National Report on the Housing System from a Multi-Level Perspective: Spain

An extract from Deliverable 4.2, '*National Reports on the Housing System from a Multi-Level Perspective'*, of the ReHousIn project

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FOREWORD

This report is an extract from Deliverable 4.2, 'National Reports on the Housing System from a Multi-Level Perspective', of the ReHousIn project, which analyses housing systems in nine European countries, focusing on tenure-policy frameworks and housing supply dynamics.

The full version of the deliverable is available here.

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The ReHousIn project aims to spark innovative policy solutions towards inclusionary and quality housing. To achieve this, it investigates the complex relationship between green transition initiatives and housing inequalities in European urban and rural contexts, and develops innovative policy recommendations for better and context-sensitive integration between environmentally sustainable interventions and socially inclusive housing.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Spain's housing system faces a persistent structural crisis characterized by high commodification, limited social housing, and increasing affordability gaps. Historically rooted in a pro-ownership model, Spain has seen homeownership decline since the 1990s while rental tenure expanded, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis. This shift coincided with the financialization of housing, as austerity policies, foreclosure waves, and the privatization of distressed assets enabled global investment funds and real estate trusts to consolidate large portfolios, accelerating rentier accumulation and deepening inequalities.

Despite the 2023 Right to Housing Law, which introduced rent controls and tenant protections, systemic challenges persist. Social housing represents only about 2% of the national stock, among the lowest in Europe, while speculative dynamics—short-term rentals, seasonal lets, and foreign investment—inflate prices in major cities. By 2025, housing affordability surpassed unemployment as Spaniards' top concern, with 34.1% citing it as the primary issue. Urban centers like Barcelona exemplify these tensions: rents have risen far faster than incomes, and 45% of tenants are cost-burdened. Meanwhile, rural areas face depopulation and vacancy, reinforcing territorial imbalances.

EU Recovery and Resilience Facility funds (€6.8 billion) have driven energy-efficient retrofitting, yet uptake remains slow due to bureaucratic complexity and fragmented governance. Various green renovation programs risk fueling green gentrification and renovictions without robust anti-displacement measures. Similarly, the PERTE de Industrialización de la Vivienda seeks to industrialize construction and deliver 20,000 affordable units annually, addressing bottlenecks such as land scarcity, licensing delays, and labor shortages.

Spain's housing governance is fragmented across national, regional, and municipal levels, generating conflicts over competencies and regulatory strategies. While recent reforms signal a modest shift toward decommodification through public investment, rent regulation, and the mobilization of land and buildings remaining from post-2008 bank bailouts, entrenched market logics and intergenerational wealth inequalities continue to shape housing provision. Reducing housing inequalities in Spain will require coordinated governance, long-term public housing investment, and stronger regulation of speculative practices to ensure that climate and digital transitions do not exacerbate spatial inequality.

The report argues that a just energy transition in Spain will require stronger protections for tenants and permanent social housing strategies. As it stands, energy-efficient renovation, densification, and nature-based solution approaches all risk, to various extents, reproducing spatial injustice under the banner of the green transition.

2 THE HOUSING DEBATE

Since 1991, Spain has experienced a gradual but significant transformation in housing tenure patterns, marked by a slow decline in outright homeownership and a corresponding rise in mortgaged ownership and rental tenure. In 1991, most Spanish households—well over 80%—were homeowners, with the majority owning their homes outright. Over the next three decades, mortgaged homeownership rose sharply as access to credit expanded in the early 2000s, peaking just before the 2008 financial crisis. At the same time, the share of households in rental housing began to grow again after decades of decline, reflecting rising housing costs, more precarious employment, and reduced access to homeownership for younger generations. Social rental housing, however, remained persistently low—hovering around 2–3% of total housing stock—underscoring Spain's historical bias toward ownership and its underdeveloped safety net for low-income renters. These shifts have widened housing inequalities, particularly affecting youth, single-parent households, and migrant renters (IDRA, 2025), who face structural barriers to stable, affordable housing in a market dominated by owner-occupation and limited public provision (see Tables, Appendices). Meanwhile, homeownership has become increasingly out of reach for first-time owner-occupiers.

If we consider major cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, and Málaga, these national trends have been even more pronounced due to the pressures of tourism, financialization, and gentrification. Between 1991 and 2021, the rate of homeownership in Barcelona remained relatively stable at around 68%, but its composition shifted significantly, from predominantly outright ownership to a growing share of mortgaged owners. At the same time, the private rental sector expanded steadily, rising from around 20% in 1991 to over 38% by 2021, driven in part by speculative investment, short and medium-term rentals, and constrained housing supply. Social housing remains critically low, with publicly owned units making up just over 1.5% of the city's housing stock, with cooperative and nonprofit housing experiencing some marginal growth. This dynamic has fueled spatial segregation and affordability crises, disproportionately impacting low-income households. Despite recent efforts to expand public housing and regulate rents, the overall tenure structure continues to reflect and reinforce deepening inequalities in access, stability, and housing quality.

The politics of housing, particularly at the municipal level, were central to a political shift in Spain since 2009: The founding of the Platform for the Mortgage Affected (PAH) in 2009 galvanized grassroots resistance against evictions during Spain's housing crisis, transforming housing into a central political issue. This movement propelled its spokesperson, Ada Colau, to the mayoralty of Barcelona under the political platform Barcelona En Comú (Barcelona in Common) from 2015 to 2023, marking a shift toward municipalist governance focused on the "right to housing" as a core policy agenda. At the level of the Spanish state, the Comunes, as part of the left-wing alliance Unidas Podemos (Together We Can), leveraged their role in a government coalition with the PSOE to make housing a legislative priority and were instrumental in drafting and negotiating the 2023 Right to Housing Law. By framing housing as a right enshrined under the Spanish constitution rather than as a commodity, this leftist alliance pushed the PSOE toward adopting stronger regulatory mechanisms targeting property speculation and addressing Spain's affordability crisis. While mortgage foreclosures remain an important political question, in recent years, it has been organizations of renters that have played a larger role in activism and political organizing in Spain, particularly the various regional renters' unions that have emerged and joined in the negotiations surrounding the 2023 Right to Housing Law.

Since December 2024, housing has become the top concern for Spaniards. According to Spain's official polling institution, the Center for Sociological Investigations, 34.1% of respondents cite housing as the main issue by February 2025, near the 2007 housing crisis peak (CIS, 2025). Affordability now surpasses unemployment and political instability. The EU has urged Spain to address a 600,000-unit housing shortage (Banco de España, 2024), and in April 2025, the Spanish government pledged €1.3 billion in EU funds to industrialize construction through prefabrication and advance public-private partnerships.

Housing policy debates center on demographic pressures (aging population, low birth rates, migration), territorial imbalance, the increasing centrality of private equity in the financialization of housing, and the proliferation of short-term rentals in tourist hubs. This is exacerbated by a migratory inversion, in which high proportions of floating populations in major cities are highly qualified foreign residents born outside of Spain, adding complexity to the historical migration-housing nexus that has defined urban growth and led to the decline of many rural areas in the country since the Francisco Franco regime. For example, according to the municipal register, 26% of the population of Barcelona are foreign nationals (considerably higher among those aged 20-39), rising 5.7% in one year, the majority of them highly qualified.

Homeownership, the centerpiece of housing policy and cultural aspirations since the Franco era, is increasingly inaccessible for the middle class. Since 2023, over 50% of home purchases have been without mortgages, driven by investors. By early 2025, only 14% of mortgages offered by Spanish banks were for primary residences (de las Heras, 2025). Young people, often stuck living with parents into their 30s and beyond, face precarious jobs and soaring urban rents, while elderly renters find themselves susceptible to renovictions. Meanwhile, cities attract remote-working international migrants, aided by national programs like the Digital Nomad Visa, the Golden Visa, and tax incentives (Beckham Law), fueling resentment among locals.

Affordable rentals are scarce in cities like Barcelona and Madrid. Spain's post-2008 housing market saw heavy foreign investment, especially from real estate investment trusts (SOCIMIs) and private equity firms (known colloquially as "vulture funds") purchasing bank-owned properties at discounted rates. Small-scale investors also contribute via second-home rentals. Transnational gentrification is driven by global mobility and favorable tax policies, displacing low-income residents and reshaping urban neighborhoods.

Tourist rentals via Airbnb and similar platforms have contributed to housing scarcity. In major cities and coastal towns, thousands of homes are removed from the rental market for tourism. Though cities—particularly Barcelona—have implemented some regulations, enforcement is weak, and national policy is only beginning to catch up. Municipalities bear responsibility but often lack legal tools, creating tensions within Spain's fragmented governance system.

While urban centers have become prohibitively expensive in relation to wages, rural Spain has low housing costs but faces depopulation and a lack of economic opportunities. Over 70% of municipalities have fewer than 1,000 residents, with many experiencing population decline.

Vacancy rates exceed 30% in many areas, highlighting unbalanced development. The discourse contrasting “emptied Spain” and over-touristed major cities remains central to political debates in Spain, with “left-behind” regions susceptible to rightward political shifts and distrust in green transition measures (Rodríguez-Pose and Bartalucci, 2024).

