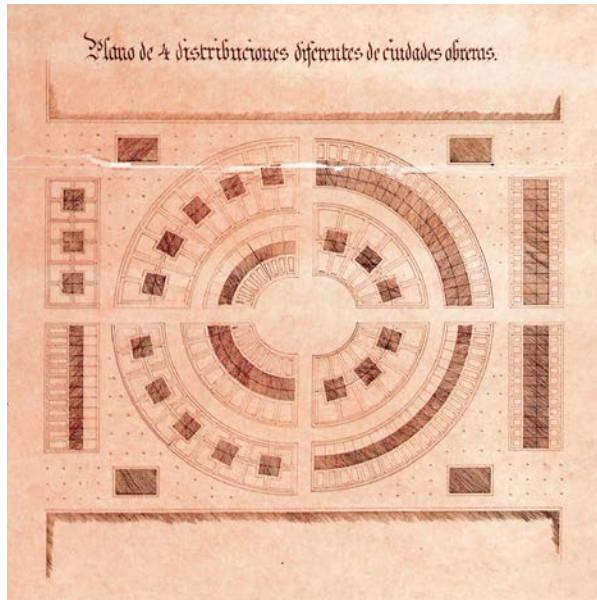
1860-1915

Housing shortages, as Friedrich Engels once pointed out, are not a problem unique to the modern proletariat. However, as a result of the sudden influx of people into big cities, the industrial age significantly worsened the conditions of workers' housing. The hygienists were the first to condemn diseases tied to the squalor of working-class housing. In 1849, Pere Felip Monlau argued that "public hygiene came about [...] due to the ills experienced in crowded towns." The housing issue was pivotal in the discussions concerning Barcelona's Eixample plan from Monlau to Ildefons Cerdà. Indeed, the 1864 Expansion Act (Llei d'Eixample) essentially viewed the expansions as residential extensions designed to help solve the housing problem in large cities.

Rambla de Catalunya. 1880-1889. Josep Esplugas Puig. AFB.
The Eixample was in essence a residential expansion driven by the ambition to safeguard specific sanitary conditions, especially ventilation, in urban spaces and housing alike. Cerdà's design called for considerable investment in urban development which shaped the construction process, outcomes and type of housing.

EXPANSION AS A RESPONSE TO THE HOUSING PROBLEM

Cerdà and working-class housing. Cerdà's concern for the conditions of the working classes and in particular for the problem of their housing is obvious in the process of drawing up his plan. He cites legislative initiatives in other countries such as the founding of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes in Britain in 1844 together with examples of other outstanding measures in France. The ideas for kinds of homes for his expansion district included collective housing for the working classes which in the end would never be built.



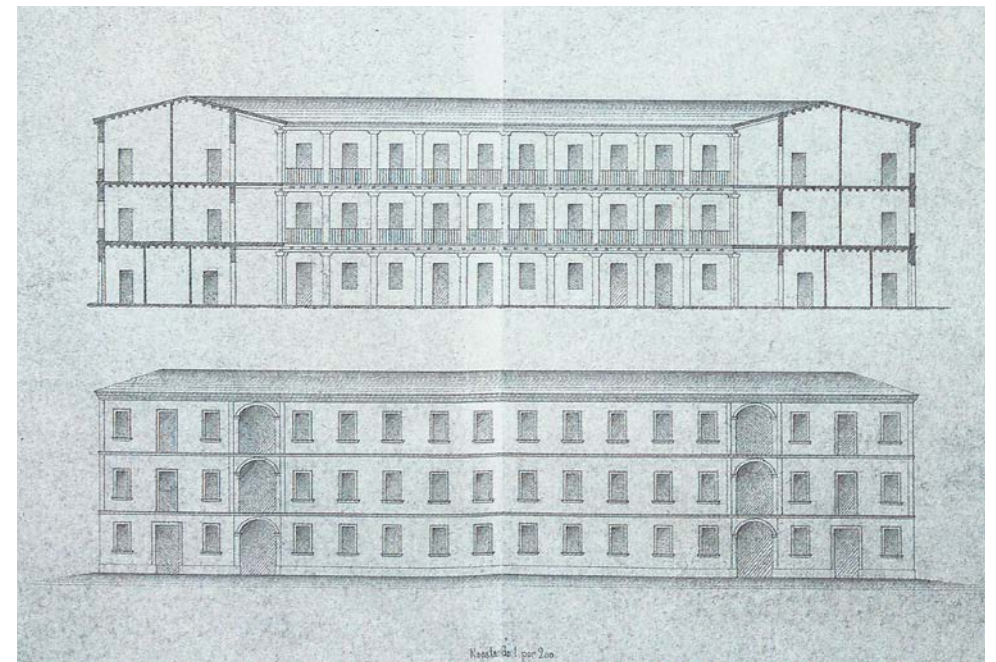
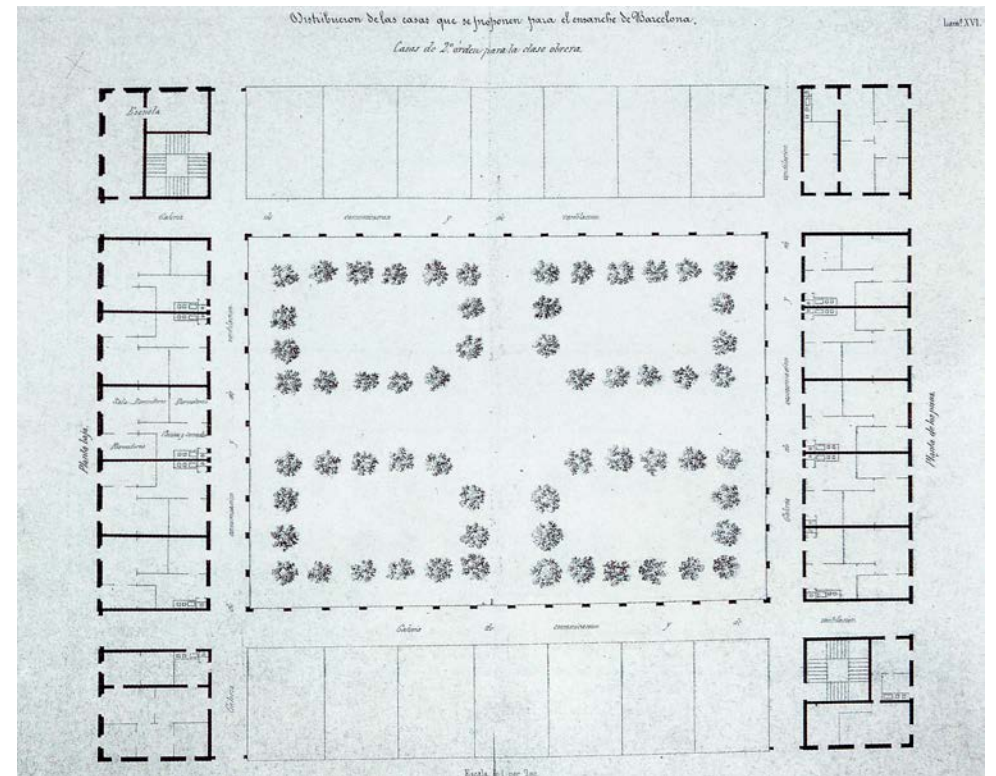
← French workers' *cité*, plan in *Atlas de la Teoría de la construcción de Ciudades*, print XLVI (1859)

→ Plan, elevation and section of a building for workers in *Memoria del anteproyecto del Ensanche de Barcelona* (1855)

(I. Cerdà: *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades: Cerdà*. Barcelona: Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, 1991, vol. 1)

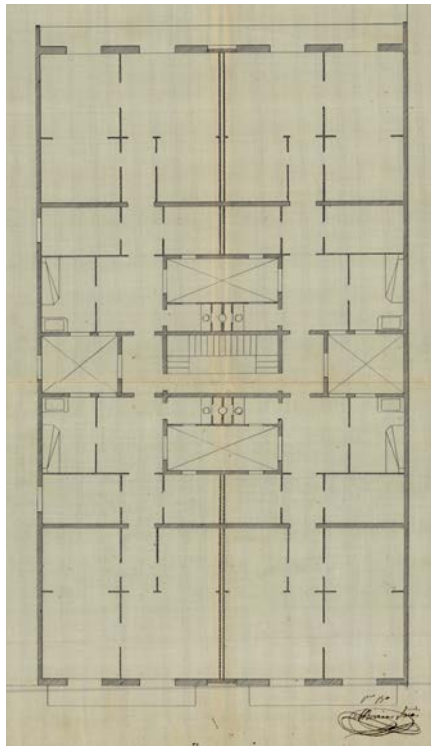
The collective housing for workers Cerdà had envisaged, inspired by the French workers' *cités*, was never part of the construction of the Eixample, even though it was viewed as the solution to the serious housing shortage.

Expansion as a solution to the housing problem. Cerdà believed that the non-stop rise in rents, which had such a severe impact on the poorer classes, was due to an indefensible monopoly resulting from the meagre space available within the city walls and could only be countered by the extension of the built-up area to be provided by the Eixample. It was the best solution to the problem of the shortage of housing, its unhealthy condition and high price. Although the 1864 Expansion Act curbed the plan's ambitions in terms of interior renovation and provision of facilities, it also set the goal of resolving "the problem of tenancy".



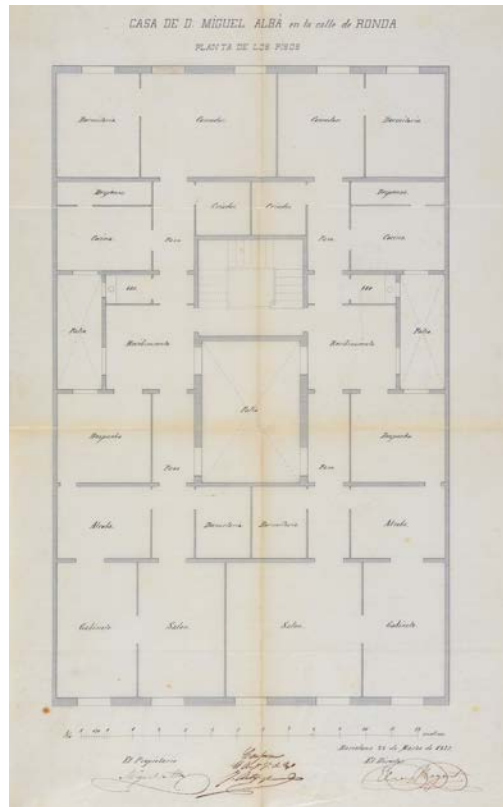
BUILDING THE EIXAMPLE, 1860-1903

The central Eixample and its adjoining neighbourhoods. In the central Eixample, the size of the streets, high development costs and investment by the Comissions d'Eixample (Expansion Committees) pushed up the price of plots of land and rental properties were built for a more affluent population with slower capital recovery. By contrast, in the outlying areas it was decided to opt for cheap development (narrower, unpaved streets with no infrastructure) and the traditional form of small, single-bay houses bought in exchange for the annual payment of a long-lease fee which called for less capital outlay. Density would only be ramped up in more advanced stages.



↑ 53, Parliament Street. Plan of a floor of the flats. 1868. AMCB

→ 36, Ronda de Sant Pere. Floor plan of the flats. 1872. AMCB



Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes. 1870. Joan Martí. AFB



↑ Urgell Street hosting Sant Antoni Market. 1930. Josep Domínguez. AFB

→ Núria Street in the Clot district. 1945-1955. Unknown photographer. AMDSM



The central Eixample was turned into a wealthy residential area where at first mansions and later on special residential buildings were built during this period. Meanwhile, in the outlying districts and the towns on the Barcelona plain, artisan houses were put up following traditional forms.

In spite of its uniform appearance, the Eixample hosted very different types of housing in terms of floor area and services. In the central zone, the housing units have a large floor area and quicker access to technical services. By contrast, in outlying and therefore more working-class districts like Sant Antoni, the properties are in keeping with the low-income housing approach. Buildings with four flats per floor measuring barely 50 m² are very common.

