

Barcelona's sociodemographic filter: an analysis of individuals participating in the residential and migratory flows of the central city

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Since Barcelona's central municipality reached its urban and demographic maturity, more than one third century ago, migration and residential mobility have been the determinant factors of its sociodemographic renewal. It has been proved in many other inner cities that participants in residential flows (moving into, moving out of and moving within the urban core) are not randomly selected from the whole population. In Barcelona, young people, singles, professionals and the highly educated are more willing to move into and within the central city. Meanwhile, family dimension is behind most of the leaving the inner city movements. Manual workers and medium educated are also more likely to leave central areas. As a consequence, Barcelona's urban core has experienced an intense process of population renewal during the last decade. This research is based on the analysis of the Census 2001 100% microdata, which enables us to explore the sociodemographic profile of each person who has arrived, left and moved within Barcelona's central city.

Keywords: Urban demography, residential mobility, migration, central city, Barcelona, sociodemographic renewal.

Extended abstract:

Sociodemographic selectivity in central cities

Sociodemographic profiles of individuals participating in the residential flows have been analyzed in several Occidental inner cities. Recent studies in this topic are framed in a highly accepted current of reurbanisation, the return of inhabitants to central cities areas, in a process related to a new functional specialization of the inner city (Musterd, 2006) and to its new emergence (Cheshire, 2006; Storper and Manville, 2006) prevails. In the USA, the great majority of the central cores have seen how their population has increased between 1990 and 2005 (Frey, 2006), while the same has happened to London and Paris, where a long period of abundant shortfall have come to an end.

Rossi (1955) and Abu-Lughod and Foley (1960) introduced the life-cycle approach to explain the selectivity in residential changes, just when leaving the city movements were changing the physiognomy of many cities. From the 1970's, when the back to the city movements emerged, new studies that take into account the sociodemographic characteristics of those who arrive to the urban core, considering as well those who move from the suburbs, started to be developed. Sanchez and Dawkins (2001) point out that life-cycle approach is less relevant to explain the profile of immigrants to the urban core.

In Europe, many efforts have been made to understand sociodemographic changes in the urban core of Paris and London. Bonvalet and Lelièvre (1991; 1994) defined the demographic filter of Paris inner city and detected that it is a privileged space for social success. Recent studies of Ogden, Hall and Schnoebelen (Ogden and Hall, 1998; 2000; 2004; Ogden and Schnoebelen, 2005), analyses transformations in the typology of households living in the central city. Selective migration and residential mobility plays a major role in the decrease of the size of households in Paris, and in the proliferation of one member households. In Greater London, Ford and Champion (2000) reveal differences in the sociodemographic profiles of the three residential flows involving the city (moving into, out and within). However, the process of population renewal in London's inner city has been widely analyzed from a gentrification approach, pointing out the socioeconomic variable and relating the observed patterns to other urban, economic, politic and cultural processes that are taking place in certain areas of the urban core (Coombes and Charlton, 1992; Champion, 1999; Atkinson, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Hamnet 2003).

Gale (1979) examines the first cases of back to the urban core movements in North-American cities. The author concludes that those who migrate tend to be white, younger, highly educated,

and often professionals with no children and a higher income. These conclusions are quite similar to those of Spain (1989), who found that the unmarried people and households without children and high income are more willing to move to the urban core. Furthermore, LeGates and Hartman (1986) reach the same conclusions in their attempt to define the immigrant: since usually the housing market is smaller and more expensive in the urban core than in the suburban areas, the number of households with higher incomes and no children arriving to the urban core is likely to be higher. Long and Glick (1976) underline the attraction of the non-traditional households to the urban cores. In a study of Cincinnati, Varady (1990) deals with an immigrant who is characterized by a high level of education, with no children and clearly willing to have a better access to job opportunities and to live in a cosmopolitan environment. Frey and Kobrin (1982) emphasize the different composition in the type of households participating in the flows moving into and moving out of the central city. South and Crowder (1997) and Sanchez and Dawkins (2001) introduced the importance of movements within the cities. Most recently, Frey (2002, 2005, 2006) and Birch (2005) confirm the population growth of most of the USA central cities in the 1990's and during the 2000-2005 period, as well as a change in the composition of the population living in the urban core of these cities.