Efforts to boost social housing face obstacles. Spain’s public housing stock is very low by European standards, at around 2%. Despite notable recent pushes, national, regional, and local plans aim to construct social housing on public land but face bureaucratic, legal, and coordination challenges. Quality, affordability, and social equity concerns persist, especially with public-private partnerships. In recent years, innovations have come in the form of “public-commons partnerships” (Bianchi, 2024), such as publicly subsidized cooperative housing development and increasing roles for the non-profit sector in housing provision, particularly in Catalonia, but this has not occurred at a scale to make a major impact on the overall housing market.

Governance in Spain is particularly complex because housing is regionally devolved, but key fiscal and legal tools remain central. Conflicts arise when different parties govern each level, and their willingness to acquiesce to the 2023 Spanish Right to Housing Law. Along with social movements such as renters’ unions, EU pressure is increasing: Spain is urged to boost affordable housing, reform taxes, and streamline permits, but reforms often lack local legitimacy and specificity.

In June 2025, the European Commission warned that Spain’s housing crisis threatens economic growth. Recommendations include boosting social housing, streamlining permits, and shifting taxes. Vulnerable populations—non-EU nationals, disabled people, and low-skilled workers—are most affected. The currently governing Socialist Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) supports affordable housing, but disagreements at different political scales remain over funding and mechanisms. In Catalonia, municipalities are identifying land and using legal tools to reclaim housing for public use, and have been serving as a testing ground for many of the policies devised to attempt to address the housing crisis. This has principally occurred through the implementation of the price limits and tenant protections of the 2023 Spanish Housing Law, which has led to a reduction of long-term rental costs but also a major reduction in supply, strategic vacancies, and a shift to unregulated sub-markets (seasonal leases of 1-11 months, rental of individual rooms, etc.). In Spain as a whole, short-term and seasonal lets are 35% more profitable for landlords than traditional long-term leases, according to the most recent tax declaration data (Yebra and Jara, 2025). As of June 2025, seasonal rentals account for 11% of call contracts signed in Catalonia, with figures considerably higher in the Barcelona metropolitan area (Rigol, 2025).

Housing inequality reflects broader structural issues in Spain. Key among those is delayed youth emancipation, foreign capital and tourism pressure on the housing market, gentrification, and limited public housing converging into a fragmented, investor-driven system. Addressing this requires coordinated governance, long-term investment, legal reform, and a rights-based approach to housing.

3 HOW THE HOUSING SYSTEM HAS CHANGED

3.1 Q1: Degree of commodification

I. What is the direction of travel of the national/local housing system: are these becoming more de-commodified (universalist) or re-commodified (residualist) over time?

In the scope of the time frame under consideration in this study, the national and local housing systems have followed a relatively steady path toward residualism: the emphasis on homeownership—along with tax benefits—has shifted toward policies promoting rental housing and gradually supporting tenants' rights and security of tenure. Homeownership has largely been de-emphasized, aside from some subsidies for younger, first-time purchasers in some autonomous communities, while renting has become more dominant, along with more regulation of rental contracts and a shift toward a renter model of social housing provision. However, both the dominant models of promoting owner occupation or rental housing provision have occurred predominantly along residualist lines. Evidence of this re-commodification over time is the decline of social housing protections through Official Protection Housing (VPO), liberalization of renters' protections and land use planning toward market-driven housing development, the financialization of housing in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, and the increasing domination of institutional investors over owner-occupiers in home purchase. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, austerity-driven retrenchment of public housing policies and the large-scale privatization of foreclosed assets created fertile ground for speculative investment. This enabled global financial actors—such as private equity funds and Real Estate Investment Trusts (in Spanish, SOCIMIs)—to transform housing into a high-yield financial asset, accelerating its commodification and deepening housing inequalities in the urban market. High levels of mortgage defaults and decreased accessibility to credit following the crisis have led to an increase in people living in rented accommodations, with skyrocketing cost burdens in recent years, particularly in major cities. Eviction moratoria and mortgage forbearances during the Covid pandemic helped to partially avoid a broader catastrophe, and, as previously mentioned, the influence of the leftist Podemos party in its government coalition with the PSOE led to the introduction of housing measures (price caps, longer leases, public housing construction) that represent an ambitious, but limited, shift toward housing decommodification.

The role of the SAREB1 is illustrative of housing commodification and financialization in the wake of the 2008 crisis, with the "bad bank" absorbing distressed real estate assets from

[1] SAREB (Sociedad de Gestión de Activos Procedentes de la Reestructuración Bancaria) is Spain's state-backed "bad bank," created in 2012 to manage and sell distressed real estate and financial

bailed-out banks, a process that was financed almost completely by public funds, and financial losses were socialized while private actors were the greatest beneficiaries. SAREB's rental housing assets were initially managed by private equity firms such as Blackstone. In 2022, SAREB was recognized as having a "social mandate" through a shift that made the state its primary owner. García-Lamarca's argument (2017) that the SAREB portfolio should be treated as a public resource directed to social housing initiatives—reclaiming the social function of housing from financialization—was eventually accepted by the Spanish state, but not until after many of the most desirable housing assets had been auctioned off to institutional and individual investors. Elements of the current PSOE leadership acknowledge that the 50 billion euro bailout of Spanish banks was a lost opportunity to provide accessible housing, with the social mandate of the state becoming the majority stakeholder seen as a turning point in "reversing and restoring the justice that should have been achieved in 2012" (Noriega, 2025).

Since 2023, through the Right to Housing Law, the Spanish state and (some) autonomous communities (Catalonia, Navarra, Basque Country) have made major advances in promoting tenants' rights, controlling rental prices, mobilizing SAREB properties toward social rentals, and increasing the public provision of new social rental housing. Indeed, the 40,000 remaining housing units of SAREB and 2,400 vacant or partially constructed lots (with capacity to construct another 55,000 units) were transferred to a publicly-owned company managed by the Public Business Entity for Land (SEPES), a state-owned company under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Agenda (MIVAU), in July 2025. The portfolio is worth an estimated 5.9 billion Euros. Within this are included the 7,500 housing units that SAREB offers as social rentals. Sepes has, until now, played a relatively minor role in residential densification through preparing former industrial land for residential redevelopment, then selling the land. The Spanish government is cautious to emphasize that SEPES will manage former SAREB properties not as social housing per se, but as permanently protected affordable housing with minimum income requirements, with the goal of "emphasizing that affordable housing is profitable, also for the private sector" (Noriega, 2025). All SEPES units will be for rental. Its first projects, of 1,600 units, will be financed and developed by the public company itself, but with the aim of starting public-private partnerships by the end of 2025. The model to be followed is expected to be one in which surface rights and public works concessions will be passed on to private developers, with agreement that the housing remains publicly owned after a defined period. Developers are expected to receive a 6-10% return on investment. Nevertheless, this is a major shift, as SAREB's goal was to sell these homes, which have now been transferred to state ownership, becoming available for a combination of social, accessible, and affordable rentals, with prices below the market and a commitment that costs will not exceed 30% of household incomes. There is a further element of political strategy involved in the implementation of SEPES' housing development, as funds will initially be almost exclusively

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assets transferred from troubled banks during the financial crisis. Originally privately operated with public oversight, it became fully state-owned in 2022 and now holds a significant portfolio of residential properties, some of which have been proposed for use as public or social housing.

focused on autonomous communities where regional governments have put into place Right to Housing Law protections, namely the designation of tense rental market areas.

While the Spanish government has recently emphasized the need for both regulation and an increase of affordable housing supply—with the President Pedro Sánchez pledging the creation of 1.5 million new affordable housing units in December of 2014—legal loopholes around seasonal rentals2 and the subdivision of flats into individual bedroom leases—important secondary markets for migrants in large cities—would need to be closed, as they are currently being exploited en masse by landlords and real estate investors. So far, the main actions made in this regard have been the Spanish government's 2025 law requiring all short-term and seasonal lets to be registered with the government, and for a licensing number to be posted on online listings to reduce fraud. Addressing these issues, along with the continued construction of public rental housing in major metropolitan areas, would be key steps toward a more universalist housing regime. Other programs, such as recently instated rental and home purchase subsidies for young people in Catalonia, serve to create a more generationally equitable housing system, while at the same time leaving a residualist system largely intact.

A key question is what will happen with the housing units that were constructed in the developmentalist property boom under Francoism (1950s-70s)—when many households accumulated properties as homeowners—through intergenerational wealth transfer. Catalonia, Valencia, the Basque Country, and Navarra have revised the rules for VPO, in which new units will remain protected in perpetuity, but as of yet, there has been little effort to retain VPO properties as affordable housing after their protections expire. On a massive scale, affordable multi-family housing complexes (built at considerable public expense) are being transferred to the open market. As VPO expirations have long outpaced the construction of, and conversion to, social housing units, this implies that current measures toward housing decommodification are insufficient to counteract a net decline of affordable housing as VPO protections expire.

Intergenerational wealth transfer (whether through continued family use of a property, its rental, its sale, or its vacancy) plays a key role in a society still dominated by homeowners across the socio-economic spectrum, and in which owning rental properties is considered one of the most profitable modes of investment—particularly in major cities, provincial capitals, and areas with strong second-home and tourist markets. There is a considerable imbalance between inheritors of residential properties in the many "left-behind" areas of Spain, where inheritance may result in financial burden and abandonment, and those who inherit properties in tense housing markets. Intergenerational conflicts are driven by the realization that many younger people will not become property owners, a phenomenon labeled "generation rent"

[2] In the Spanish legal framework, vacation rentals are for less than one month and may subject to regulations, while seasonal rentals (1-11 months) and the rental of individual bedrooms remain unregulated, creating unregulated, largely "a-legal" leases.