WIDENING THE GAP

Densification of Ciutat Vella and Barceloneta. However, the city's expansion could not hide the dramatic densification of Ciutat Vella and Barceloneta which had already worried Cerdà. Between 1855 and 1902, their population grew by 20% and this was a cause for great concern against the backdrop of the epidemic crises of the period as can be seen in the reports by Pere Garcia Fària and other hygienists. These worsening conditions for the most vulnerable social groups coupled with the well-off classes' access to the new technical networks helped to significantly widen social differences.



← Lunch in an artisan house. Engraving by J. Noguera. BC

→ Advertisements in the *Anuario de la Asociación de Arquitectos* [Association of Architects' Yearbook] between 1899 and 1916. CPMR

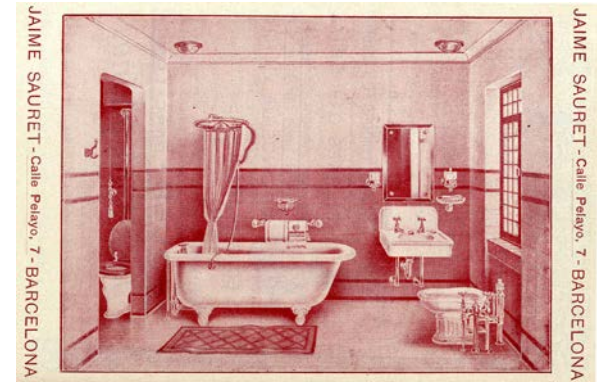
↓ Dressmaker at home in Barcelona. 1915. Brangulí. ANC

While the new homes in the Eixample were spacious and featured technical and equipment improvements, in a large part of the old town they lacked the minimum liveability requirements and the overcrowded conditions were dire.



↑ The dining room. 1915. Unknown photographer. Photograph given by Luisa Algans to the "Finestres de la memòria" photographic collection project promoted by Centre Cultural La Casa Elizalde

Fitting the first toilets and cast iron range cookers in well-off homes began in the late 19th century. By the 1910s, some properties featured bathrooms as standard.



Technical networks and the new liveability requirements of the wealthier classes. Access to plentiful running water and gas gradually changed household amenities and made the better-off classes more accustomed to higher standards of hygiene and comfort. The main tramways connected Ciutat Vella, where most business was conducted, with the central Eixample and second homes in Gràcia, Sant Gervasi and Sarrià. The new technical networks, run by private firms, targeted their services at the most affluent residents, which meant they contributed to the growing separation and increase in social differences.

PLANO GENERAL DE LA DISTRIBUCION

(5)



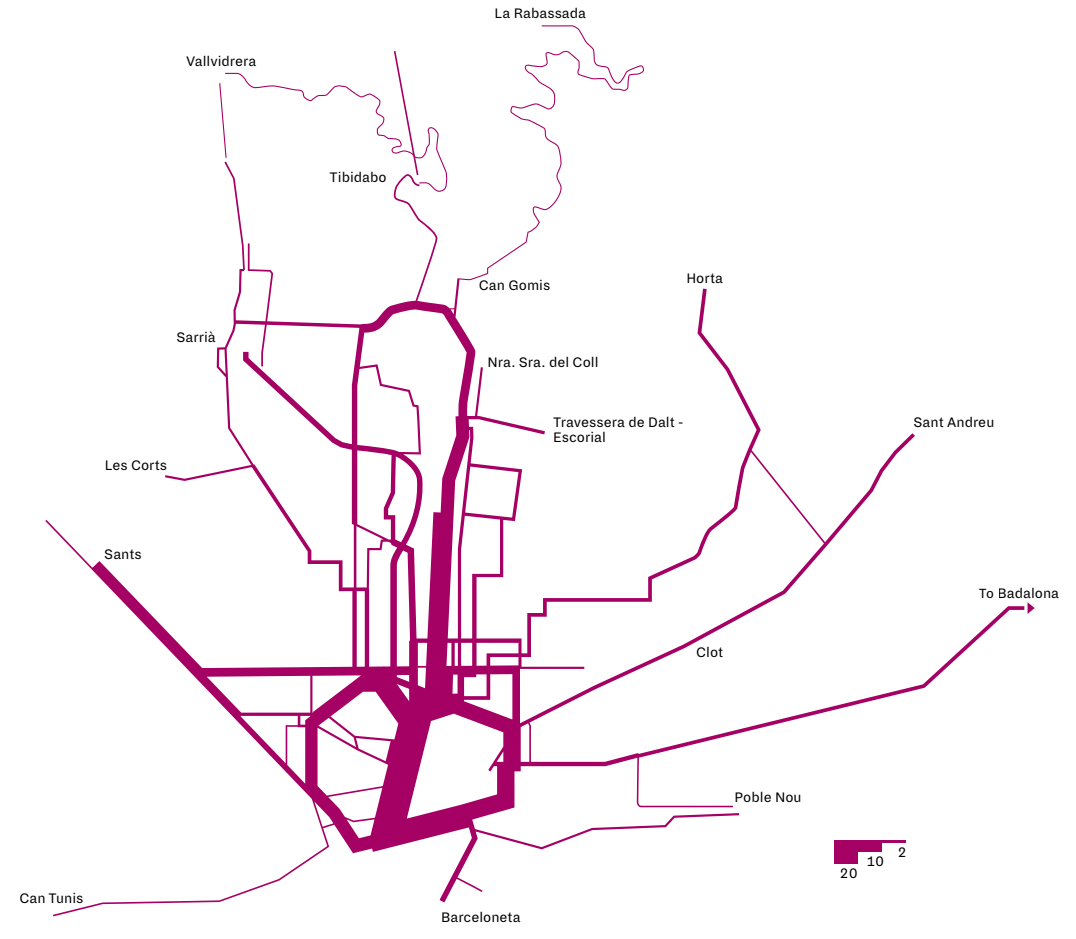
ESPLICACION.

- Canalizaciones existentes
- — — — — proyectadas
- Valvulas de paso, de detencion y bombas de aire
- Reservoirs construidos en Gracia por la Compañia



Compañía de Aguas de Barcelona general distribution map in early 1873, "Aguas de Dosrius. Compañía de Aguas de Barcelona. Sociedad Anónima Belga". Barcelona, 1 February 1873. AHCB

In 1873, Compañia d'Aigües (Aigües de Dosrius) started to supply mains water from its storage facility in Guinardó to the most affluent families in Sant Gervasi, Gràcia, the central Eixample and a large part of Ciutat Vella. It was even more obvious that the tram network was also governed by financial considerations because at the time it was an expensive means of transport. It also had a discriminatory impact since it helped to differentiate the wealthier, better-served residential areas from more working-class areas with far lower traffic flows.



↑ Trams and traffic flows (millions of passengers). 1910. F. J. Monclús & J.L. Oyón "Eixample i suburbanització. Trànsit tramviari i divisió social de l'espai urbà a Barcelona, 1883-1914", in *La formació de l'Eixample de Barcelona. Aproximacions a un fenomen urbà*, Olimpiada Cultural '92, Barcelona, 1990, pp. 1511-1573

→ Trams on Gran de Gràcia Street. 1910. Unknown photographer. AMDG





2 THE GREAT HOUSING CRISIS: DYNAMICS AND CONFLICTS 1915-1953

The period after the outbreak of the First World War triggered a prolonged housing crisis. Firstly, the unprecedented rise in migration to the city and pressure on the existing housing stock led to major deterioration in low-income housing in the historic centre, densification of the towns on the Barcelona Plain and the growth of a second ring of undeveloped low-density outlying districts devoid of services. Secondly, the sharp rises in rents against a background of high inflation led to an upsurge in evictions and the major rent strike of 1931. The whole period was marred by the absence or ineffectiveness of social housing policies. The only significant actions were the efforts to clear shantytowns and the struggle against unemployment. The strains and critical situation of this long period had a crucial impact on the housing problem and left a legacy which was a burden on subsequent eras.

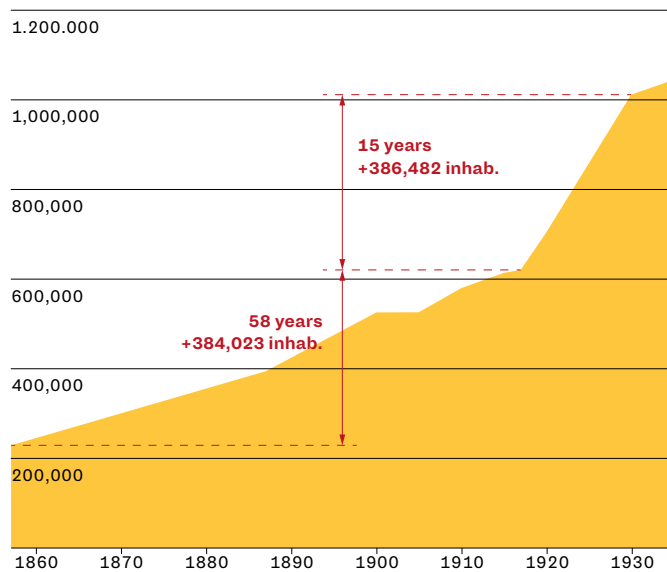
Cases Barates (Cheap Houses) in the Horta district. 1936. Josep Badosa. AFB

The clusters of Cases Barates developed by the Housing Board were the only public initiatives to address the serious housing problem in the 1920s.

EMERGENCE OF THE HOUSING PROBLEM (1915-1930)

Population growth and the deterioration of low-income housing.

New sanitary regulations and the advent of technical networks raised standards of liveability. These improvements changed the lives of the better-off classes, yet the pressure of migration led to an unprecedented decline in the conditions of low-income housing with a sharp rise in rents, the emergence of shantytowns and self-build properties and an unparalleled upsurge in densities and cohabitation. El Raval, where the population rose by 24% between 1902 and 1931, became the most unhealthy and problematic neighbourhood.



Increase in Barcelona's population, 1860-1930. Compiled by authors

→ Magazine A.C.
Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea.
Issue 6, 1932. AHCB

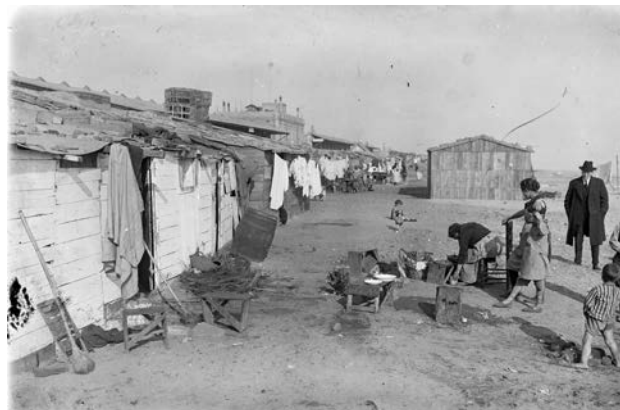
Housing shortages in the first third of the 20th century led to the emergence of many kinds of substandard housing in addition to densification and overcrowding in Ciutat Vella.