Temporal and geographical context

Since Barcelona's industrial and urban explosion, known after the second third of the 19th century, the central municipality experienced a continuous population growth based on the incessant contribution of the in-migratory flow. At the late seventies, clashing with the saturation of the urban core, the volume of the population living in the central municipality reached its peak (more than 1,750,000 inhabitants), and immigration stopped being the main factor to explain changes in the sociodemographic structure of the population. A period of uninterrupted loss of population arrived just after that moment, in a process related with the intensification of the urban sprawl, the arriving of the baby-boomers to the age at leaving home, and the consequent reduction of the household size in a city where few new dwelling units were added to the urban fabric. This episode was recently stopped, not only as a consequence of the increase of international migratory flows, but also because of the relative increase of residential movements towards the city.

Spanish Census 2001 data recollects residential and migratory itineraries in a municipal level. To analyze residential movements crossing the municipal borders, census data provides origin-

destination information of the last movement done, as well as the year of that residential change. The 2001 Census also provides information about the last change of dwelling within the municipality. The small size of Barcelona's central municipality has been a crucial positive point for the development of this research. Its 100 square kilometers allow the consideration of the entire Barcelona's municipality as the central city of the Metropolitan Area. Nowadays, there are about 1,6 million residents living in the central municipality; meanwhile there are 3 more million people living in the other 163 municipalities that comprise the 2,100 square miles of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. From a housing market prices point of view, no more than 5 metropolitan municipalities show more expensive dwelling prices than the cheapest neighborhoods of the central city.

This research is based on the analysis of the Census 2001 100% microdata, which permits to explore the sociodemographic profile of each person who has arrived, left and moved within Barcelona's central city. A fourth dimension of the residential flow is also important to consider: those who moved in the Metropolitan Area and didn't include Barcelona's central municipality in their residential itineraries.

Results

The family dimension involving the change of residence is one of the main aspects that defines the leaving the city movements in the age at leaving home. Almost eight of every ten young adults aged between 25 and 34 who leave Barcelona live with a partner or children in the new residence. However, the proportion descends to 60% when the movements within the city are analyzed, and it is below the 50% when all the arrivals to the city are counted up. For the very first time in the demographic history of Barcelona, the married population does not exceed the single population until they are almost 40 years old, a process in which migration and residential mobility have played a key role, in addition to the well-known behavior change in terms of nuptiality. Therefore, singles in young adult ages not only put down roots in the city because they are less likely to move, but also because of the demographic filter of Barcelona, which keeps in the city not married and not cohabiting population once they have started the residential movement.

Regarding age and sex, the combination of two processes, international immigration and leaving the central city movements because of residential reasons, has rejuvenated the demographic structure of Barcelona's population. Thus, boomers generations, born in Spain between 1965 and

1975, have definitely lost their leading role in the population structure, one feature that had characterized Barcelona's demographic pyramid since they were born. In that sense, is expected that modal age in Barcelona's population will remain in the range of the 25-30 years old, reproducing processes experienced in other European central cities as Paris and London.

Educational attainment of residents in Barcelona's inner city doesn't explain the intensity of the residential change, but it defines their final destination, hence, their territorial distribution. In terms of the educational attainment, Barcelona's sociodemographic filter can be synthesized in its capacity to retain the highly educated and the permissibility to allow leaving the urban core to individuals who only have completed the compulsory education. In the immigratory flows, selectivity strengthens the arrival of highly educated population, especially when they are arriving from the rest of the Metropolitan Area or Spain.

From a socioeconomic approach, professionals and active women are the most likely groups to remain in the central city, while manual workers and inactive women are more willing to leave the urban core. In the moving into the city movements, new residents arriving from the Metropolitan Area present a similar profile with those who change of dwelling within Barcelona. Meanwhile, the internationalization of the immigratory flows has subtracted intensity to the process of professionalization derived of Metropolitan movements.

Finally, the result of introducing dwelling variables to the residential model of Barcelona's inner city points out that Barcelona's sociodemographic filter allow to leave the city to those who want to satisfy their residential preferences as far as the housing tenancy and dwelling surface are concerned. However, neither the newly arrived population nor those who change residence within Barcelona are able to reproduce the behavior of those who leave the city, and are more willing to live in rented and smaller flats.

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