(Institut de Recerca Urbana de Barcelona, 2023). Despite social movements' targeting of foreign private equity funds as responsible for the current housing crisis since post-2008 bank bailouts created strong incentives to dispose of distressed properties, there is also a strong culture of rentismo popular (popular rentierism) in Spanish society, in which acquiring rental properties is a key, culturally-ingrained strategy for wealth generation as reliable, or more so, than the Spanish stock exchange (Carmona Pascual, 2022).

The central role of intergenerational wealth transfer also influences autonomous communities' policies toward inheritance. According to Eurostat studies on inheritance trends, 15-20% of Spaniards reside in properties inherited through their family: this is higher in rural and small towns and lower in major cities. This trend, particularly in rural areas, leads to a stock of affordable housing that remains decommodified (as it does not enter the market). However, a key challenge is that taxes on inherited properties in areas of low market demand—much of the rural interior of the country and the "emptied Spain"—means that properties are often a financial burden, rather than an asset, for their inheritors. In many cases, this leads to vacancy and abandonment in areas with declining or stagnating populations.

The increasing market share of rental housing in major metropolitan and tourism-dominated areas—as well as speculation in the sale market—is a step toward the greater commodification of housing, with high rates of migration since the 1990s filling the gap for low birth rates.

The changing approaches toward the disposal of distressed properties acquired by SAREB as an indicator of a gradual, uneven paradigm shift from a residualist to a universalist mode, but not a fully decommodified one. For example, the state is gradually moving toward a model in which public bodies (autonomous communities or municipalities) have the right of first refusal when properties owned by large private investors enter the market: the new strategy is to acquire housing estates and convert them to public rental housing, allowing the state to provide new social rentals faster than they would be able to build them. Build-to-let investors are compelled to exit the market because of rent caps in tense housing markets where the Housing Law regulations have been implemented. Another example of an attempt to create permanent VPO housing—though it might be a stretch to call it decommodification—is the Catalan government's 2025 Emancipation Loans, granting interest-free loans to first-time buyers under 35, encouraging the conversion of purchased homes to permanent VPO.

Thus, we can see that the path change is developing toward a dual market, in which housing continues a path toward commodification while at the same time, the state plays a more active role in protecting tenants and providing de-commodified housing, while leaving a speculation-led model largely intact. If seasonal lets are most stringently regulated, in places like Catalonia that have implemented rent controls, this will continue to result in inflated sale prices: prices have already surpassed 2008 levels in Barcelona and are projected to continue doing so, driven largely by strong demand from foreign investors.

There are key limits to what the Spanish state may do to control or coordinate these dynamics since autonomous communities have the right to elect whether they apply certain elements of the Housing Law, such as "tense zone" protections, and the majority of autonomous communities have elected not to apply them. Most regions governed by the conservative Popular Party—Madrid, Galicia, Murcia, Cantabria, Andalucía, and the Balearic Islands—have refused to declare tense zones or rent caps, citing concerns about market distortion, administrative burden, or jurisdictional conflict. This speaks to the limitations of top-down policies toward greater rights of tenants within a fragmented system of governance.

II. Are there structural divergences (tensions) between the direction of travel (universalist - residualist) of the national housing system and the local housing system? (For example, one fostering re-commodification, the other preventing it?)

Historically, there have been structural diversions between Catalonia and the Spanish state, and also between the municipality of Barcelona and Catalonia. Catalonia, and particularly Barcelona, has tended to spearhead more de-commodification efforts than the Spanish state as a whole, evidenced by autonomous community housing policy (2007 Catalan Right to Housing Law) and Barcelona's various attempts in the regulation of private rentals and prioritization of tenant protections. This may be partially explained by demands for greater devolution of powers or Catalan independence, but also reflects that metropolitan Barcelona has experienced phases of housing crises since the early 2000s.

Recent years have seen conflicts, with Catalonia passing various measures toward the de-commodification of housing, including a rent control law (in place 2020-2022), which led to an average rent reduction of 3% (28 Euros monthly), but was overturned by the Spanish constitutional court (OH-B, 2022).

The 2023 Spanish Right to Housing Law was greatly influenced by earlier experiments in Catalonia, even if Spanish law is weaker in regulating private rentals. We can also consider debates within the same political parties at various scales—for example, though Catalonia is currently governed by the same party as the Spanish state—the Catalan Socialist Party (PSC)—the Catalan branch of the PSOE—abstained from a Catalan parliament vote which would have placed greater regulations on temporary rentals, effectively vetoing the measure and highlighting the parties historical alliances with the real estate lobby.

If we consider the debates between different spatial scales, even within the PSOE, there are divergences between directions of travel. For example, when the 2023 Right to Housing Law was being written, various research interviewees from the ReHousIn project explained that the Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Agenda vocally opted to leave seasonal lets unregulated as a pressure relief valve to appease Spanish real estate interests. At the local level, current Barcelona mayor Jaume Collboni campaigned on and sought to enact a modification of a local regulation requiring developers to provide 30% of new units as affordable housing in new developments or buildings undergoing major renovations. This was first framed as abandoning this approach outright due to its perceived impact of slowing new development, then later reduced to loosening regulations so developers could build affordable housing at the same volume on other sites. This can be interpreted as a push toward re-commodication, though it was recently abandoned because the center-right Catalan independentist party Junts was unwilling to endorse the modification (Lamelas, 2025).

Like the the original Catalan rent control law, the implementation of the Spanish law in Catalonia brought long-term rental prices down, in the case of the latter by approximately 6% (Jofre-Monseny et al., 2023). However, at the same time, property owners took many residential units off the market or shifted from long-term to seasonal lease structures, greatly reducing the supply of long-term residential rentals.

Since 2023, there has been a general agreement between the local housing system (in Metro Barcelona and Catalonia) and the Spanish state in Madrid, though the state is in stark conflict with the autonomous community and municipality of Madrid, governed by the right-wing Popular Party. This can be explained, in part, because as of 2024, the Spanish state, the Catalan government, and Barcelona City Hall are all governed by the Socialist Party (PSOE and PSC).

Catalonia has been a pioneer in the regulation of rental properties under the Spanish Right to Housing Law, followed by the Basque Country and Navarra. This is challenging because competencies held at different levels of the state create structural divergences: municipalities are predominantly responsible for urban planning, land use regulation, and issuing construction permits. Some municipalities can also give rent subsidies and build their own public housing. Autonomous communities only have competencies in normative terms, such as creating legal definitions of “protected housing” and whether/how it can eventually be privatized (or not). The regulation of tourist rentals is the competency of both autonomous communities and local governments, though the state appears to be starting to intervene. The state, for its part, has the main competencies of civil regulations through the Urban Rent Law, the Housing Law, and various elements of urban planning and economic activities. It is also a key actor in creating housing plans and financing autonomous communities, and its role has increased greatly in recent years.

While approaches to housing and land use policy at the level of the Spanish state and certain regions represent elements of de-commodification within an overall framework maintaining elements of neoliberalism, in regions governed by the conservative Popular Party—the Community of Madrid, Andalusia, the Canary Islands, the Balearic Islands, Extremadura, and Murcia—are taking a more deregulatory path that avoids implementing tenant protections and state-led land provision for subsidized rental housing production. Rather, autonomous communities are following the lead of the Community of Madrid, whose plan to address the housing crisis is liberalizing land use planning regulations so that housing—including protected housing—can be built on land which has been zoned for other purposes in an expedited fashion (Santamarina, 2025), based on the argument that the housing crisis is, foremost, an issue of undersupply.

For Spain to achieve a more decommodified housing system, robust regulation of rental properties (and, especially, vacation and seasonal rentals) would need to be implemented, and to catch up with the rest of Europe in terms of housing justice requires a major push toward the construction of, or conversion of buildings to, public and social housing. Currently, rent regulations function as a patch but do not address supply-side issues in a country where 98% of housing units remain in private hands.

III. What synergies and/ or conflicts exist between the vertical and horizontal governance levels?

We can point to shared funding of housing plans, like the State Housing Plan, which is adapted by autonomous communities according to their housing needs. EU funds have also been essential in this regard, especially EU NextGen funds, as they have been distributed by the State to autonomous communities for social housing and building refurbishment. In Catalonia, there are a variety of joint housing initiatives, such as the Barcelona Housing Consortium, a collaboration between the Catalan government and Barcelona's city hall. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were high levels of coordination between government institutions at different levels, including protecting housing for the economically vulnerable (against evictions and mortgage foreclosures, enhanced unemployment benefits, etc.).

Discordances between the Spanish state and the Generalitat (the Catalan regional government)—even between the same political party—have already been mentioned. At times, depending on the political balance, there are also conflicts between the municipal government of Barcelona and the autonomous community government. This often regards competency disputes or funding constraints, pitting local, regional, and national governments against one another. Barcelona has frequently criticized the Catalan Government—often dominated by more conservative parties than the city itself—for inadequately funding and supporting social and affordable housing initiatives. The Catalan Government has been slow in delivering promised funds, including renters' subsidies. Under Mayor Ada Colau, the city highlighted discrepancies in Catalonia's housing budget, which is well below the European Union average. The city administration under Colau called for strong regulatory frameworks to control rental prices, with the Catalan Government taking a more cautious approach to regulation. Furthermore, Barcelona City Hall had taken an aggressive approach toward expropriating vacant properties and fining large landlords for leaving homes unoccupied, measures that the Catalan government has been slower to adopt (this was part of the center-left independentist Republican Left party's platform last year, though they lost the power of the Generalitat). Barcelona has been more active in recent years in delivering SR housing within the city itself—including expropriating vacant land—while the Generalitat has been slower to deliver on pledges to construct public housing. This is happening more now, largely due to funding injections from the Spanish state and the European Union, and the Catalan government's pledge to create 50,000 social housing units by 2030.