Densidad de Barcelona por distritos

DISTRITO V (Barrio Chino)
Densidad media: 1023 h. por hect.
Densidad máxima: 1604 h. por hect.
(Estadísticas municipales de la ciudad)

“En las calles de Amalia, Arco del Teatro, Berenguer, Cadena, Carretas, Cera, Cid y Conde del Asalto, existen viviendas de
20 % mortalidad anual!
en las cuales, de no renovarse sus habitantes, quedarían totalmente deshabitadas en cinco años.”
(De la conferencia del Dr. Aguadé, Alcalde de la Ciudad)

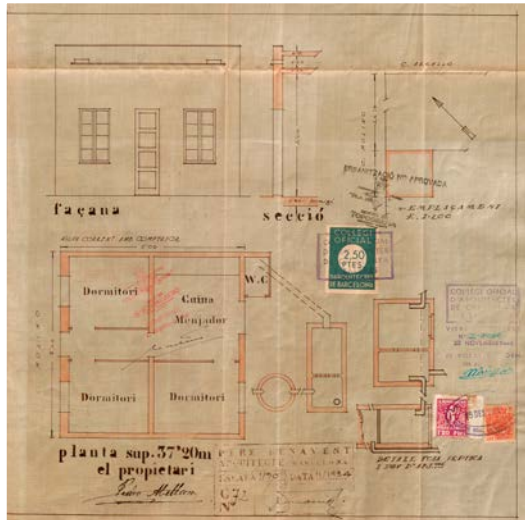
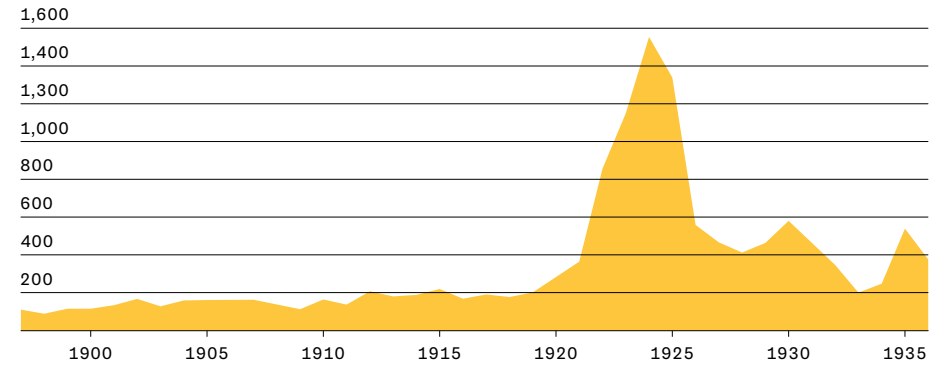
A.C. PUBLICACIÓN DEL G.A.T.E.P.A.C.
AÑO II
DOCUMENTOS DE ACTIVIDAD CONTEMPORÁNEA



← Left to right:

1. A family in a property. 1920-1938. Gabriel Casas i Galobardes. ANC
2. Shanties in Somorrostro. 1929-1939. Bert i Claret Fotògrafs. ANC
3. Dormitory in a 'sleeping house' or hostel in Barcelona's 'Xino' neighbourhood. 1930-1935. Josep Maria Sagarra i Plana. ANC

Outlying growth and the second outskirts. The relative fall in public transport fares in the 1920s made it possible to gradually separate residence and workplace. However, it also entailed greater population density in the traditional outlying districts and the emergence of a sub-market of low-cost housing in the second ring on the outskirts. Here there were plots with unpaved roads, devoid of sewage, mains water or electricity and with scattered construction of small houses. The first and second outlying districts can be clearly seen in the upper and lower bands of the map showing housing rented by workers.



← House in the second outskirts: property in Molí Street. 1935. Pere Benavent. AMCB

Cohabitation and small, makeshift homes in alleys or houses in the second outlying districts were the most striking examples of the housing crisis of this period among the less well-to-do classes.

↑ Residential construction with new build permits, 1897-1936. Source: José Luis OYÓN i Carme GARCÍA SOLER, "Las segundas periferias, 1918-1936: una geografia preliminar", 1998

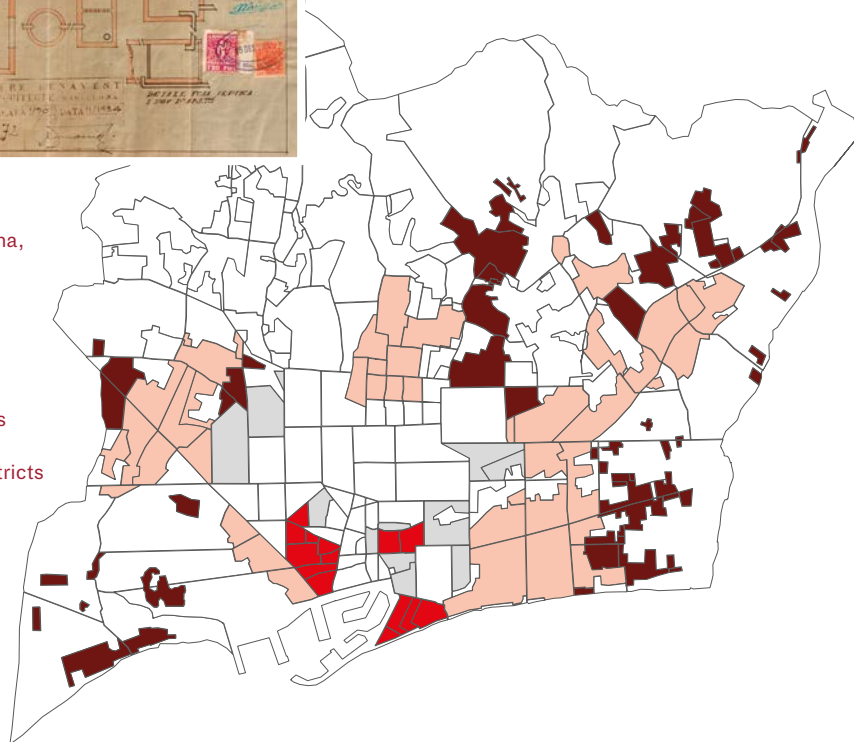
→ Portugalete Alley in la Bordeta. 1933. Unknown photographer. AMCB



The three scenarios of working-class Barcelona, 1931-1936

- Crowded neighbourhoods in the historic centre
- Working-class slums
- Second outlying districts
- Zone of transition

Source: José Luis Oyón. *La quiebra de la ciudad popular*. Edicions de Serbal. Barcelona, 2008



THE FOUNDATIONS OF HOUSING POLICY IN EUROPE AND THE 1911 CASES BARATES ACT

Once general confidence in the corrective power of market forces had been lost in the wake of the cholera epidemics, the English Public Health Act of 1848 sought to regulate the sanitary conditions of dwellings. However, the foundations of housing policies were not laid in European countries until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while it was not until after the First World War that systematic housing policies on an unprecedented scale were rolled out in Frankfurt, Vienna and the big British and Dutch cities. The 1894 French *Habitations à Bon Marché* (Low-cost Housing) Act, which was opposed to subsidies and interventionism, proposed the discretionary participation of savings banks and was less effective.



In England, the 1875 Public Health Act's requirements for greater ventilation, water supply and a controlled drainage system in homes led to a shift from cramped and unsanitary back-to-back houses to byelaw terraced houses resulting from a much more stringent ordinance. Photo: London, possibly the borough of Islington or Camden. 1960-1965. John Gay/English Heritage/Mary Evans. Photoaia



1. Wohnhausgruppe der Aktienbaugesellschaft für kleine Wohnungen in Frankfurt a. M.

↑ In the late 19th century in Frankfurt, housing cooperatives were developed and social assistance programmes, new planning tools and measures to control property speculation were introduced. Aktienbaugesellschaft residential complex for small flats in Frankfurt. c. 1900. Photoaia

↘ *Habitations à bon marché*, general view of the houses and the public on opening day. 5 July 1913. Agencia Rol. BNF

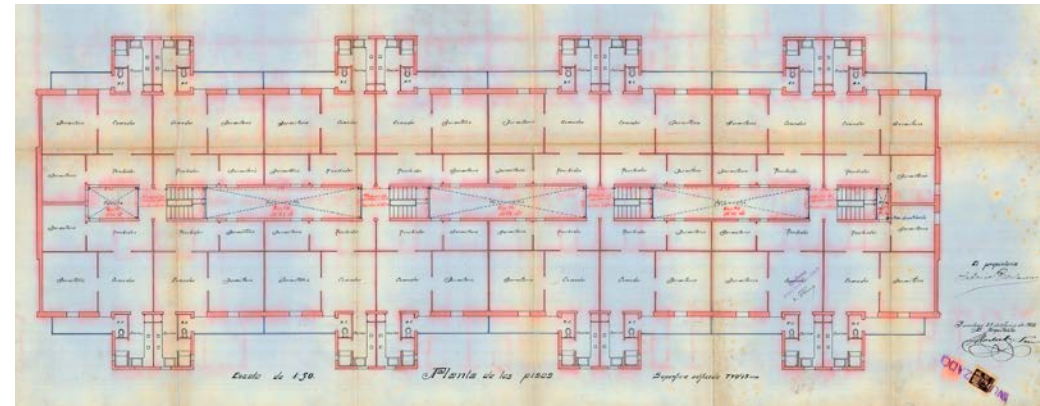


CASES BARATES DEVELOPMENTS: A HOUSING POLICY?

Despite later European legislative initiatives which were more interventionist, the Spanish 1911, 1921 and 1924 Cases Barates Acts, based on the French law and hence with similar shortcomings, revealed the absence of a decisive housing policy and had a very limited impact. The only municipal developments, which were undertaken by the Patronat de l'Habitatge (Housing Board) founded in 1927, were mainly designed to clear the area around the Montjuïc Expo of the numerous shantytowns which had sprung up there. Although their scope was fairly small, they were the expression of the sanitary conditions required at the time and the first settlement of the new outlying districts.

→ Sociedad Constructora Fomento de la Propiedad Cases Barates. 1920-1925. Brangulí. ANC

↓ Can Peguera Cases Barates in what was then the Sant Andreu district (today Nou Barris). 1929. Josep Gaspar Serra. AFB



The Spanish Cases Barates Act also gave rise to a number of private initiatives; some developments were relatively insignificant, although others involved large-scale schemes such as the Casa Gran de Sants and the Cases del Drapaire on Gran Via.

↑ Casa Gran de Sants. 1930. Floor plan of the flats. AMCB

← Side view of the Casa Gran de Sants. 1935. Josep Carnicer. AMDS

↓ Concepció building (Cases del Drapaire), Gran Via de les Corts. 1925-1927. Brangulí. ANC



THE FIRST MASS SOCIAL HOUSING POLICIES IN EUROPE

The small scale of the initiatives in Barcelona is plain when compared with the mass social housing policies rolled out at that time by social democratic governments in the United Kingdom, in German and Dutch cities and in Vienna. By the 1930s, subsidised housing in Barcelona stood at around 2% while in many European cities it was 10% or even 20%, something which determined the impact rent had on wages.



↓ → Karl Marx Hof, Vienna, 1927-1930.

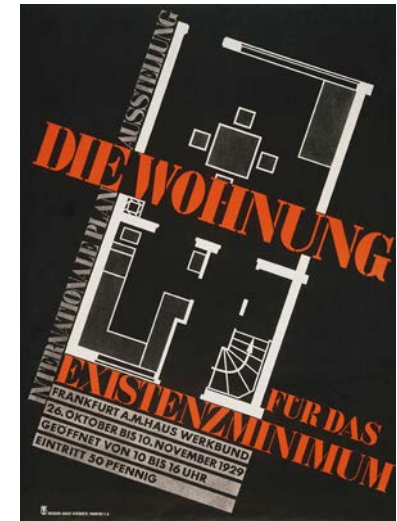
Between 1919 and 1933, the huge workers' public housing building programme embarked on by the social democratic city council included more than 370 large complexes, called *Höfe*, with their own services (kindergartens, laundries, canteens and dispensaries) together with some 50 *Siedlungen*, which were cooperative settlements for agricultural self-production, initially built during the War in suburban zones and in areas developed later on with municipal backing and also by private firms. Martin Gerlach Jr. Alamy Archive. Photoaisa



↑ Takbuurt housing estate, South Amsterdam, 1918-1927. Amsterdam undertook ambitious public building plans between 1915 and 1930 and this meant that the Housing Department ended up running 10% of the city's housing stock by 1925. Although the new neighbourhoods were dominated by compact construction in closed blocks with high-rise buildings, four low-density garden neighbourhoods (called *tuindorpen*) were also built in the northern part of the city inspired by British models. Alamy Archive. Photoaisa



← Siedlung Römerstadt, Frankfurt, 1927-1928. Following Mayor Franz Adickes's far-reaching urban development programme from 1890 to 1912, between 1925 and 1933 Mayor Ludwig Landmann and architect Ernst May turned their attention to the construction of *Siedlungen* designed on the basis of the functionalist town planning and housing principles drawn from the fledgling modern movement and which were discussed at the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) held in the city in 1929. Alamy Archive. Photoaisa



