

PAPERS 46 HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY.

First Results of the *Enquesta de condicions de vida i hàbits de la població de Catalunya, 2006**

FOREWORD

This 46th PAPERS issue that the reader may be holding is the first report including data from the *Survey of the living conditions and habits of the population of Catalonia, 2006*. Just as it was done at the 2000 edition, two fully current and socially relevant subjects, housing and residential mobility, have been chosen and analyzed at the scale of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and the Province of Barcelona. The analysis has been territorially disaggregated in four internal areas (the city of Barcelona, the First Metropolitan Belt, the Second Metropolitan Belt and rest of the Province of Barcelona). Besides, considering that this is the *Survey*'s 5th edition, when regarding these territories data have been studied diachronically when possible; this way, the results obtained may be understood in a more precise manner as a part of long-running dynamics rather than just a juncture.

As a complement to this first results analysis, the monograph includes two annexes that help contextualizing the information about the main subject and the statistic resource of the data. The first annex includes statistic tables that complement the text, either supporting the graphics inserted in the analysis or adding information that hasn't been considered essential to it. The second annex is dedicated to the resource that provides for data: the *Survey of the living conditions and habits of the population*; its 2006 edition technical and methodological features are detailed, together with a wide explanation about the process of sample construction.

Carme Miralles-Guasch and Carles Donat, both geographers at the Institute for Regional and Metropolitan Studies, and Jaume Barnada, an architect at the Barcelona City Council, have structured the report in four parts that can be read independently while they are connected amongst them too, as explained at the summary and the set of conclusions at the end of the analysis.

The first part describes the characteristics of the housing units where the population lives, regarding housing tenure, living space, year of construction and type of building. Some data related to secondary residence are also expounded. A very relevant subject is treated in the second part: residential mobility in relation to the housing changes that have taken place during the five or six years preceding

each edition of the *Survey*. Regarding the aforementioned territories, it is possible to know the amount and evolution, the causes and the relation between residential changes and the life cycle. At the third part, the authors have wanted to focus on two collectives amongst the ones that meet greater difficulties when looking for a house: the youth and the elderly. Due to rather different reasons these two social groups – that are defined by their age and thus not internally homogeneous – have greater problems than the rest of the population when facing the housing market. The last part of the article deals with the changes of residence that also result in a change of municipality —which are called internal inter-municipal migrations— analyzing them as a dynamic involving the different territorial areas considered, as well as in relation to the sizes of both the towns of origin and destination. There is also a section that regards the newcomers. And taking everything into account, main tendencies in population distribution are pointed out according to the residential changes revealed by the *Survey*.

The article concludes with a summary and a set of conclusions that outline, in a synthetic manner, the characteristics of the housing units and the population living in them, emphasizing the youth and elderly matters due to the specific difficulties that they meet. Changes of residence have also been highlighted, together with the consequent redistribution of the population at the metropolitan scale.

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF BARCELONA AND IN THE PROVINCE OF BARCELONA¹

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Introduction

Within the context of contemporary history, since the end of the 1990s the housing market has entered into an unprecedented cycle of rising prices. This cycle has been characterised by a sharp increase in the population who are looking for a home and by the boom in housing construction, a fact which, however, has not stopped prices from rising significantly year after year. While this housing market

trend has met the housing needs of a large part of the population, albeit at the cost of taking on heavy mortgage repayments, it has excluded others and left them in an even more adverse situation because of the accumulated shortage in some form or other of subsidised housing which, in turn, has become less and less of a priority in metropolitan areas since the beginning of this cycle. All in all, this has led to a situation where nowadays housing is one of the main concerns of citizens and also one of the central issues in public policies for the coming years.

This volume of the journal *Papers* features the first set of data from the 2006 edition of *Enquesta de condicions de vida i hàbits de la població* (from here on referred to as the *Survey*), and focuses on housing and residential mobility. This issue was already the subject of discussion in some of the articles in the volume that began publishing the data from the previous *Survey* five years ago, and for a variety of different reasons has been a recurring theme. First and foremost, as said before, is the importance that this issue has at present for both society and public administration policies. The second reason is related to the territorial level, metropolitan, where the main forces behind the housing market coincide now more than ever. It follows that one needs to be alert to the fact that these housing market mechanisms and the implementation of housing programmes by public administrations in this field have a major bearing. In fact, in some cases they are at the root of other areas of public interest such as mobility, social cohesion and environmental sustainability, which are all within the metropolitan sphere of interest. Last, but by no means least, the third reason which has brought us to focus on the first data on housing, starts from the conviction that this information and analyses provide more in-depth knowledge about the complexity of the housing market and the needs of the citizens. Furthermore, with the latest *Survey* we now have access to a chronologically ordered series of data for the entire Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (1995, 2000 and 2006), and to a lesser degree for the whole of the Province of Barcelona (2000 and 2006), which allow for making diachronic analyses and providing more accurate information for planners and public management.

This article is divided into four sections which deal with the main characteristics and factors related to housing in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and the