In current debates around the housing crisis in Barcelona, public-private organizations such as the Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan (PEMB) are calling for greater collaboration between the Catalan government, the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, municipalities, and the private sector. They argue that the housing policy needs to scale up from the metropolitan area (36 municipalities) to the "second metropolitan ring", or Barcelona region, with rent regulations, the mobilization of empty properties, and the provision of public land for housing co-operatives as "meanwhile" approach, while the construction of gradually social housing is scaled up. This would be essential to construct the projected 475,000 new homes in the metropolitan region by 2050, as called for by the recently approved Metropolitan Plan.

In the period in focus, the Generalitat has consistently claimed that the Spanish state has underfunded affordable housing programs and that Catalonia does not receive funds proportionate to its population size and housing challenges. In 2022, the Catalan Government accused the Spanish government of failing to adequately fund its portion of rental subsidies under the State Housing Plan. The most serious conflict was the overturning of the 2020 Catalan Rent Control Law: while this was determined in a constitutional court rather than in a political body, the challenge was made by the Spanish government itself. The same happened with previous attempts of the Generalitat to expropriate vacant properties owned by banks for social housing. While Catalonia's claims for greater autonomy cannot be separated from broader demands of the independentist movement and its key parties, which factor into nearly all political calculations between the Spanish state and Catalonia, the Catalan government has typically taken a stronger stance toward the decommodification of housing than the Spanish state.

3.2 Q2: Impact of exogenous macro-trends, policies, and crises: What have been the events that really made a change in each tenure?

I. *To what extent are processes of de-commodification and re-commodification in each housing system driven by, or respond to, the identified exogenous macro-trends (e.g. EU policies / welfare restructuring) and crises (e.g. financial crisis, housing affordability crisis)?*

Housing—and especially public and private rental housing—is at the forefront of national political agendas in contemporary Spain. The dynamics of exogenous macro-trends have led to various processes of de- and recommodification of housing during the period in question, unfolding through policy shifts and structural economic changes.

Entering the European Union (in 1986), less than a decade after the transition to democracy and the opening of the Spanish economy, has had several implications for the commodification and decommodification of housing. On the one hand, Spain's membership in the EU provided access to various EU funding mechanisms that have been used to finance the construction of social and affordable housing. The EU has also funded infrastructure projects that have indirectly impacted housing markets (transport, utilities, urban redevelopment), boosting housing demand. However, on the other hand, entering the EU has led to the liberalization of the housing market, with EU rules encouraging increased competition, deregulation, and free flow of capital (along with the freedom of movement of people).

The commodification of housing in Spain was spurred by endogenous, neoliberal housing reforms such as the 1985 Boyer Degree (updated in 1992) which did away with tenant protection (price freezes and security of tenure), Spain's entry into the European Economic Area, and its adherence to the European Stability Pact (1992) further promoted fiscal austerity measures and the liberalization of the housing market. Integration into the EU led to an influx of foreign investment in Spain’s housing sector, particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s, and then again after the 2008 housing crisis. This has led to Spain being an attractive market for foreign investors in real estate. The increased availability of capital and the liberalization of lending practices because of market liberalization and foreign investment led to a housing boom in the 2000s, mostly for the commodified OO market.

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the commodification of housing could be said to have increased, but in a different form: a shift from owner occupation toward the growth of the buy-to-let market, the entry of international institutional investors from the EU and beyond, and the increase in the financialized private residential rental market. If we consider that EU membership has imposed restrictions on Spain’s ability to implement national housing policies, this indirectly led to a reduction in state intervention in the market to comply with EU public procurement and competition rules. The European Commission’s state aid rules have also placed limits on large-scale public housing programs and their target populations, especially in terms of subsidized rental housing, while the EU principles of market competition have also placed in jeopardy elements of rent control laws and regulations around seasonal and vacation rentals in recent years. Overall, a case could be made that entering the EU had an overall impact of further commodifying the housing market.

We can also consider the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath concerning credit access policies of the European Central Bank, as well as the reflection of a broader failure to regulate financial capital worldwide. Where the lead-up to the crisis was facilitated by easily accessible credit, speculation, and overleveraged developers with an emphasis on owner-occupied, commodified housing, the response to the crisis in Spain was the acceleration of housing financialization, capitalized upon by national banks and international investment funds. Rentiership becomes more central to modes of capital accumulation, with financial institutions purchasing distressed properties at highly discounted rates to convert them to rental properties. The creation of the SAREB turned distressed real estate assets into financial instruments and investment assets, seeing the rise of corporate landlords (both national and international), increased tenant evictions, and increased speculative vacancy. The second-hand housing market became ripe for speculation, while we also saw the emergence of build-to-rent schemes and SOCIMIs as financial instruments. This commodification of housing has greatly contributed to the ongoing affordability crisis, worsened by mass tourism and by short-term and seasonal rentals to tourists and digital nomads in major cities and coastal tourism areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered some decommodification measures in Spain, some temporary and some lasting. There were, for example, eviction moratoria and mortgage forbearances, though this did not so much impact commodification as tenants’ rights. In major cities, there was a partial return of some vacation rentals to the long-term market that might not have happened without the pandemic’s impacts on mass tourism. These measures, however, were reactive and temporary, not leading to a longer-term decommodification shift.

In recent years, EU structural funds—particularly NextGen funds—have directly impacted Spain’s housing strategies. In some ways, this has resulted in the increased production of decommodified housing through the promotion of new VPOs and cooperative housing developments. However, EU policies have also limited the scope of subsidized housing by targeting it only to lower-income groups, as opposed to a more universalist approach. In this sense, EU policies uphold commodification by focusing specifically on needs-based housing assistance with heavy involvement of the private market.

The City of Barcelona also relies upon European Union finance for the social housing it has constructed in the past decade: Between 2017 and 2025, the city council has accessed 190M€ in European Investment Bank (EIB) financing for the construction of approximately 2,700 public rental housing units (Mayors for Housing, 2025), circumventing a political climate when little public housing initiatives were happening at the state or regional level. Considering that 10,000 people entered the lottery to access 201 new affordable housing units in a new building next to the new the new Glòries Park in Barcelona, access to public and affordable housing remains incredibly competitive in the city.

In summation, while Spain is in the midst of a paradigm shift in housing policy since the 2023 Right to Housing Law, its housing system continues to follow a path-dependent trajectory of commodification deeply rooted in the Franco era and neoliberal reforms since the 1980s, and a net loss of public housing units. It appears that the widespread reforms since 2023 will lead to a modest shift toward decommodification of the rental housing market through increased tenant protections and the construction of new social housing, but it is unclear to what extent this will rein in housing speculation, price inflation, and VPO expiration, as market forces still dominate.

If we consider specifically the transfer of SAREB properties to a state-owned land company to create affordable housing, which could be considered a step toward the creation of social housing, we nevertheless witness a continued path toward housing commodification, albeit through a modality that offers some benefits to tenants, particularly those of the middle classes. This is because, instead of removing these assets entirely from speculative markets, the operation leaves their status as financial products intact through keeping them as mechanisms prioritizing debt recovery over the imperative for social housing that prioritizes a broader spectrum of society, including lower-income people. The “near cost-neutral” approach to the state management of SAREB properties sidesteps possibilities toward deeper housing reforms prioritizing social, rather than affordable, housing. Thus, rather than decommodification, the SAREB deal perpetuates the financializing logic that turned homes into tradeable assets during the post-2008 financial crisis through market-driven management in the form of a state-owned company, reinforcing the role of housing as a commodity. As the declared objective of this approach is to increase the supply of protected housing as a mechanism to drive the lowering—or containment—of current real estate prices, and the governments’ plan to create “its own Idealista” (referring to the main online real estate platform in Spain), the approach is one of extending, rather than containing, the market logic of housing provision.

3.3 Q3: Capacity to filter crises: how does each housing system respond to macro-events and crises?

I. *What is the capacity of the local and national housing system to provide affordable housing? Identify the key obstacles to the production of affordable* *housing and the key enablers of the production of affordable housing, in both the national and local housing systems.*

The ability of Barcelona's local housing system to deliver affordable housing is currently constrained by a set of structural imbalances, policy limitations, and external pressures that have accumulated over the past two decades. Despite recent regulatory reforms and intensified monitoring of housing market trends, the city continues to struggle to meet the needs of its low- and middle-income households. An April 2025 report (OH-B, 2025) reveals that affordability challenges are deeply embedded in the urban housing landscape, where demand has consistently outpaced supply, and policy responses have not yet closed the gap.

One of the most pressing issues facing Barcelona's housing system is the persistent misalignment between income levels and housing costs. Data from the OH-B shows that between 2000 and 2023, household incomes increased by less than half the rate of average rents. This affordability gap has meant that a growing proportion of tenants are experiencing housing cost overburden, defined as spending more than 40% of household income on rent. In 2023, nearly 45% of market-rate renters in Barcelona fell into this category. The situation is particularly acute among younger residents, migrants, and single-parent households, who are disproportionately affected by high rental costs and insecure tenure.