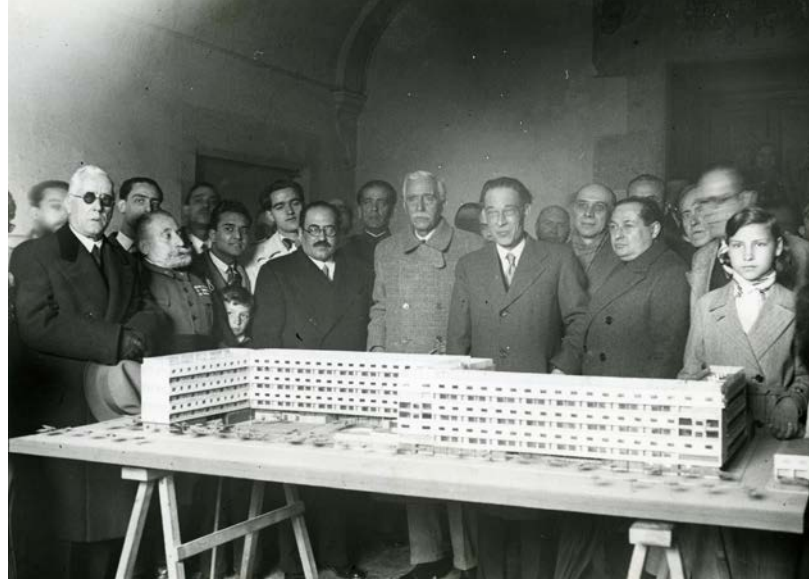
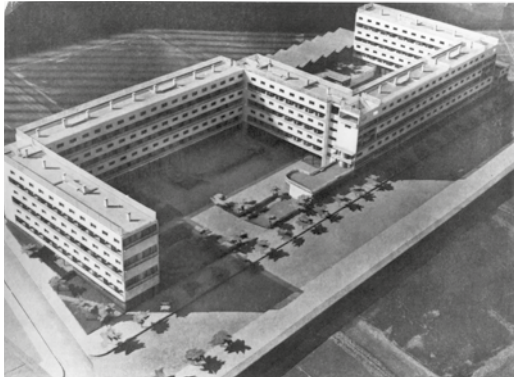
↑ Hans Leistikow. Poster for the exhibition *The Dwelling for Minimal Existence* organised in Frankfurt for the 1929 CIAM. It shows the floor plan of a typical small house equipped with a standardised kitchen known as the "Frankfurt kitchen" designed by architect Grete Schütte-Lihotzky. 1929. Photoaisa

LA CASA BLOC: THE PROPOSAL THAT LOOKS AT EUROPE

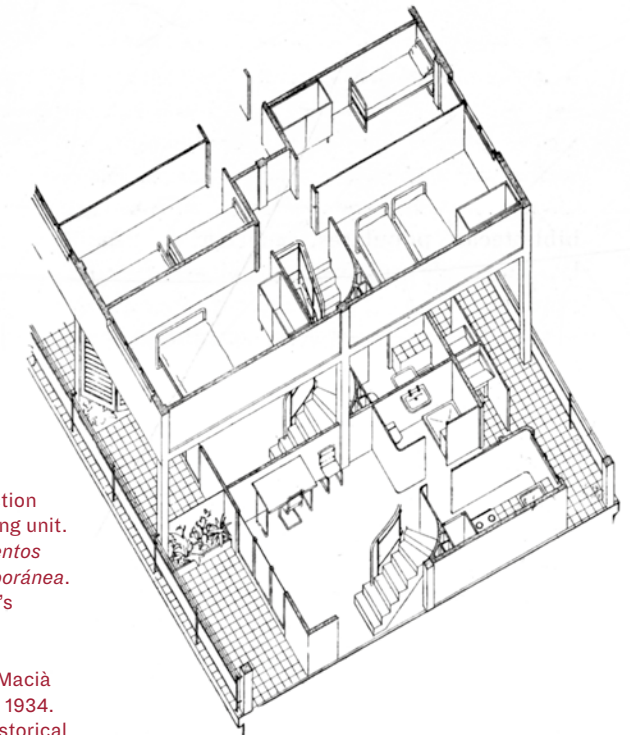
La Casa Bloc is a group of houses commissioned by the Institut Contra l'Atur Forçós (Institute Against Forced Unemployment) and designed by GATCPAC architects following CIAM guidelines that was built in Sant Andreu between 1932 and 1936. It was an example of the housing policy that the Generalitat de Catalunya sought to promote but which was thwarted by the Civil War.

→ Presentation of la Casa Bloc with the President of the Generalitat, Francesc Macià and other authorities. 12 March, 1933. Pérez de Rozas. AFB

↓ Model of the Casa Bloc. GATCPAC. Magazine *AC Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*. Issue, 11. 1933. COAC's Historical Archive



↗ Casa Bloc under construction. 1934. Josep Torres Clavé. AFB



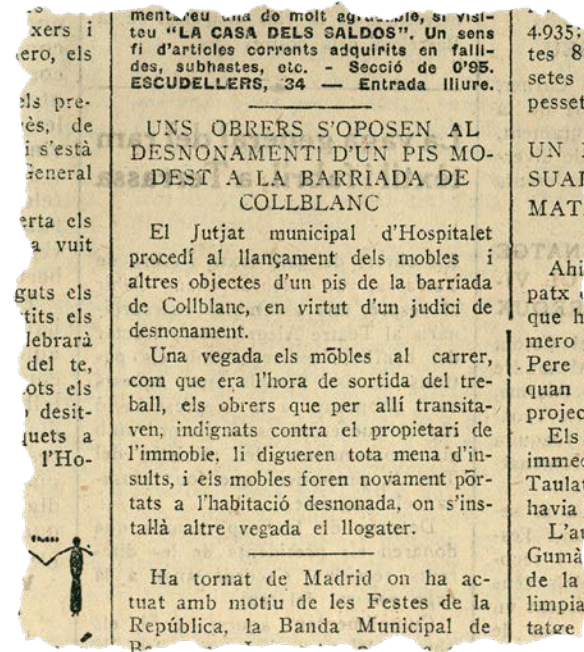
↗ Axonometric projection of the standard housing unit. Magazine *AC Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*. Issue, 11. 1933. COAC's Historical Archive

← Comparison of the Macià Plan with Cerdà Plan. 1934. GATCPAC. COAC's Historical Archive

FROM THE 1931 RENT STRIKE TO THE 1946 RENT FREEZE

Rent, the most common form of tenure, accounted for 20-30% of workers' wages. Although the forced extension of rents was approved in 1920, the situation continued to get worse until the crisis following the 1929 Expo and the world recession triggered an upsurge in unemployment, inflation and evictions. Widespread unrest and the action taken by the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) led to the extremely tough rent strike in 1931 which marked a turning point. As early as December, a decree imposed a new forced extension of existing rents which did not go up again until they were finally frozen in 1946 during the early Franco regime.

Strike outside the Construction trade union headquarters. 1931. Gabriel Casas i Galobardes. ANC



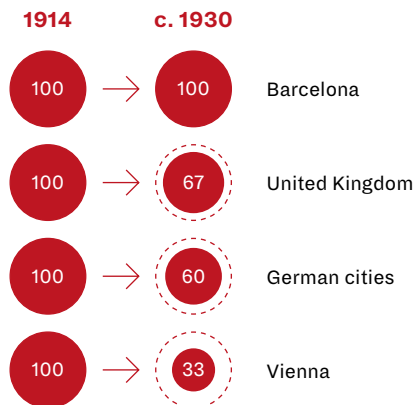
← News item on a group of workers' opposition to an eviction in Collblanc. *La Publicitat*, 24 June 1931, p. 4. AHCB

↓ A homeless family sitting among rubbish in a Barcelona street. 1931. Gabriel Casas i Galobardes. ANC



Change in the impact of rent on workers' incomes in European cities, 1914 - c. 1930

Source of data: José Luís Oyón. *La quiebra de la ciudad popular*. Edicions del Serbal. Barcelona 2008, p. 166



THE EARLY FRANCO REGIME'S PALTRY HOUSING POLICY (1939-1953)

Despite the Falangist-inspired proclamations and speeches of the immediate post-Civil War period, the 1939 Subsidised Housing Act (Ley de Vivienda Protegida) and the building work carried out by the Obra Sindical de la Hogar, which between 1942 and 1953 did not even meet 3% of the estimated shortfall, there was in fact noticeable continuity in housing policy between the 1935 Salmón Act, passed during the Republic's conservative two-year period, and these early years of Franco's dictatorship. Housing policy came under the Ministry of Labour and its sole purpose was to ease the unemployment of the time rather than effectively address growing housing shortages among the working classes.



← The absence of a resolute housing policy meant that shanties were the only homes available to many families. Inside a wooden shack in Somorrostro. 1940s. Unknown photographer. CPFC

Some shantytowns were informal, structured and organised towns. Picture of the entrance to the Can Valero shantytown on Montjuïc. 1967. Tomás Riva Muñoz. MhIC



Little in the way of social housing was built during the early Franco regime. The schemes by the Obra Sindical de la Hogar and the Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda were more akin to a semi-rural approach (like so many that were built all over Spain) than a resolute policy to redress the urban housing shortage.



↑ La Mercè neighbourhood (at first called Las Cinco Rosas). Pedralbes. 1946. AMDC

← Meridiana housing development in la Sagrera. Photo of the opening day. 1944. Pérez Rozas. AFB

→ Cases del Governador. This housing complex was developed by the Barcelona Civil Government and offered to the shanty-dwellers cleared from Diagonal Avenue when the Eucharistic Congress was held. Photo of the opening. 1952. Pérez Rozas. AFB



3 THE LONG HOUSING BOOM: HOUSING ESTATES, DENSIFICATION AND COMMONHOLD (1953-1979)

In the early years of Franco's regime there were few initiatives, albeit all of them wrapped up in grandiose speeches. The economic slump and persistent migration led to an unprecedented deepening of the housing problem. Although after 1951 it was recognised as the "primary national problem", the growth of migration overwhelmed the measures undertaken in the shape of new housing estates and rent-control subsidies and the conditions of low-income housing worsened. It was only after 1960 with the change in the political and economic situation, the passing of the Commonhold Property Act (Ley de la Propiedad Horizontal) and the advent of private enterprise that the new housing estates and large-scale residential densification began to meet the shortfalls. This was the start of a genuine revolution in housing and everyday life which fundamentally changed the very notion of liveability. It is also at this time when demands began to flare up in earnest.

La Pau estate built by the Obra Sindical del Hogar (1963-1966). This was one of the large housing estates developed by the authorities on the basis of the new model (2,499 flats). 1967. Carme Garcia. AFB

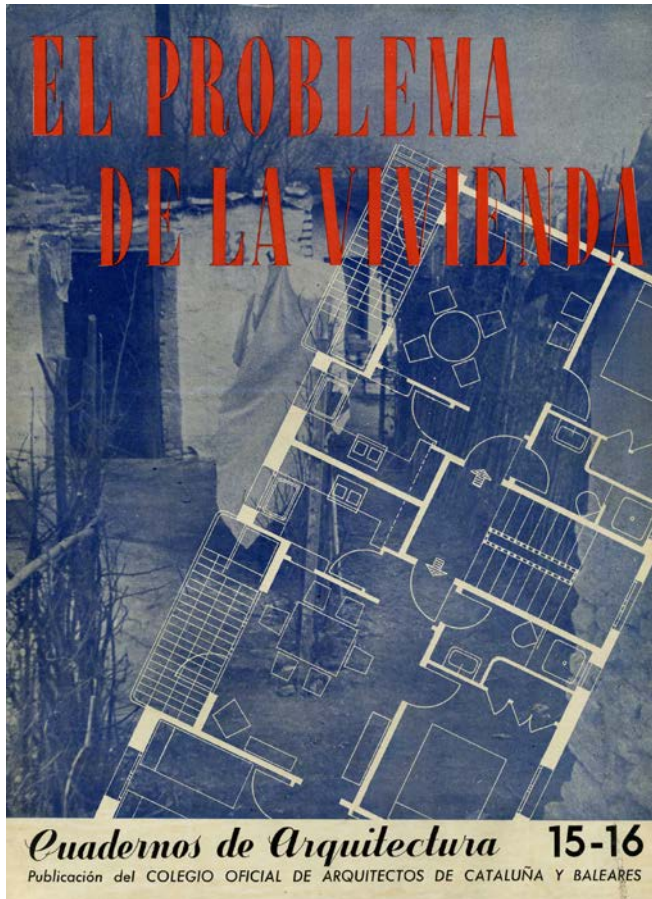
THE FIRST RESPONSES TO THE “PRIMARY NATIONAL PROBLEM”, 1954-1957

Change in the construction cycle. Persistent waves of migration to large towns and cities meant that the housing issue could no longer be avoided and in 1951 it was acknowledged as the primary national problem. The approval of the County Plan in 1953 signalled the start of another cycle which would be completed with the 2nd Housing Plan and the Rent-controlled Housing Act in 1954 (Ley de Viviendas de Renta Limitada), which significantly boosted residential construction through exemptions, tax rebates, priority supply of materials, grants and loans. In spite of this helping hand, however, shortages persisted during the 1950s due to constant inward migration.