The origins of this crisis can be traced not only to market dynamics but also to long-standing underinvestment in public housing infrastructure. At present, social rental housing accounts for only 2% of the housing stock in Barcelona, the same as the national average.

The supply side of the housing system has not kept pace with demand. While the population of Barcelona has grown steadily over the past two decades—driven by immigration, demographic shifts, and lifestyle changes—new housing construction has lagged far behind. The number of completed residential units has remained stagnant, and land scarcity in urban cores has further constrained development. The result is a tightening of available units, especially for long-term rentals. Overcrowding is on the rise, with a significant increase in the number of "multi-household" units, where more than one family shares a single dwelling. This trend reflects not only a housing shortage but also the growing unaffordability of living independently in the city.

Another factor distorting the local housing market is the proliferation of short-term and seasonal rentals. Since the rise of platforms like Airbnb, the share of housing used for tourism-related purposes has expanded rapidly. The 2025 OH-B report notes that over 10,000 tourist apartments are legally operating in Barcelona, and this number does not account for illegal or unregistered units. These apartments, concentrated in central and coastal neighborhoods, exert upward pressure on rents by reducing the supply of homes available for autochthonous residents. The trend has been further complicated by a surge in temporary rental contracts—leases that fall outside the scope of rent control regulation. In Q4 2024, seasonal rentals made up over a quarter of all new contracts in the city, highlighting a growing shift by property owners to bypass price caps and maximize returns.

The implementation of rental regulation in March 2024 marked a significant shift in housing policy at the regional level. Under the framework of Spain's 2023 Housing Law, areas designated as "stressed residential markets," including Barcelona, are subject to controls on rent increases. New leases must be linked either to the previous contract's rent or to a benchmark index established by the Generalitat de Catalunya. The initial impact has been measurable: Accounding to the Catalan Land and Housing Institute, by Q1of 2025, the average rent for new contracts had fallen by 8.9% in Barcelona and 4.7% in stressed residential market areas in Catalonia compared to the same time the previous year This contrasts with years of steady increases and indicates that the regulatory measures are beginning to moderate market dynamics. However, there has also been a 52% increase in new temporary contracts (short-term and seasonal) in Catalonia, demonstrating landlords' tactical shift toward these lease structures and reducing the supply of long-term rentals (Rigol, 2025).

Price caps alone do not address the root causes of the crisis. Landlords retain considerable flexibility in how, to whom, and for how long they lease their properties. Enforcement remains a challenge, and loopholes in the system can lead to underreporting or misclassification of contracts. While some property owners have taken advantage of new tax incentives—such as the 90% income tax deduction available to those who reduce rents by 5%—many remain skeptical of state intervention and prefer to hold or sell properties—or convert them to short-term or seasonal rentals in major cities with tourist pressure—rather than lease them under regulated conditions.

At the national level, several initiatives aim to increase the volume of affordable housing. One of the most ambitious is the Strategic Project for the Industrialization of Housing (PERTE), launched with EU recovery funding. This program targets the construction of 20,000 affordable homes per year through modular and prefabricated building methods. It seeks to streamline the development process, reduce costs, and overcome the bottlenecks of traditional construction. However, its success will depend on local cooperation, land availability, and sustained financial backing.

Despite these obstacles, there are enablers within the system that could support the long-term production of affordable housing. Barcelona benefits from a robust institutional framework for data collection and policy evaluation. Especially under the citizen municipalist Ada Colau's mayoralty (2015-2023), the municipality has also taken steps to regulate tourism rentals more aggressively, impose penalties for non-compliance, and protect tenants from displacement.

Civil society organizations, housing cooperatives, and community land trusts are playing a growing role in expanding non-market housing alternatives. These models, though small in scale, provide a template for more inclusive and participatory approaches to urban housing. They offer a counter-narrative to speculative development and could serve as a foundation for broader reform if adequately supported by public policy.

The capacity of the housing system in Barcelona to deliver affordable housing remains constrained by structural imbalances, insufficient supply, and market pressures exacerbated by tourism and speculation. Recent policy measures—including rent controls, tax incentives, and national investment programs—represent important steps toward mitigation, but they must be part of a more comprehensive strategy. This would require deeper coordination between national, regional, and local governments; increased investment in public and social housing; and stronger protections against the financialization of housing.

II. How have the identified crises and macro-trends affected the capacity of these housing systems to provide affordable housing?

The housing system in Barcelona—mirroring broader national dynamics—has been severely challenged in recent decades by a convergence of crises and macro-trends that have eroded its capacity to provide affordable housing. A sustained housing affordability crisis has taken root, characterized by the structural divergence between average household incomes and housing costs. According to the OH-B, from 2000 to 2023, household incomes increased by 84%, while average rental prices rose by 178%, and the price of second-hand housing by 165%. This affordability gap has become particularly acute in the rental sector, where a growing segment of the population has been priced out of ownership due to tighter credit conditions and rising purchase costs, thus increasing dependence on rental housing.

A further challenge lies in the changing dynamics of the rental market itself. Since 2019, legal reforms at the national level have extended the minimum duration of rental contracts from three to five or seven years, depending on the type of landlord. While this has increased housing stability for tenants and reduced evictions, it has also led to a notable decline in rental turnover. With fewer tenants moving and landlords taking properties off the rental market or shifting to seasonal let arrangements, the number of new rental contracts has dropped significantly—by over 20% since early 2022—potentially limiting market flexibility and reinforcing supply constraints, while at the same time providing renters who have long-term leases with more security.

III. What challenges have the state and non-profit sector faced, in the light of recent crises (e.g. 2008 GFC, Covid emergency interventions)?

A key challenge is that a great deal of private developers went out of business in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, leaving a greatly reduced number of large developers with the capacity to build at a large scale. Now that the Spanish state and some regional governments are emphasizing building large-scale social housing complexes, this is perceived by policymakers as only possible through increased partnership with these large national firms and the entry of new firms with European finance capital.

The key Spanish state intervention into the construction sector has been the 2025 introduction of the PERTE, which is designed to address various barriers limiting the speed and agility of housing construction, including the scarcity of buildable land in many metropolitan areas, slow bureaucratic licensing, increasing construction costs, and a shorage of qualified construction labor as the result of a prolonged decline in new-build development since 2008. The construction sector of Spain, typically described as low-productivity and under-industrialized, is the target of this plan, which commits 1.3 billion euros in public funding—leveraging private investment—toward industrialized, modular housing production, reducing build times by 20–60% and boosting sector productivity.

4 CONCERNS REGARDING THE GREEN-HOUSING NEXUS

Energy Efficient Retrofit

The structural underpinning of Spain's housing crisis has much to do with the dynamics of assetization- the transformation of housing into an asset for financial investment that prioritizes revenues and asset valorization over the response to a social need for housing. The cumulative outcome has been a housing regime in which scarcity, not abundance, underwrites value, and where public institutions often function less as correctives to market failure than as active enablers of rentier accumulation. This is widely observable in the second-hand market within which rehabilitations are based.

As Delclós and Vidal [2021] cautioned, for EU-funded housing rehabilitation activities under NextGeneration (2021-2027) to avoid exacerbating housing inequalities in Spain, initiatives must not on seek only climate neutrality but also housing cost neutrality and neutrality of housing tenure that empower tenants' unions and right-to-housing organizations as key stakeholders in the just transition: "Unless there are changes in this direction, the new wave of public investment will likely engross private profit, undermining its social impact on the right to housing" (p.336). Universal housing retrofit grants and subsidies in Barcelona have tended to favor higher-income groups, resulting in a greater number of retrofits completed and greater investment per homeowner, but not playing an economically redistributive function. Meanwhile, targeted housing renovation subsidies in private multifamily buildings in more urgent need of rehabilitation address households with more critical needs and result in more comprehensive energy-efficient retrofits (Esteve-Güell, 2025). While Esteve-Güell suggests that an optimal approach would be a combination of universal and targeted retrofit schemes in order to increase social equity while meeting EU rehabilitation targets of 3% annually, if we focus more squarely on targeted retrofit programs paired with anti-displacement protections, such targeted programs are more likely to reduce housing inequalities. Those facing the greatest risk of negative repercussions from the "renovation wave" are tenants, particularly those living in high-pressure housing markets.

The state's role has been less redistributive than it has been an intermediary between European Union funds and, principally, homeowners' associations, as most Spanish people live in private apartment blocks. Spain has been referred to as a "democracy of property owners", and this term adequately describes the dynamics of retrofit: decisions are ultimately made by homeowners (owner-occupiers and landlords alike), building by building. There has been a slow take-up of European Union residential refurbishment funds in Spain. €6.8 billion has been allocated nationally to support energy-efficient renovation, marking a shift from cosmetic improvements to deep, structural upgrades with climate objectives. The funding is unprecedented, but uptake has been slow due to mistrust, bureaucratic complexity, and the difficulty of coordinating multi-owner residential buildings. From the EU-funded Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan, Programs 1 to 5 were designed to cover everything from technical diagnostics to project execution, with subsidies reaching up to 80%. Yet, citizen engagement lagged, with the first visible demand in Catalonia appearing six months after the program launch. Homeowners often prioritize other needs, like elevators, and do not see energy renovation as urgent or beneficial. As fieldwork has demonstrated, applications for rehabilitation subsidies are going to middle-class (often architects or those well-versed in policy) who convince fellow owners of homeowners associations and their often apprehensive property administrators. This dynamic is quite common in mid-20th-century apartment buildings that had once been VPOs.

If we are to focus on the impacts of individual households rather than broader systemic trends, the key threat of energy-efficient retrofits concerning housing inequalities appears to be the threat of renoviction, though there is little data available to corroborate this widely held concern among housing activists, planners, and policy analysts. Spain does not have a "just cause eviction" law, as may be found in parts of North America and is being introduced in the United Kingdom: lease termination is a justifiable ground for eviction in Spain. In some cases, particularly vulnerable families with children, squatters have some "just cause" protections from evictions, particularly if their landlord is legally considered a large property holder. Considering that hundreds of thousands of leases signed during the Covid-19 pandemic are expiring in 2025, many occupied units will likely undergo energy-efficient retrofit as a pretext to evict tenants and later raise rents—what we could call "green renoviction"—though we do not yet have final data on the distribution of these funds.

Looking forward, there is a major issue in relation to EU energy efficiency mandates and their impacts on the Spanish housing system. The EU's updated Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD 2024/1275), which incorporates Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), mandates that Spain (and all other member states), requires that all homes sold or rented from 2030 must have an energy rating of E or above, and by 2033, this will require a rating of D or above, with increasingly stringent requirements as years pass. Only 75% of housing units fulfill the 2030 requirements, and only 15% of homes fit the guidelines anticipated for 2033.

There is a gradual acceleration of energy-efficient retrofits of residential buildings driven by European Union subsidies (López, 2024). The subsidiary of the New York-based private equity firm Blackstone, Effic is one of only two large companies operating throughout Spain. Blackstone is also the largest private landlord in Spain and in the world. Effic has served over 7,000 property administrators—who are now eligible for direct loans from banks—offering a full-service model that includes technical assessments, financing, project execution, and administrative support, and is publicly lobbying for greater regulation, which would make properties with F and G ratings unable to be rented.

Even with a model in which private equity profits directly from EU subsidies, the rehabilitation wave is well behind meeting targets. For Spain to reach the EU 2050 climate targets, it would need to accelerate retrofits from a current rate of 30,000 per year to 300,000 per year.

There does not appear to be widespread public awareness in Spain about the availability of public subsidies for energy-efficient retrofit. This is also due to property administrators being unaware of, or uninterested in, the bureaucratic steps involved in seeking such funds. Aside from specific large-scale retrofit projects of lower-income, marginalized neighborhoods like Sant Ildefons in Cornellà de Llobregat (Barcelona)—increasingly being treated as a model case worthy of replication—there are few examples of retrofitting projects that are completed at a large scale, targeted in an area where homeowners would be unlikely to pay for retrofit themselves.

Densification

Densification is only beginning to be a part of policy conversations in Spain, mainly within the context of thinking of metropolitan-level, often transit-oriented, housing development plans and policies. We must consider that about 90% of Spain's land area is uninhabited (making it the least densely settled country in Europe), while at the same time, settled (particularly urban) areas are among the most compact and with some of the highest population densities in Europe. There are indeed issues of urban sprawl: for example, 85% of population growth in the metropolitan area of Madrid has occurred in the suburbs rather than the central city since 1990. Barcelona also experienced significant peri-urbanization since the creation of new automobile infrastructures for the 1992 Summer Olympics, as the city's confinement by mountains and the sea makes residential expansion only possible on requalified industrial and infrastructural land, of which reserves are limited. Thus, hard densification comes into play in major urban areas, particularly on rezoned brownfield sites. This is increasingly the strategy for the construction of new mixed-income and social housing in metropolitan Barcelona. In secondary cities, the development of green fields on the peripheries of cities remains common, whether for market-rate, social, or mixed housing.

Soft residential densification is also occurring, particularly in Barcelona and Madrid, where ground-floor commercial spaces—and even parking garages—are converted or subdivided into housing, while the rental of individual bedrooms is a rising trend since its lack of price protection regulations by the 2023 Right to Housing law. On the other hand, small family sizes and incoming highly-qualified migrants in Barcelona have created a market where 32% of all households are one individual (40% of those aged 65+), up from 25% in 2021. On the other extreme are households made up of multiple, principally migrant, families sharing small apartments. There are ongoing trends of soft densification of commercial spaces in Madrid and Barcelona, but there are serious concerns about the suitability of these spaces, many of which do not comply with the minimum parameters established principally by autonomous community law.

We see variations in which, through soft densification, pre-existing buildings may see increases and decreases in population without any new construction. The most notable form of soft densification in Barcelona is the gradual conversion of street-level commercial, bars, and light industrial spaces into housing. There is a market for purchasing properties without a habitability certificate and either illegally renting or reselling these properties as residences, or speculatively purchasing lower-priced commercial spaces and then seeking permission for residential conversion. Such ground-floor units are key elements of so-called “infravivienda”, a broad term for sub-standard housing, which tends to be overlooked by authorities since their tenants are more likely to be vulnerable and unable to access housing elsewhere. On the other hand, Barcelona has experimented with converting these spaces to homes for physically disabled people in some neighborhoods, driving a debate for the appropriate mix between ground-floor commercial and residential usages.

Overall, a key question is whether forms of new-build, hard densification in urban Spain should be understood as significantly divergent from the greenfield and brownfield development that have dominated state-led gentrification strategies (in the case of historically industrial areas) or developer-led suburban expansion (in the case of greenfields) in recent decades. Being as, particularly in the case of EU-funded schemes and in self-fashioned green cities like Barcelona, Nature-based Solutions (NBS) are incorporated into the comprehensive planning processes, such ecological interventions go hand-in-hand with redevelopment projects: this creates challenges to assess to what extent such activities represent green transition objectives, or simply implicate such projects into new "rules of the game".

The role of public-private partnerships and public-commons partnerships is becoming an important element of an approach to building an additional 600,000 housing units, with ongoing debates on how many of these should be protected housing and through what mechanisms. The Catalonian government, for example, has committed to creating 50,000 new units of protected housing—predominantly on a rental model—by 2030. To get close to this unlikely target, the role of private builders is key: since the 2008 crisis, many construction companies have gone out of business, leaving only a handful of large, national homebuilders with the capacity to build at such a pace and scale. The extent to which public-private partnerships will prove fruitful will depend on the contexts and conditions in which they occur. Debates on the political left echo those occurring previously in cities in New York and London, where new mixed-income developments have internal segregation (access to a pool, or "poor doors"), but generally accept the need to mobilize the private building sector to build public housing. This, in turn, relates to the theme of densification (in the case of the conversion of industrial and infrastructural land to housing and public facilities) in the case of Barcelona, but also to greenfield development, as is seen in redevelopments on the periphery of Madrid.

Due to European Union Next Generation funds distributed to Spain as part of the Covid recovery package, there is a great deal of renaturalization and green infrastructure projects currently occurring, particularly in secondary cities, while activities in the largest cities—varying in scale and extent—are more likely to come from municipal or metropolitan comprehensive planning. Approaches of secondary cities appear more opportunistic and tailored to the language of European Union promotion. In the case of case studies in Catalonia, as NBS have been widely integrated into the planning of major rezoning projects, they are largely inextricable from broader processes of brownfield or peri-urban greenfield redevelopment. In Barcelona, this is largely through the SUDS program, or Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, installed in the process of creating new public space, green infrastructure, and flood risk mitigation elements as a precondition of private or public site planning.

Nature-based solutions

NBS, while essential for building climate-resilient and healthier cities, are increasingly implicated in processes of green gentrification in Spanish urban contexts. In cities like Barcelona, for example, the implementation of parks and green corridors—particularly in former industrial areas such as Sant Martí—has coincided with rising property values, demographic shifts, and the displacement of working-class residents. Rather than fostering inclusive urban transformation, these green interventions often become catalysts for real estate speculation, benefiting higher-income newcomers while marginalizing long-standing communities. The quality and aestheticization of green spaces, rather than their ecological functionality alone, play a central role in attracting capital and reshaping neighborhood profiles. Without accompanying measures—such as affordable housing guarantees, anti-displacement policies, and genuine participatory planning—NBS risk reproducing spatial inequalities under the guise of sustainability. Considering that NBS approaches are incorporated into comprehensive planning and green infrastructure approaches to new development sites, in many cases, NBS may simply be considered a prerequisite for developments that do not significantly differ from “traditional” brownfield and greenfield development, with debates largely confined to the quantity and distribution of social housing within new developments. To ensure that green urbanism promotes environmental justice rather than exclusion, we must embed equity and social safeguards into every stage of NBS design and implementation.

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6 APPENDIX

6.1 Data Sources and Calculations

A. Total Household Baseline

- All calculations use the **official household total of 18,539,223** from the **2021 INE census**, excluding collective dwellings (residencias, hospitals, etc.).
- This total serves as the denominator for calculating the % share of each tenure type.

B. Owner-Occupied Housing

- Total owner-occupied households: **13.94 million** (75.2%)
  → Derived directly from INE-ECEPOV 2021.
- **Breakdown**:
- Shared ownership was listed as “n/a” due to its negligible presence in Spain.

Source Cross-Checks:

- INE census + OECD Affordable Housing DB confirm these ranges.