← Trinitat Nova: twin buildings in the Municipal Housing Board's second stage. 1959. Brangulí. AFB

↓ The Turó de la Peira housing estate was one of the largest private developments of the time with construction company Sanahuja. José Canela, architect. 1954. The housing inspector visits Turó de la Peira, 1957. Pérez de Rozas. AFB



↑ Nord train station. 1960s. J.M. Huertas Clavería. APE

← Cover of the special issue looking at the problem of housing brought out by the magazine *Cuadernos de Arquitectura*, issue 15-16. Barcelona, 1953. The discussion on basic housing conditions was at the core of architectural approaches.



A transitional period, 1950-1957: trials of mass minimal housing.

The low-income housing stock was ageing, over-occupied and often did not meet minimum sanitary conditions. Hence large-scale mass housing schemes were the touchstones for trying out the new liveability requirements laid down in bylaws and testing new kinds of models. Some were public initiatives, often driven by pressing needs and the economy, while others were private developments which took advantage of the new benefits and exemptions. The new scale of intervention sometimes took the form of blocks of flats while on other occasions it sought to keep to more commonplace urban patterns.

Shantytowns and self-building: a problematic legacy. Despite the increase in construction in the 1950s, problems in finding a place to live left a legacy of cohabitation, shantytowns and self-built homes. Although a slum clearance policy was implemented from 1949 onwards, shantytowns continued to spread and re-housing their inhabitants took a long time and was extremely difficult, to the point that the last shacks did not disappear until the pre-Olympic period. Meanwhile, the self-built settlements which were left out of the development plan had great difficulty in getting the most basic services. However, most of them were consolidated in the end.



↑ The Gálvez family outside their house, Mare de Déu de Lorda. 1957. A

→ The Franco family building their house in Trinitat Vella. 1950. ATV

Some families had acquired small rural plots of land in the hope (although sometimes they were swindled) that they would be able to build their houses on them. These were often off-plan plots which made it very difficult to get them approved. The whole family made the most of Sundays and public holidays to get on with their building work.

↓ Somorrostro neighbourhood and beach. 1959-1966. Unknown photographer. AMDCV



↑ ↑ Rodrigo Caro Street. c. 1960. CCC

↑ Dwellings in Torre Baró. 1973. Carme Garcia. AFB

Roquetes Altés was originally a neighbourhood with self-built housing, yet over time it adapted to urban infrastructures and ended up as a densely populated district which was connected to the rest of the city.

THE EUROPEAN MIRROR: HOUSING POLICIES IN THE POST-SECOND WORLD WAR PERIOD

The ambition and diversity of housing policies in the post-war reconstruction process in different European countries highlight the limitations of the measures undertaken by the Franco regime and the extent to which they consolidate divergences that will have long-lasting effects.



↑ London County Council, Alton Estate, Roehampton. 1952-1958. Interior of a flat. 1960. LPA

↳ Ina-Casa neighborhood, Tiburtino, Roma. 1949-1954. Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi. Magazine *Casabella-continuità*. Issue 215. 1957. P.39. COAC's Historical Archive

Italy: the INA-Casa Plan (1949-1963). In 1949, Act 43 of 28 February passed by the newly established Parliament of the Italian Republic laid the foundations for a highly ambitious plan for affordable housing known as INA-Casa. It was funded by the Government, businesses and workers. Its objectives were to cut unemployment, bring traditional techniques and materials to the fore and design neighbourhoods as new parts of the city with housing, services and public spaces which would foster civic and community values. In fourteen years, over 350,000 families were given a home in both large cities and small towns.

United Kingdom: New Towns (1946-1970). Reconstruction in the UK was targeted at 32 new towns. They were built over three stages across the country in order to ease overcrowding and curb the sprawl of the big cities, plan territorial development and improve people's living conditions. They included a town centre, residential areas arranged in neighbourhood units and production zones. The first ones, including Stevenage (1946), had been designed for some 60,000 inhabitants using centralised models, while the last, such as Milton Keynes (1967), were planned for some 250,000 inhabitants and based on uniform grids. In the national capital, London County Council also built medium and high density neighbourhoods including the Loughborough Estate (1952-57) and the Alton Estate (1952-58) which like the New Towns became international benchmarks.



Germany: Interbau, Berlin (1953-1957). In Berlin, the reconstruction of the 19th-century Hansa district was planned as a showcase of residential buildings for the International Modern Housing Exhibition (Interbau) in a large park. It was decided to put up a blend of high-, medium- and low-rise buildings in a range of residential types which were commissioned from German architects and prominent practitioners including Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Arne Jacobsen and Oscar Niemeyer. Visited by numerous Barcelona architects, Interbau also hosted a Spanish pavilion in which a selection of works and projects by the Obra Sindical del Hogar were exhibited.

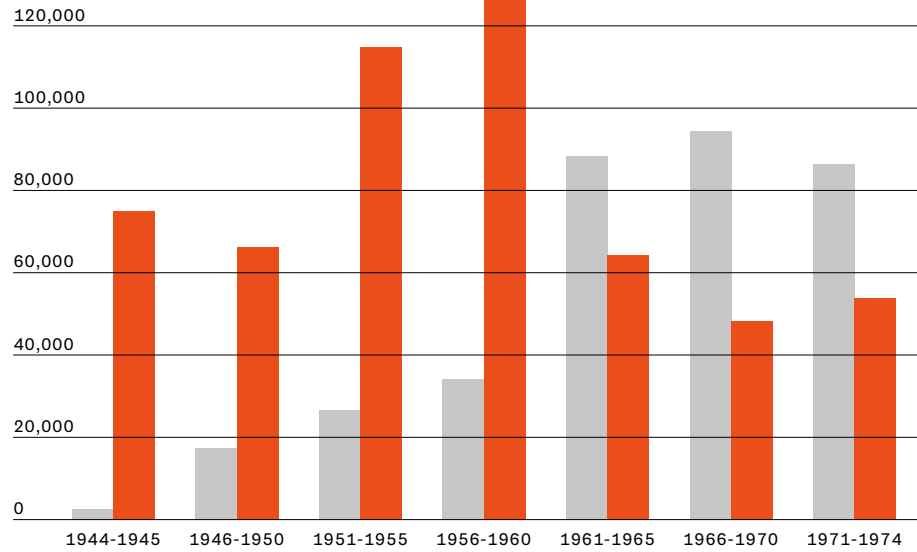
France: the Grands Ensembles and the Villes Nouvelles (1958-73). Despite the precedents of Auguste Perret's plan for rebuilding Le Havre (1944-54) and Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles (1946-52), in the short period between 1958 and 1962 the ZUPs (priority urban development zones) were defined which had been developed with the construction of the *grands ensembles*. They were settlements of between 30,000 and 70,000 people, including the town of Bagnols-sur-Cèze (1956-1960) and Toulouse-Le Mirail (1961-66). In 1965, a plan was added for the construction of nine *villes nouvelles*, new towns set up between 1967 and 1973 with five of them in the Paris region, as new hubs of autonomy and decentralisation in their respective metropolitan regions.

↖ Interbau, Berlin. 1953-1957. ABH
↓ Toulouse-le-Mirail *ville nouvelle*. 1956-1961. Georges Candilis, Alexis Josic and Shadrach Woods. COAC's Historical Archive



**THE PROPERTY BOOM AND ITS PATTERNS, 1958-1976:
HOUSING ESTATES AND DENSIFICATION**

The foundations of the housing boom. The change of government in 1957 and the decisive shift towards economic deregulation led to setting up the Ministerio de la Vivienda (Ministry of Housing). It drove forward the Pla d'urgència social de Barcelona (Barcelona Social Emergency Plan) in 1958 and introduced the 1960 Commonhold Property Act under the tagline "we don't want a Spain of labourers but rather of homeowners". It was, in fact, a consequence of the final breakdown of the rental market and was intended to be a way of overcoming obstacles, stimulating the commonhold property market for housing as an alternative and enlisting the help of private enterprise. The economic growth following the 1959 Plan de Estabilización (Stabilisation Plan) did the rest.



Increase in inhabitants and approved housing units by five-year period in Barcelona (1944-1974). Source: Municipal statistics

Approved housing units
 Increase in inhabitants

↗ Construcciones Españolas leaflet showing developments underway and sales made. The developments include the Besòs neighbourhood, the area between Maresme and Pere IV streets and Guipuzcoa Boulevard. MTPC

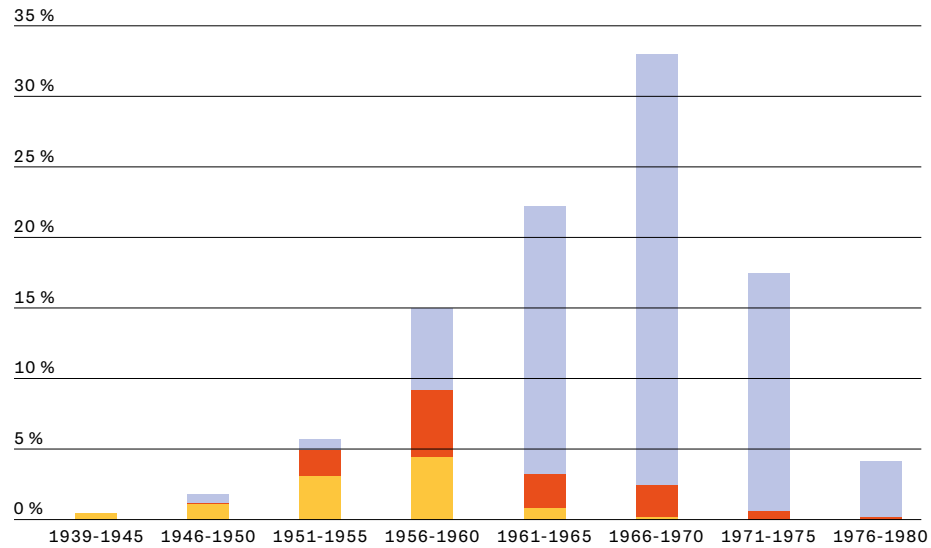
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CONSTRUCCIONES ESPAÑOLAS

ENRIQUE GRANADOS, N.º 135

Almanaque de...

Densification of pre-existing communities: greater prevalence but less visibility. Densification in pre-existing communities provided the largest share of new housing, especially on the working-class outskirts of the city. Changes in zoning and market pressures led to the gradual replacement of houses by high-rise blocks of flats, some of which were rent-controlled, others increasingly under commonhold ownership. Often the swap system was used in which the owner of the house handed over the plot of land in exchange for owner-occupied flats. However, this replacement did require the prior installation of sewers and running water.