C. Private Rental Housing (PR)

- Total estimated private rental households: **3,825,000**
  → Composed of three subcategories:
  - **Private landlord (long/medium contract)**: 2.95 million (15.9%)
  - **Lives rent-free**: 465,000 (2.5%)
    → Often involves intergenerational or informal arrangements.
  - **Other private rented**: 410,000 (2.2%)
    → Includes informal lets, transitional rentals, or undefined contracts.

Method: The INE-ECEPOV disaggregates “alquiler” (rent) into these categories. "Lives rent-free" is included under "other tenures" in the census but is documented separately in the microdata.

D. Social Rental Housing (SR)

- **Total SR**: 276,000 units (1.5%)
  → Cited in multiple reports, including Amnesty (2023) and OECD.
- **Publicly owned SR**: 250,000
  → Nearly all SR in Spain is owned/managed by local or regional governments.
- **Non-profit owned SR**: Estimated at 26,000 units
  → Based on figures from the Barcelona Housing Observatory and scaled to

the national level. This likely overestimates, but these are the best data we have access to.

E. Missing Category – "Other / Unknown Tenure"

- **Gap of 498,223 households** found between cumulative tenure totals and the national household figure.
- This is accounted for by:
    - Dwellings with unknown or unclassified tenure status.
    - Residents in institutional housing not captured in household-level survey categories.
    - Data inconsistencies or omitted responses in survey instruments.

Approach: Rather than reallocating the gap proportionally,“Other / Unknown” was created for transparency.

F. Rounding, Units, and Precision

- Household figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 for readability.
- Percentages are calculated using unrounded figures for accuracy but displayed to one decimal point.

G. Validation Strategy

- Data points were triangulated between:
    - **INE (ECEPOV)** for official counts and tenure distribution.
    - **OECD Housing Database** for international comparisons.
    - **El País**, **Amnesty International**, and **academic estimates** for housing stock classification (particularly for SR and free occupation).
    - Local data (Barcelona OH-B) to estimate non-profit/social tenures.

Appendix 2

A. Total Household Baseline

- The **total number of households** in Spain in 2011 was:
  18,083,692 (as recorded in the INE *Censo de Población y Viviendas 2011*) .
- All tenure category percentages were applied to this base.

B. Owner-Occupied Housing

- INE's 2011 ECEPOV data states that:
    - **78.9%** of Spanish households were owner-occupied.
    - This was further divided into:
        - **46.0%** owning **outright** (fully paid)
        - **32.9%** owning **with a mortgage or loan**

C. Private Rental and Rent-Free Housing

- **Private rentals at market price** accounted for **13.5%** of households in 2011, per INE .
- INE separately reported that **3.3%** of households lived in housing "provided free or at low price," a category understood as **rent-free or symbolic rent** arrangements.

Calculation:

- Private rental = 13.5% × 18,083,692 ≈ 2,441,716
- Rent-free = 3.3% × 18,083,692 ≈ 596,802

D. Other Tenures (Residual Category)

- The remaining percentage (**4.3%**) includes:
    - Institutional arrangements (religious orders, company housing)
    - Shared/cooperative ownership models (rare in Spain)
    - Survey non-responses or ambiguous tenures

Calculation:

- Other = 100% – (OO + PR + Rent-Free)
  = 100% – (78.9% + 13.5% + 3.3%) = **4.3%**
  = 4.3% × 18,083,692 ≈ **776,701** households

This method mirrors INE's official approach in reporting tenure when exact legal statuses were unknown or irregular.

E. Assumptions and Limitations

- **No disaggregation** by public vs. non-profit social rental housing was available in the 2011 ECEPOV dataset. It is likely included in the 4.3% "other" or 3.3% "rent-free" category.

- No shared ownership category was isolated, as this form of tenure is negligible in Spain.
- Figures were **rounded to the nearest whole household**, though calculations used exact percentages for accuracy.

Appendix 3

A. Total Household baseline

- The 2001 INE Census reported **18,217,300 private households** in Spain. This figure excludes collective or institutional dwellings and serves as the denominator for all tenure calculations.

B. Owner-Occupied Housing

- According to INE 2001, **82.2%** of households lived in owner-occupied housing.
- This category was further disaggregated into:
  - **Owns outright**: Estimated at **56.1%** of all households
  - **Owns with mortgage**: Estimated at **26.1%**
- This breakdown was derived from:
  - INE's *Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida* (ECV) 2004–2005
  - Eurostat's EU-SILC 2004, which report that ~68–70% of owner-occupiers had paid off their homes.
- These ratios were applied to the 82.2% owner-occupied figure to estimate the absolute number of outright vs. mortgaged homes.

C. Private rental and rent-free housing

The remaining **17.8%** of households were allocated across three rental and quasi-rental categories:

1. **Private market rental (9.5%)**
   – Based on retrospective estimates from INE ECV 2005 and adjusted to reflect early-2000s norms.
   – Included standard lease agreements with private landlords.
2. **Social rental housing (1.5%)**
   – Estimate based on OECD and Amnesty International data showing that social rental stock remained around 1.5% of total housing units in both 2001 and 2011.
   – Assumes consistent low investment and historical continuity across this period.
3. **Rent-free or symbolic rent (2.0%)**
   – Includes households living in dwellings owned by family, employers, or institutions without regular rent payments.
   – Estimate informed by INE's 2005 ECV and similar categories reported in 2011 ECEPOV.

D. Other tenure arrangements (4.8%)

- The remaining **4.8%** includes:

- Institutional housing (e.g., company housing, military or religious accommodations)
- Informal tenures (e.g., squatting, unregulated dwellings)
- Shared or cooperative arrangements (rare in 2001)
- Survey non-responses or ambiguous classifications

This is a **residual category**, calculated as: 100% – (Owner-occupied + Market rental + Social rental + Rent-free) = 100% – (82.2% + 9.5% + 1.5% + 2.0%) = **4.8%**

E. Calculation and Rounding

- All percentages were applied to the total household figure (18,217,300).
- Household numbers were rounded to the nearest whole number for clarity, while ensuring that the sum totals exactly 100% of households.
- Small rounding differences may occur but do not affect category proportions.

F. Limitations

- **Social rental data in 2001** were not disaggregated in the census. Estimates rely on later OECD and AI reports.
- **Mortgage data** were inferred using 2004–2005 surveys.
- Rent-free and other tenure shares are approximations based on subsequent years with minor back-adjustments.

Appendix 4

A. Total Households and Dwellings

- The total number of dwellings in 1991 was **17,220,399**, according to INE.
- Among them, **11,852,075** were classified as *family dwellings in use*, or **primary residences**—those that were actually occupied as main homes.
- This represents **68.8% of all dwellings** in Spain.

Calculation:
11,852,07517,220,399×100=68.8%\frac{11,852,075}{17,220,399} \times 100 = 68.8\%17,220,39911,852,075×100=68.8%

B. Total Number of Households

- The number of private households (hogares) in primary residences was approximated to **~17.99 million**, based on the estimated population (~38.88 million) and average household size (~2.16 persons per household), consistent with INE census data and OECD calculations.

C. Owner-Occupied Housing

- Official tenure shares were not disaggregated in the 1991 census.
- However, various sources indicate that **owner-occupancy rates were slightly higher than in 2001**, with estimates ranging from **83–85%**.
- A mid-range value of **84%** was adopted for this reconstruction.
- Based on trends from Eurostat and INE ECV (2004–2005), we applied the following subdivision:
    - **Owns outright**: ~55% of total households (i.e., ~65.5% of owner-occupiers)
    - **Owns with mortgage**: ~29% of households

D. Rented and Other Tenures

The remaining **16% of households** were assigned to rental or other tenure types. This group was further divided based on trends extrapolated from INE ECV and Eurostat SILC:

- **Private market rental**: ~7% of total households
  Based on a steadily declining rental market in post-Franco Spain through the 1980s–1990s.
- **Social rental**: ~1%
  Consistent with OECD data that places Spain's public/non-profit rental stock between 1–2% of total dwellings during this period.
- **Rent-free or symbolic rent**: ~2%
  Includes accommodations provided by family, employers, or other parties without standard rent payment.
- **Institutional or informal housing**: ~6%
  Used as a residual category to account for non-classifiable arrangements such as cooperative housing, squatting, military housing, or data gaps.

E. Estimation Procedure

Each tenure category was calculated using the following steps:

1. Determine percentage share based on documented or inferred sources.
2. Multiply by the estimated total number of households (~17.99 million).
3. Round to the nearest thousand for clarity.

Appendix 5

A. Total Households and Dwellings

- **Primary residences**
  – Calculated as 96% of the total dwellings (≈785,757 × 0.96 = 754,000).
- **Owner-occupied (OO)**
  – Derived as the complement of the local private rental rate: OO = 100% –

38.5% = 61.5% of primary stock.
– The split between outright and mortgaged uses the national ratio (~60/40) due to lack of Barcelona-specific microdata.

- **Private rental**
  – Municipal survey gives 38.5% directly. No higher-level detail for rent-free; it's assumed minimal.
- **Social rental**
  – Public: Based on city-managed public housing listings: ~22,600 units.
  – Non-profit/cooperative: Includes Barcelona's 86 Sostre Cívic units plus others → estimated ≈ 3,000 units.
- **Other tenures**
  – The remainder after deducting owner, private rental, and social from primary stock (≈ 1.5%).
- **Mid-term rentals (MTR)**
  – Growing but not included in these totals; flagged separately. Based on documented increases since 2018.

📃 Notes and Caveats

- Data is rounded to nearest thousand; totals may vary slightly.
- Mortgage vs. outright figures are estimates, due to lack of Barcelona-specific survey splits.
- Rent-free occupancy may be undercounted in municipal surveys.
- Social rental statistics rely on institutional reporting rather than census microdata.
- "Other" category includes institutional and informal housing not captured elsewhere.

Appendix 6

A. Total Households and Dwellings

- **Total Primary Residences** Assumed ~770,000, based on INE 2011 census data and municipal estimates ohb.cat.

Owner-Occupied Housing

- Census indicates **61.3%** of households owned their homes in the city—totaling ~472,000 .
- Split into outright/mortgaged using a **national 60/40 ratio** (2004–2011), yielding ~277,000 outright and ~195,000 mortgaged homes.

C. Private Rental Housing

- Census reports **30.1% rented in 2011**, totaling ~232,000 units .

E. Rent-Free / Low-Cost Cession

- Such tenure appears in census as “cedidos gratis o a bajo precio”—approximately **1.5%**, ~11,550 dwellings.

F. Institutional/Other Housing

- The remainder (~4.1%) reflects institutional dwellings, informal tenure, Vacant-to-occupied categorization gaps, or data mismatches.

Appendix 7

 Primary Residence Count

- ~770,000 primary residences in 2001 based on INE census and corroborated by UB-INE apartment studies .

 Owner-Occupied

- 68.4% homeownership rate for Barcelona in 2001.
- Split into ~45% outright and ~23.4% mortgaged, based on mid-2000s mortgage survey patterns.

 Private Rental

- Estimated at ~20% of primary stock—consistent with municipal rental data and the broader decline in Barcelona’s rental market by 2001.

 Social Housing

- Total ~3%, with ~2.3% publicly owned and ~0.7% non-profit/cooperative, based on OECD-affiliated sources .

 Rent-Free/Cession

- Estimated at 1.5%, representing housing ceded free or at low cost, aligned with trends visible in 2001 census microdata.

 Institutional / Informal / Other

- Residual category (~6.1%) covering cooperative, informal, or institutional housing, plus data non-responses.

 Rounding

- All figures rounded to nearest 100 for clarity; minor rounding variances may occur.

6.2 TABLES

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)
OO	**13.940.000**	**75.2%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Owns outright	9.040.000	48.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Owns with a mortgage or loan	4.900.000	26.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
PR	**3.825.000**	**20.6%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	2.950.000	15.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lives rent free and other private rented	875,000	4.7%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lives rent free	465,000	2.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other private rented	410.000	2.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SR	**276,000**	**1.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	250,000	1.3%	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	26,000	n/a-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN	498,223	2.7%				
TOTAL	**18,539,223**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**

Table ES1: Spain, 2021: Distribution tenures and social groups (All households). Sources: complied by authors; data from 2021 Population and Housing Census (INE) INE-ECEPOV, OECD Affordable

Housing Database - own calculations. See Appendix 1. These data only reflect primary residences and long-term contracts. As of 2021, approximately 69.1% of housing units in Spain were occupied as primary residences. This leaves 30.9% of housing units which were non-primary residences. These include vacant housing (due to speculation, inheritance, abandonment, approximately), second homes, temporary accommodations/vacation rentals, commercial residential property. As of 2024, Spain has one of the highest proportions of vacant and seasonal homes in Europe, with over 12% of the total housing stock being vacant dwellings (excluding seasonal homes) (OECD 2024).

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)
OO	**14.279.456**	**78.9%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Owns outright	8.320.360	46.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Owns with a mortgage or loan	5.959.095	32.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
PR	**3.815.219**	**21.1%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	2.441.716	13.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lives rent free	596.802	3.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SR	**276,000**	**1.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	250,000	1.3%	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	26,000	n/a-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN/ OTHER	776,701	4.3%				
TOTAL	**18,083,692**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**

Table ES2: Spain, 2011: Distribution tenures and social groups (All households). Sources: complied by authors; data from 2011 Population and Housing Census (INE) INE-ECEPOV, OECD Affordable Housing Database - own calculations. See Appendix 2. These data only reflect primary residences and long-term contracts. As of 2011, approximately 71.7% of housing units in Spain were occupied as primary residences. This leaves 28.3% of housing units which were non-primary residences. These include vacant housing (due to speculation, inheritance, abandonment, approximately), second homes, temporary accommodations/vacation rentals, commercial residential property.

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)	Households (absolute)
OO	**14.971.989**	**82.2%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Owns outright	10.230.899	56.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owns with a mortgage or loan	4.741.090	26.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
PR	**2.368.240**	**11.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	1.730.634	9.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free	365.000	2.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SR	**276,000**	**1.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	273,260	1.5	-	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	26,000	n/a-	-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN/ OTHER	876,421	4.8%					
TOTAL	**18,217,300**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	

Table ES3: Spain, 2001: Distribution tenures and social groups (All households). Sources: complied by authors; data from 2001 Population and Housing Census (INE) INE-ECV (2004-2005), EU-SIL, OECD Affordable Housing Database - own calculations. See Appendix 3. These data only reflect primary residences and long-term contracts. As of 2001, approximately 70.0% of housing units in Spain were occupied as primary residences. This leaves 30.0% of housing units which were non-primary residences. These include vacant housing (due to speculation, inheritance, abandonment, approximately), second homes, temporary accommodations/vacation rentals, commercial residential property.

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)	Households (absolute)
OO	**15.110.000**	**84%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Owns outright	9.900.000	55%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owns with a mortgage or loan	5.200.000	29%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
PR	1.620.000	**9.0%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	1.260.000	7.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free	360,.000	2.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SR	**180.000**	**1.0**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	n/a		-	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	n/a	n/a-	-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN/ OTHER	1,080.000	6.0&					
TOTAL	**17.990.000**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	

Table ES4: Spain, 1991: Distribution tenures and social groups (All households). Sources: complied by authors; data from 1991 Population and Housing Census (INE) OECD Affordable Housing Database, IPUMS 1991 Spain metadata - own calculations. See Appendix 4. These data only reflect primary residences and long-term contracts. As of 1991, approximately 68.8% of housing units in Spain were occupied as primary residences. This leaves 31.2% of housing units which were non-primary residences. These include vacant housing (due to speculation, inheritance, abandonment, approximately), second homes, temporary accommodations/vacation rentals, commercial residential property.

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)	Households (absolute)
OO	**451,000**	**59.9%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Owns outright	278,000	36.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owns with a mortgage or loan	173,000	23.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
PR	290,000	**38.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	290,000	38.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free	negligible	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SR	**11,900**	**1.5**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	n/a		-	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	n/a	n/a-	-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN/ OTHER	1.100	.0%					
TOTAL	**754,000**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	

Table ES5: City of Barcelona, 2021: Distribution of social groups. Sources: Barcelona Land Register (2021), Barcelona Sociodemographic Survey (2020), compiled by the authors. In the city of Barcelona, 98% of residential properties are private residences. See Appendix 5.

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)	Households (absolute)
OO	**472,000**	**61.3%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Owns outright	277,000	36.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owns with a mortgage or loan	195,000	25.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
PR	**243,500**	**31.6%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	232,000	30.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free	11,500	1.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SR	**11,600**	**1.5**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	n/a		-	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	n/a	n/a-	-	-	-	-	-
n	31,550	4.1%					
TOTAL	**770,000**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	

Table ES6: City of Barcelona, 2011: Distribution of social groups. Sources: Barcelona Land Register (2011), OH-B, OECD Affordable Housing database (2021), compiled by the authors. In the city of Barcelona, 98% of residential properties are private residences. See Appendix 6.

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)	Households (absolute)
OO	**526,000**	**68.4%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Owns outright	346,500	45.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owns with a mortgage or loan	179,500	23.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
PR	**165,550**	**21.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	154,000	20.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free	11,550	1.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SR	**23,100**	**3.0%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	17,700	2.3%	-	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	5,400	0.7%	-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN/ OTHER	46,900	6.1%					
TOTAL	**770,000**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	

Table ES7: City of Barcelona, 2001: Distribution of social groups. Sources: 2001 Population and Housing Census (INE), Barcelona Statistical Office, IPUMS 2001 microdata, compiled by the authors. In the city of Barcelona, 98% of residential properties are private residences. See Appendix 7.

Tenures	Households (absolute)	% of Total Stock	Low inc. (%)	Middle-low inc. (%)	Middle-high i. (%)	High-inc. (%)	Households (absolute)
OO	**526,000**	**68.4%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Owns outright	346,500	45.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owned with a mortgage or loan, and shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Owns with a mortgage or loan	179,500	23.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shared ownership	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
PR	**165,550**	**21.5%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Private landlord or letting agency (long/medium contract)	154,000	20.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free and other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Lives rent free	11,550	1.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other private rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SR	**23,100**	**3.0%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	
Rents from council or Local Authority (publicly owned)	17,700	2.3%	-	-	-	-	-
Other social rented (including housing associations)	5,400	0.7%	-	-	-	-	-
UNKNOWN/ OTHER	46,900	6.1%					
TOTAL	**770,000**	**100%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	

Table ES8: City of Barcelona, 1991: Distribution of social groups. Sources: 2001 Population and Housing Census (INE), Barcelona Statistical Office, IPUMS 2001 microdata, compiled by the authors. In the city of Barcelona, 98% of residential properties are private residences. See Appendix 7.