Densification process by five-year period of small construction in Nou Barris, 1939-1980: from houses to replacement by blocks of flats.
 Source: *La revolució de l'habitatge a les perifèries obreres i populars. Nou Barris, 1939-1980*, MUHBA, 2022, p. 74

Densification rate

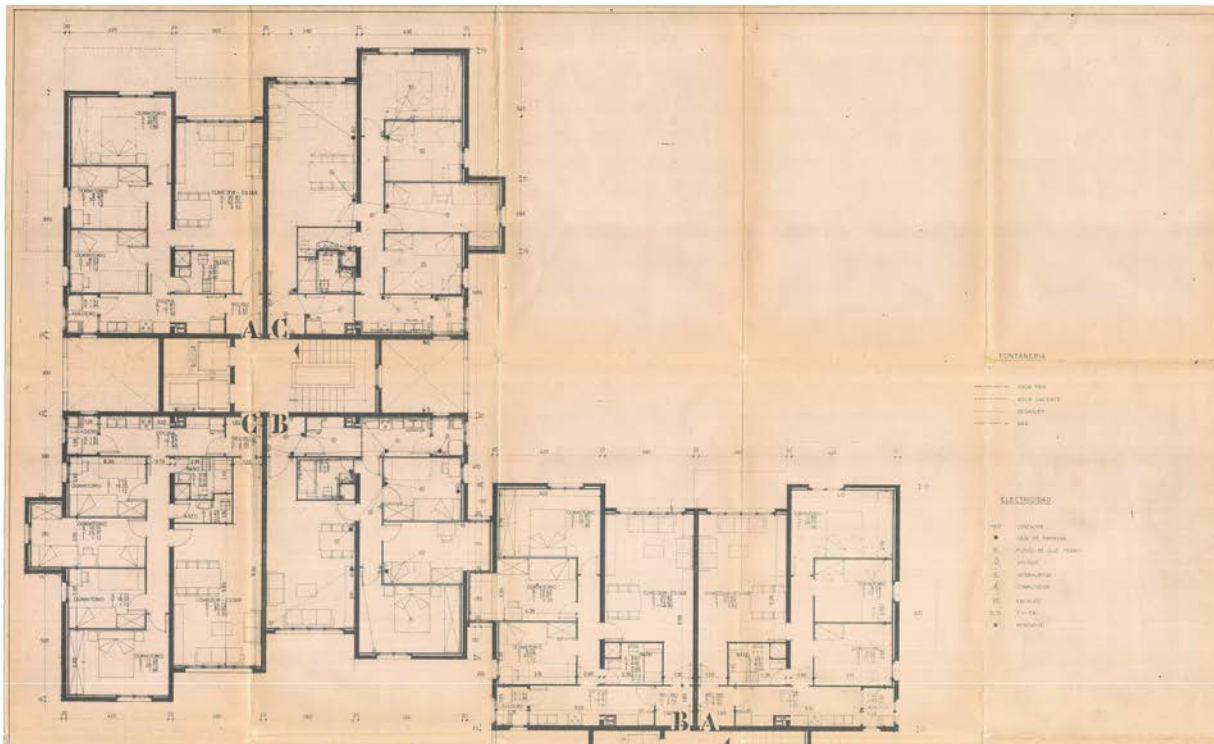
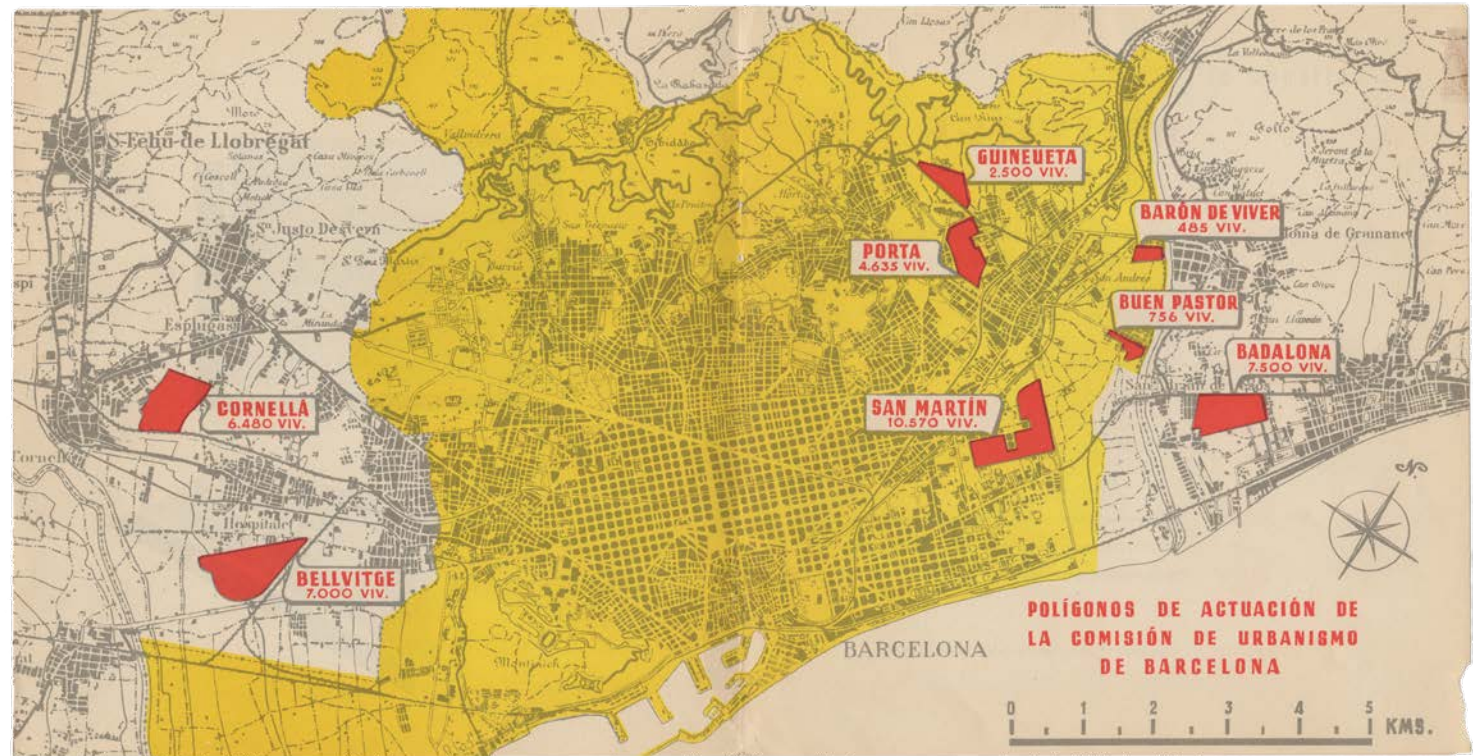
- GF / GF+1F
- Additions
- Replacements

→ Simancas Street in les Roquetes. 1968. Ginés Cuesta. AHR-NB

→ View of the Roquetes neighbourhood between Cantera and Llobera streets. 1970. Ginés Cuesta. AHR-NB



Estates: the most visible expression of the housing renewal policy. Estates are the best way to see how the new housing architecture schemes in post-war European reconstruction were welcomed in Spain. In these projects, the housing unit was the driving force based on repetition and clustering strategies. As housing estates always had a significant political aspect and greater media coverage, they became showcases for the efficiency and modernity of the Government's management. Indeed, they were put forward as the main public solution to the appalling housing problem.



Map of the Pla d'urgència social (Social Emergency Plan). 1957. Arxiu ETSAB

Floor plan of the Canyelles estate in 1974 developed by the Municipal Housing Board. Architects: Guillermo Giráldez, Xavier Subías and Pedro López. AMCB



← Blocks of flats under construction on the Sant Martí estate. c. 1957. Josep Cortinas/Museu de Badalona. Al. Fons Josep Cortinas



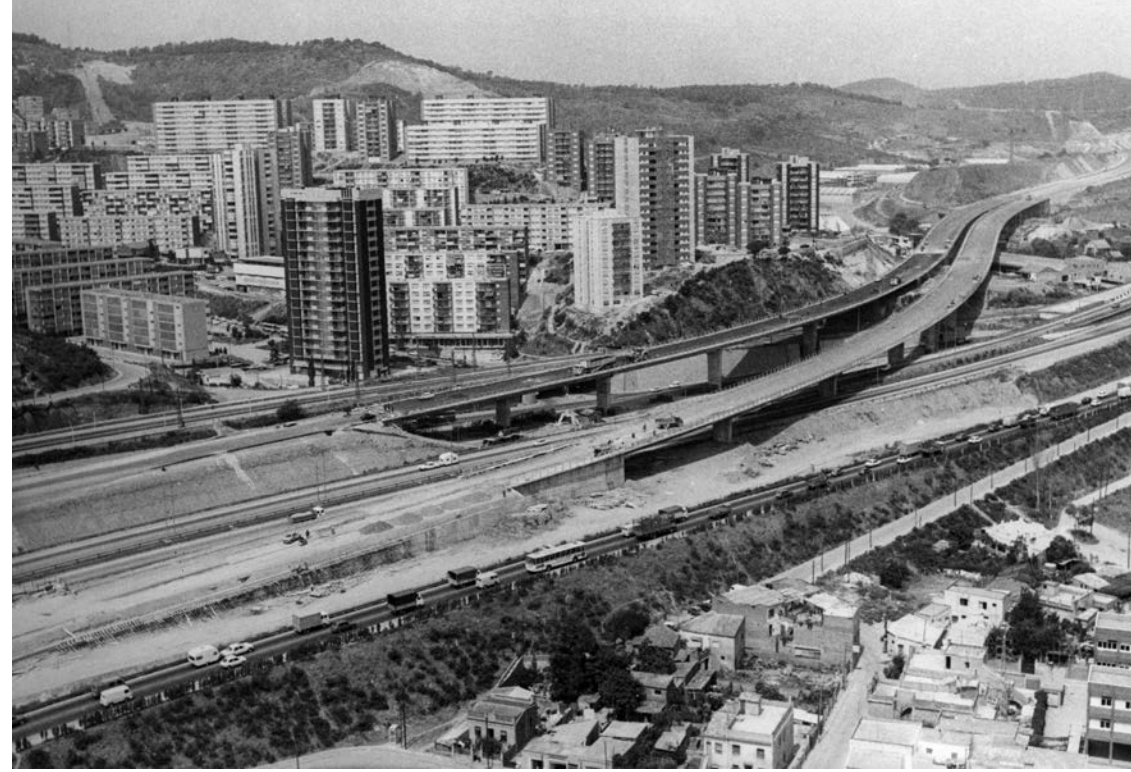
← Authorities visiting the Guineueta estate. 1968. Brangulí. AFB

→ Ciutat Meridiana estate, built in 1964. 1975. Juan Antonio Sáenz Guerrero. AFB



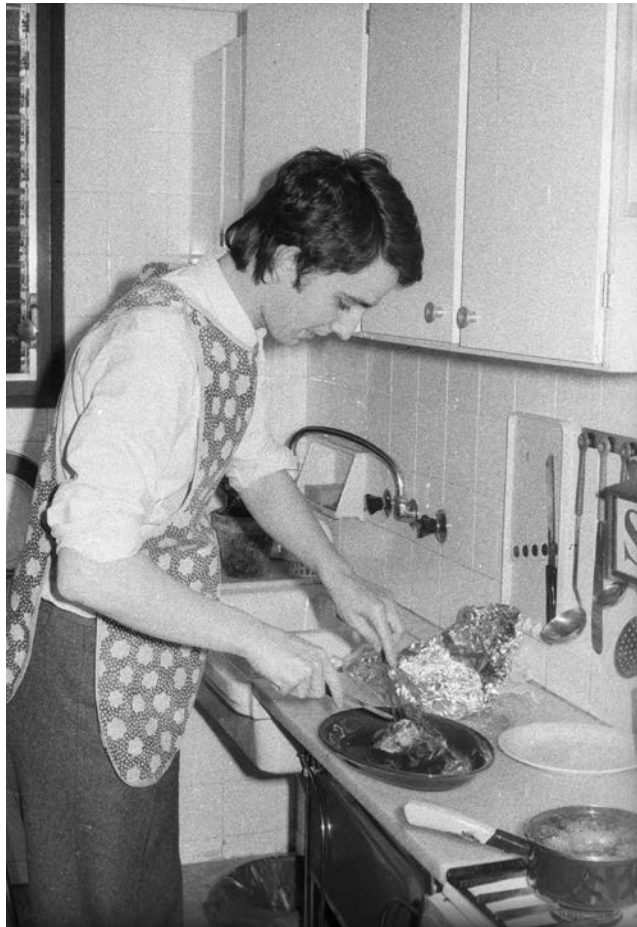
← La Guineueta neighbourhood. 1966. Unknown photographer. AFB

→ Bellvitge, Félix Sandoval Candelas. 1970s. Donated by Adela Sendra. AMLH



IMPROVEMENTS IN LIVING CONDITIONS AND CHANGES IN DOMESTIC SPACE

The 1960s saw the start of improvements in health and comfort conditions in low-income housing, although this did not become the norm until the 1970s. The new homes, most of which were owner-occupied, were equipped with sanitary fittings and met the minimum hygienic standards set by regulations. Slowly but surely they came to feature the most basic modern domestic appliances, in particular butane cookers which gradually replaced coal-fired stoves, refrigerators and most of all washing machines. This reduced the amount of housework which had a major impact on women's daily lives.



← Kitchens with fitted units were introduced into working-class homes from the 1970s and became a modern feature in many households. 1974. Eduard Olivella. AFB

↓ Advertising for Roca's Bañaseo bathtub. 1950s. MRPC



← A housewife preparing food on a butane gas cooker. 1970-1975. Marta Sala. AFB



↑ The washing machine comes to working-class homes. 1962. Unknown photographer. Teresa Bullich family collection.

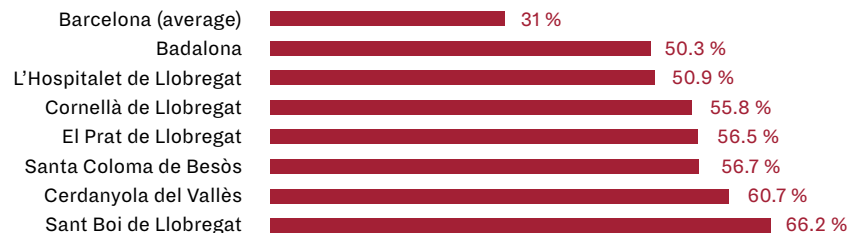


← Three children in the dining room of a house in Barceloneta. The TV, which is showing the series *Bonanza*, is the centrepiece. 1960-1970. Unknown photographer. Arxiu Popular de la Barceloneta's collection. AMDCV

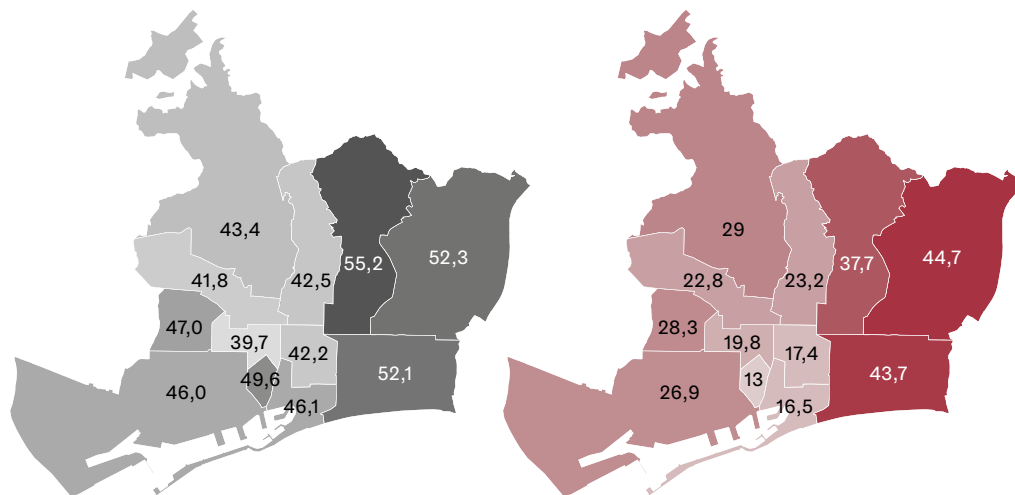
LOW-INCOME OUTSKIRTS ARE PIONEERS IN HOME OWNERSHIP

From then on, home ownership grew quickly just as it did in other countries. However, it was above average in Spain and had a unique and paradoxical standout feature: most owner-occupied homes were on the working class outskirts of the city. Subsidised rental housing was more easily accessible for the middle and affluent classes than less well-off people, mostly migrants, who had to borrow to buy their property. Contrary to expectations, however, this did not tame the people living in these neighbourhoods.

Properties paid for or with outstanding payments, percentages in various AMB municipalities, 1970



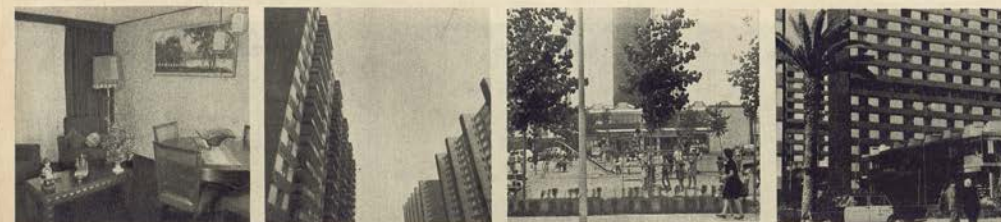
Source: *La revolución de la vivienda en las periferias obreras y populares. Nou Barris, 1939-1980*, MUHBA, 2022, p. 256



Percentage of male and female workers in industry, services, communication and transport, 1970

Percentage of properties paid for or with outstanding payments, 1970

→ "Vivimos en Bellvitge" (We live in Bellvitge). *La Vanguardia*, 15 December 1968. AHCB



Espacioso comedor-sala de estar de un piso de Bellvitge. Los edificios de Bellvitge son modernos, bien construidos y bien situados. En Bellvitge los niños son felices porque pueden correr y jugar por los jardines sin peligro. Bellvitge es un Distrito con zona comercial propia: supermercados y todo tipo de establecimientos.

VIVIMOS EN BELLVITGE
en piso de propiedad



Visitenos

Recorte este cupón y envíelo hoy mismo a la Oficina Informativa de Bellvitge, calle de la Ermita de Bellvitge, n.º 29, Hospitalet de Llobregat (Barcelona). Recibirá más información sin ningún compromiso por su parte. Aproveche más información para venir a vernos, esperamos su visita.
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✂

NOMBRE: _____
 PROFESION: _____
 DOMICILIO: _____
 POBLACION: _____

en **BELLVITGE**
hay vida

Un piso moderno, bien construido y, sobre todo, espacioso: tres grandes habitaciones, cuarto de aseo, cocina y comedor-sala de estar con terraza. Todas ellas con mucha luz y exteriores. Además, disponemos de instalación para agua caliente, ascensor (subida y bajada) y antena colectiva de TV.
Está a sólo 8 minutos de la plaza de España, lejos del ruido y de las prisas de Barcelona. Para los niños hay jardines con toda clase de juegos, pistas polideportivas, campo de fútbol, etc. Tenemos en la misma zona toda clase de comercios y tiendas, iglesias, escuelas y guardería infantil.

CRIC

FROM THE FIRST COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

Housing shortages and shortcomings were the trigger for the first activism. Together with the threat of expropriation as a result of the Torre Baró-Vallbona-Trinitat Development Plan, after 1969 they were the driving force behind growing protests and the emergence of an unexpected political force with robust social capital. The Nou Barris case shows two contradictions. The first is that protests did not erupt in the 1950s, when housing shortcomings were at their peak, but rather in the 1970s when they were beginning to be remedied. The second is that struggles were most extreme in the areas with the highest percentages of property ownership, which at the same time were the most outlying and had the largest numbers of workers.



← Report on local people's rejection of the Torre Baró-Vallbona-Trinitat Local Development Plan. Source: *La Vanguardia*, 17 February 1970, p. 29. AHCB

↘ Demonstration in Nou Barris against the Santa Engràcia shanties and for decent housing, 1970s. Kim Manresa

The residents of the cluster of self-built houses in the highest part of Roquetes, helped by the Jesuit Santiago Thió and a group of volunteers, managed to build the sewerage system on Sundays and other holidays after water mains had been laid. Roquetes had its local development plan approved, but Torre Baró and Vallbona were not included in development plans and still had no running water at the end of the 1970s.



← ↑ “Urbanizar en domingo”. Roquetes residents building the sewerage system in July-September 1964. AHR-NB



The publicly subsidised housing estates built by the Obra Sindical del Hogar with great haste and numerous construction short-comings in the 1950s had high maintenance costs which they tried to pass on in the payments made by residents for future yet uncertain ownership. This led to a payment strike between 1969 and 1973 and a number of protests were organised, including complaints to the authorities, mass meetings, press campaigns and public demonstrations in the streets, which were at first unconnected but later on coordinated on a metropolitan scale.



4 SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT POLICY BUT LITTLE SOCIAL HOUSING 1979-2011

The first democratic local councils made major efforts to remedy the shortcomings they had inherited. However, social housing development was completely sidelined due to low demographic pressure and the entrenched culture of home ownership. By contrast, high unemployment meant that the much-needed economic revival took centre stage, initially addressed with a managerial approach geared towards the Olympic Games venture but which later on came to predominate in the 1990s with a growing role for private property development. When circumstances changed around 2000 due to growing migration, entry into the euro and speculative pressure, getting hold of housing became more difficult. Warnings about a runaway housing bubble did not forestall its particularly dramatic bursting in Spain.

CONQUEST OF CITIZENSHIP IN BARCELONA AND UPSURGE IN EXCLUSION AND URBAN VIOLENCE IN EUROPE

At a time of economic recession and unemployment, access to home ownership and grassroots struggles in the neighbourhoods which fed into the anti-Franco movement became ways of attaining full civic ownership. Democracy and the new municipal policies consolidated the inclusion process. This stood in contrast to the upsurge in street violence across Europe starting in the late 1970s prompted by ethnic segregation, social exclusion and the poor prospects of disillusioned young people. The movements first emerged in Britain and France before spreading in the following years to numerous European cities.



← Demonstration by Horta residents to demand traffic lights. 1983. Unknown photographer. AMDG

↓ Demonstration for safe schools in l'Hospitalet de Llobregat. 1982. Unknown photographer. AFB



↑ Minguettes neighbourhood, Lyon, France. 1983. Dominique Barrier. Getty images

↓ Law enforcement officers take action in the Monmousseau district in Vénissieux in 1981. PHOTOPQR/Le Progres/Archives Progres Archive



“REBUILDING BARCELONA”: PUBLIC SPACE AND REMEDYING INHERITED SHORTCOMINGS

In response to grassroots demands and the historical engagement in these struggles of the new political forces in the democratic municipality, a process for rectifying shortcomings in public infrastructures and services was begun to tackle the mess inherited and the unemployment of the time. Local economic development policies were also rolled out which culminated in the challenge of hosting the Olympic Games. Starting in the 1990s and in a period of population decline, the managerial approach with private investment partners fuelled economic growth in the city which was overly reliant on the property business.



↑ Rambla Prim. 1989. Rafael Escudé. AFB

➤ Via Júlia. 1988. Unknown photographer. AFB

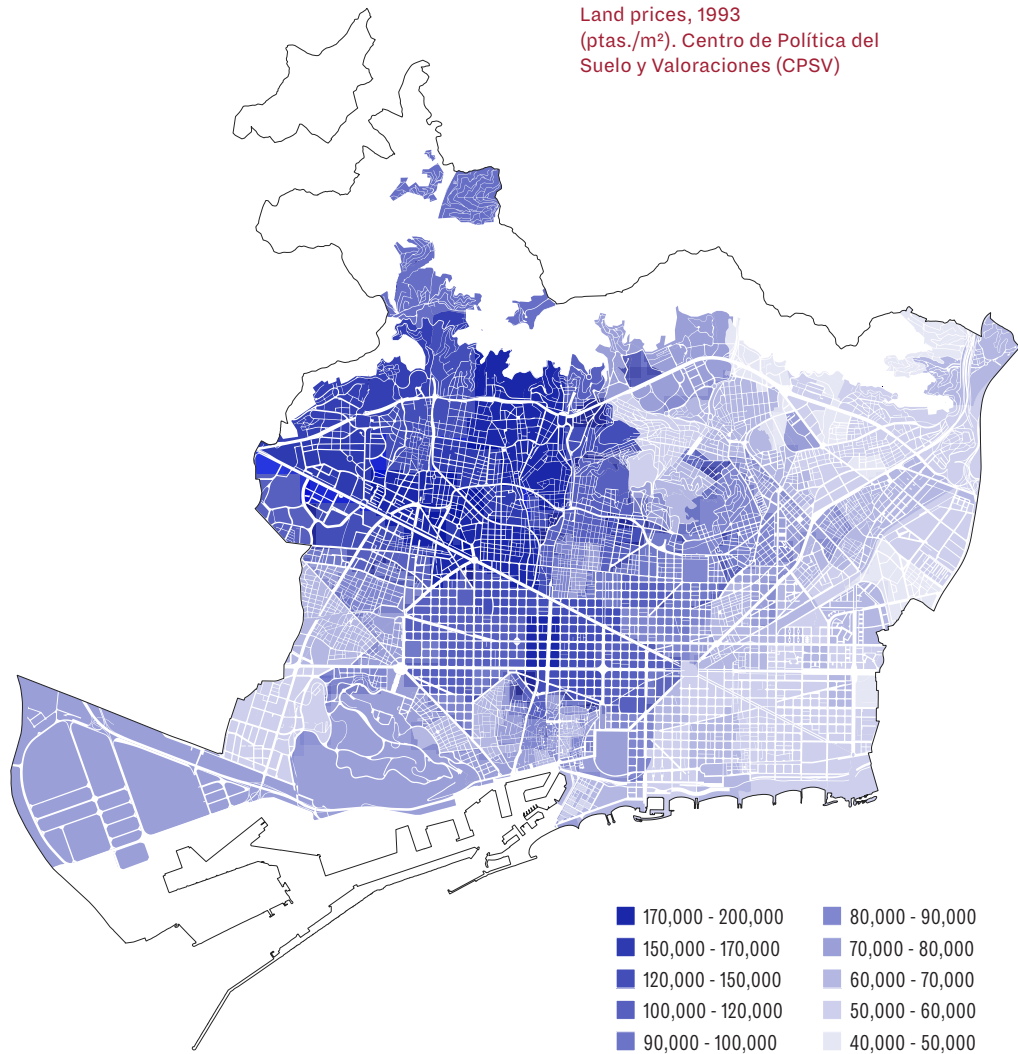
→ New Cases del Governador blocks of flats in 2003, refurbished by INCASOL. RERURSA, S.A., 2008, Ernest Gual. INCASOL



LAND PRICES AND CHANGES IN SOCIAL TOPOGRAPHY

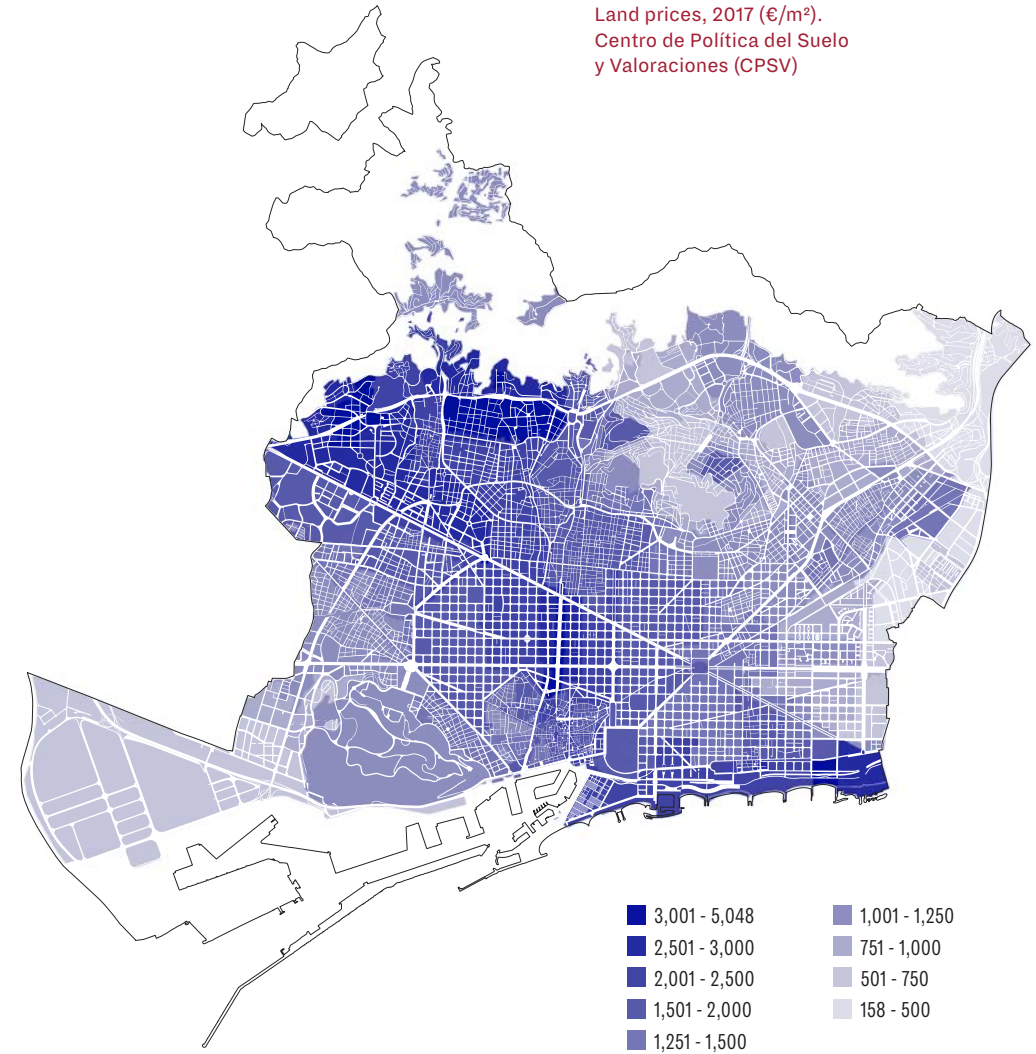
A comparison of land prices, the main organisers of social space, between 1993 and 2017 reveals the effects of the extensive renewal resulting from large-scale public investment and the expansion of the property business. It shows the changes in the major patterns of social topography, especially in the coastal area and towards Diagonal Mar.

Land prices, 1993
(ptas./m²). Centro de Política del Suelo y Valoraciones (CPSV)

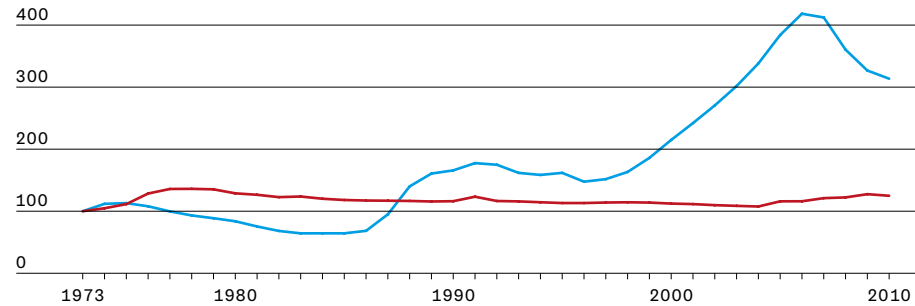


At the same time, the general increase in land values entails the gradual expulsion of the weakest economic sectors. Thus, land values became an insurmountable barrier for increasing swathes of the population, albeit with a delayed impact due to high home ownership rates.

Land prices, 2017 (€/m²).
Centro de Política del Suelo y Valoraciones (CPSV)



A property bubble foretold. From 2000 onwards, and after twenty years of population loss, housing prices soared due to high migration and tourism pressure and the speculative bubble against the backdrop of financial globalisation. The historical entrenchment of a culture of ownership with housing policies focusing exclusively on private development, tax breaks and little promotion of subsidised housing led to the depletion of the social housing stock.



↑ Evolution of house prices in Barcelona in relation to the minimum wage in real values (1973 = 100), 1970-2015. Source: Statistics Department, Ajuntament de Barcelona

↳ *La Vanguardia*, 26 October 2001. AHCB

↳ *La Veu del Carrer*, FAVB magazine, October-November, 2003. FAVB



THE HOUSING ISSUE IS BACK AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA

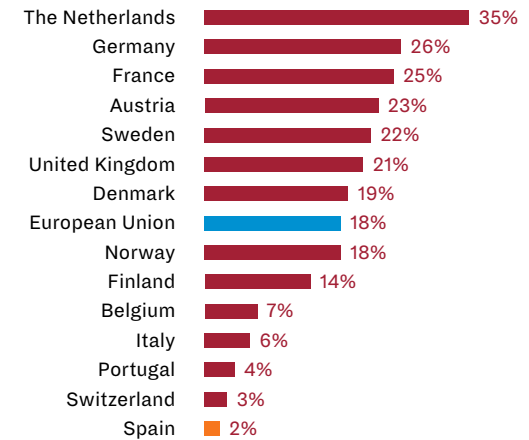
Rent deregulation in 1985 did not change the expectations of the home ownership culture, and without the dampening effect of significant social housing stock, the speculative bubble and mortgage over-indebtedness triggered the outbreak of the global financial crisis from 2008 to 2012 which had especially harsh consequences. Rising unemployment meant mortgage defaults and a dramatic upsurge in evictions which brought the housing issue back to the forefront of the political agenda.

↓ “Volem seguir vivint al Poblenou” (We want to continue living in Poblenou) demonstration on 5 May 2004 to demand housing in the neighbourhood. Unknown photographer. *El Poblenou* magazine’s Archive

→ Demonstration against property speculation. Unknown photographer. AHPN



↑ Eviction at 470, Gran de Sant Andreu Street halted due to community pressure. 14 June 2011. Albert Garcia/Photoaisa



Distribution of social rental housing stock in Europe, 1999 (%). Source: Carme Trilla, *La política de vivienda en una perspectiva europea comparada*, Fundació “La Caixa”, 2001

THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

The housing problems of the present are shaped by a long historical journey. Today's housing issues cannot be understood without the interwar crisis, the 1931 rent strike, the subsequent rent freeze and the drift towards a culture of home ownership during the Franco regime which was interpreted as a 'success story' and, to a certain extent, influenced the outcome of the property bubble. No response can overlook historic legacies and patterns; solutions need to be found with sustained action over time and without expecting immediate or entirely predictable effects.



Awarding the flats in the Eucharistic Congress neighbourhood. 1954. ADB

MUHBA Bon Pastor. Museum Project Cases

Barates. The project began in 2010 on the initiative of the Bon Pastor Residents' Association which gained the backing of the Sant Andreu District and the Barcelona Municipal Institute of Housing and Renovation. The plan was cemented by a partnership with Muhba, which is part of the ICUB. After a decade of work, funding through the Neighbourhood Plan has made the new museum venue possible. The whole process, from the historical research to building the collection and the work on the houses, has been a joint effort between Muhba, community associations, universities and other institutions. The project would not have been possible without the enthusiastic, methodical and long-lasting cooperation of the people of Bon Pastor and the Bon Pastor Residents' Association.

Project director: Joan Roca i Albert

Exhibition:

Housing the Majority. Barcelona 1860-2010

Organisation and production: Museu d'Història de Barcelona, Institut de Cultura, Ajuntament de Barcelona

Curators: Manel Guàrdia and Maribel Rosselló assisted by Amador Ferrer and Paolo Sustersic

Exhibition coordinators: Marta Iglesias and Mònica Martínez (Viureart)

Graphic documentation: Marta Delclòs and Marta Iglesias

Consultant: Joan Roca i Albert

Museum and graphic design: Andrea Manenti

Preventive conservation and restoration: Olga Ceni, Ona Curtó, Lidia Font (coordination), Natàlia Hervás, Anna Lázaro, Núria Miró and Carla Puerto

Image and document management: Marta Iglesias and Mònica Martínez (Viureart)

Language review and translations: Addenda

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Museum production and assembly: Croquins. Disseny, muntatges i realitzacions. S.A.

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Bombolla immobiliària i emergència habitacional (Property Bubble and Housing Emergency). Script and direction: Manel Guàrdia and Maribel Rosselló.

Coordination: Marta Iglesias and Mònica Martínez. Review: Joan Roca i Albert. Archival research: Copilotos S.L. Production: Alba Aguilar, Mapie García-Santamarina and Jaume Montané (Copilotos S.L.)

L'habitatge social a Europa, 1945-1975 (Social Housing in Europe, 1945-1975). Script and direction: Paolo Sustersic. Coordination: Marta Iglesias and

Mònica Martínez. Research and documentation: Cristina Camps and Paolo Sustersic. Production: Alba Aguilar, Mapie García-Santamarina and Jaume Montané (Copilotos S.L.)

Extracts from the film Serà tu tierra (It Shall be your Land) by Llorenç Soler de los Mártires.

Barcelona, 1966. Script and direction: Manel Guàrdia and Maribel Rosselló. Coordination: Marta Iglesias and Mònica Martínez. Production: Alba Aguilar, Mapie García-Santamarina and Jaume Montané (Copilotos S.L.)

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